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great by
deeds, not by
birth"
-Chanakya

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The You-Attitude & Spiritual Experience in the Workplace: Is there a Connection?

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ABSTRACT

In the words of Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson (2002), “Spiritual experiences can include being connected to a larger reality, yielding a more comprehensive self; joining with other individuals or the human community; with nature or the cosmos; or with the divine realm.”

Communication – oral and written, is a significant skill in every context: personal, organizational, social. Interrelating with others through oral communication is crucial to the workplace and to spirituality. Comprehending and appreciating what others are explaining is essential to doing a good job, whether the communication is with coworkers or others. Apparently not all communication is spiritual, but understanding what others are saying is the basis for ascribing meaning and crafting a spiritual workplace. Written communication must be done well so that one’s ideas are clear to the receiver. Electronic communications can cause serious miscommunications at times. With regard to spirituality, written communication can be very significant. For example, journaling can be a perfect channel for people to facilitate them to deal with an idea or problem. A prudent written reference by a colleague for a job applicant can amount to the difference between being selected for the position or not. Written reports and other documents are strategic to the organizational success.

One of the seven C’s of communication – Consideration also termed as you-attitude is one such facet that can lead an individual to having a more comprehensive self by connecting spiritually with other individuals (human beings). This paper tries to explore the effect of sender’s you-attitude in written communication on the receiver and makes an attempt to create a link between you-attitude and spiritual experience at the workplace.

Key words: *You-attitude, consideration, written communication, spirituality*

INTRODUCTION

As Wood stated, “The field of communication studies is concerned with the range of human communication, from the most personal to the public. The most personal communication in which we engage is intrapersonal, that is, the self-talk that emerges from our thoughts” (2009). He added, “People constantly verbalize their thoughts and exchange messages with others. When doing so between one or two other individuals, we term that process interpersonal communication”. The purpose of this study is to explore the effect of sender’s you-attitude in written communication on the receiver and an attempt to create a link between you-attitude and spiritual experience at the workplace. To be exact, what intrapersonal communication is taking place as people think about and act upon their spirituality and how revelation of the individual’s spirituality through interpersonal communication impacts his or her communication in the workplace.

Communication at work can be affirmative and reviving or deleterious and exhausting, and its effects are extreme. It would be a learning experience to see how others see their spiritual lives affecting their workplace communication. That is, what internal spiritual practices are individuals engaging in at work and the manner in which these affect the individual’s communication with others.

An aphorism ascribed to former West German chancellor Willy Brandt says: “You may buy from me in your own language, but sell to me in mine.” This saying encapsulates a central principle in communication—the seller must put himself in the shoes of the buyer; the writer must see through the reader’s eyes. In communication studies, this is known as the you-attitude.

You-attitude is a style of writing that gives the writer the reader’s position, permitting a distinct view of the situation from the reader’s viewpoint. The communication is, then sensitive to the reader’s requirements. Readers are anxious with benefits significant to them and not with the writer or what the writer represents. While one may want to send a certain message, one’s writing style may make it irrelevant for the readers. You-attitude can capture their attention and interest effortlessly and therefore convey one’s message to the readers as desired.

Consideration is an important facet of business communication. In business, affable relationships have to be preserved at every cost and one needs to remove intentional

and unintentional impediments. In order to have consideration, one needs to understand the receiver, his/her views and mental outlook. In an oral communication situation, an empathizing response is to be fostered. Responses with investigation and instruction do not endorse warmth. This element of empathy needs to be integrated in written communication too. When one empathizes with someone, one is adopting a “You – attitude” and when “You – attitude” is adopted, it is possible to realize the other person’s situation and embellish one’s style of communication with consideration.

The motivation for this study is rooted in the importance of you-attitude in written business communication in today’s times where “every minute gets paid” either in cash or in kind, or to say, in relationships.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The topic of spirituality at workplace has been addressed by many researchers since the 1990s. However, the literature reveals that there is still great prospective to explore spirituality from different perspectives, such as examining the effects of spirituality and communication in the workplace. Sass (2000) posits that the topic in the 1990s was dealt with in a “vague way,” not addressing how people experienced the “sacred” or “the Beyond” (p. 196).

Mitroff and Denton’s (1999) findings illustrate that people need a means by which to express themselves as whole persons at work, as spiritual beings, not compartmentalized; and that being able to do so ultimately allows them to produce their best work and contribute to their company’s product or service excellence.

Pokora (2001) discusses several views of spirituality. She says, “we must first explore these different views before delving into theory about spirituality and organizations. She calls for spirituality to be treated as communication and posits that scholars have drawn too small a border around what constitutes communicative experiences. If we dismiss “undeniably communicative experiences that are sensed, felt, or mediated by the ineffable” (p. 134) by turning attention to only that which can be observed, then a basic element of the human experience has been ignored.”

Long (2001) crystallizes the role of human communication today, stating that it “has emerged as the defining element in our modern age” (p. 38). She believes that communication scholars’ research over the next millennium will be essential to society, particularly in the arenas of ethics, education and culture, as people go about their daily lives. Long (2001) cites the philosopher Heidegger in the belief that spirituality and creative thought and action are part and parcel to culture. Long encourages communication research that reaches beyond the traditional view of communication as merely a transmission of messaging from one to the other, but rather, seeing communication as behavior that can encompass a rich and deep understanding of or inquiry into human relationships as well as one’s relationship with oneself. The preceding has approached spirituality and communication from the scholarly point of view. Yet, what does it mean to an individual to be a “spiritual person”?

The concept of you-attitude appears to have originated in work on advertising during the first decade of the 20th century and was presented as a business writing principle by G. B. Hotchkiss in his 1916 textbook (Hagge, 1989, p. 36). Since then it has become one of the

business communication principles that Hagge says are “essentially folkloristic, having passed through the rhetorical tradition without much thought to their real validity” (p. 49). Two fairly traditional approaches to you-attitude are exemplified by Sigband (1976), who defines you-attitude as “viewing a situation from the other person's point of view” (p.161), and by Bowman and Branchaw (1984), who define it as “putting your readers and their problems first” (p. 266). In other words, these approaches see you-attitude as somehow refuting the natural inclination to observe the world from one’s own view, however they do not provide strategies on how such a you-attitude might be articulated in texts.

Numerous textbook writers have defined the you-attitude in broad terms, including all features of effective business writing. For instance, Treece (1980) compares you-attitude with “all of the desirable qualities of communication,” comprising “consideration, courtesy, completeness, conciseness, clearness” (p. 82). Locker (1997) gives another broad definition and stretches the you-attitude to include such matters as being complete, arranging information to meet the reader's needs, and using headings and lists to help the reader find key points.

Textbooks are even less helpful in being clear about how you-attitude can be conveyed in a discourse. According to Batteiger (1985), “writing with a you-attitude is as simple as using the second person pronoun more often than the first, and will be a natural consequence of understanding the reader's situation.” Although merely using “you” and “yours” rather than “I” and “mine” will sometimes help to express you-attitude, it would be incorrect to equate you-attitude with the supremacy of “you” in a text. As Bovee and Thill (1995) say: “It isn’t just a matter of using one pronoun as opposed to another; it’s a matter of genuine empathy. You can use *you* 25 times in a single page and still ignore your audience's true concerns. In the final analysis, it's the thought that counts, not the pronoun” (p. 145). Mulvihill (1990) also notes that in the student work he has examined, even though the “you” may be there, the you-attitude is not.

The document design and readability require writers to view a document from the reader’s perspective, however you-attitude requires writers first to view a real-world situation from the reader’s perspective and then to show in the text of the document, understanding to the reader's perspective.

Locker (1997) defined “You-Attitude” as “a style of writing which looks at things from the reader’s point of view, emphasizing what the reader wants to know, respecting the reader’s intelligence, and protecting the reader’s ego.” As Ewald (1985) observed regarding sales communications, “Information and image communicated between sender and receiver become, in communication, commodities to be exchanged between seller and buyer. Both the seller and the buyer find value in the information and the image; then communication starts. Both are on equal footing; neither one is a winner nor a loser. Both can share in the common benefits from genuine communication.”

Ewald and Van (2003) suggest three features that characterize you-attitude as a convention of business discourse. These include “specialized pronoun use, preference for positive wording, and emphasis on reader benefit. The purpose of this three-fold strategy in conventional business discourse is to decrease reader resistance while simultaneously increasing reader cooperation. The goal is to facilitate the reader in acting positively on the recommendations, requirements, or requests presented in the message. In direct-mail packages, that action constructs the reader as consumer.”

Locker (1995) and Reep (1997) are exceptional in this sense. Nevertheless, it is interesting that there is little specific overlap in the guidelines of Locker and Reep with regard to you-attitude. According to Locker:

1. Focus not on what you do for the reader, but on what the reader receives or can do. In positive or neutral situations, stress what the reader wants to know.
2. Refer to the reader's request or order specifically.
3. Don't talk about your own feelings unless you're sure the reader wants to know how you feel.
4. Don't tell readers how they feel or will react.
5. In positive situations, use *you* more often than I. Use *we* when it includes the reader.
6. In negative situations, avoid the word *you*. Protect the reader's ego. Use passive verbs and impersonal expressions to avoid assigning blame (Locker, 1997, p. 34).

According to Reep:

1. Put yourself in your reader's place, and look at the situation from his or her point of view.
2. Emphasize your reader's actions or benefits in a situation.
3. Present information as pleasantly as possible.
4. Offer a helpful suggestion or appreciative comment when possible.

5. Choose words that do not insult or accuse your reader.
6. Choose words that are clear and natural, and avoid old-fashioned or legal-sounding phrases. (Reep, 1997, p. 362)

Other than not having much commonality, these two sets of guidelines are not as clear as one might initially feel. For instance, Locker does not say where and how one should use “you” in positive messages, and Reep does not say what one should do in a text in order to emphasize the reader’s actions or benefits. This lack of explicitness may result in part from there being relatively little in the journal literature that relates specifically to the expression of you-attitude. Several studies—Wells and Spinks (1990), Brockman and Belanger (1993), Shelby and Reinsch (1995)—have examined the general presence or absence of you-attitude in various kinds of letters, but there has been little attention to the text characteristics that express you-attitude. A notable exception is Campbell, Riley, and Parker (1990). Although their paper is limited to discussing the relevance of speech act theory to you-attitude, it does show that “both first and second person pronouns, as well as both subject and non-subject positions, may be exploited to create the you-perspective, depending on the type of speech act and its status as a negative or positive message” (p. 198).

As Rodman (2001) observed, “Definitions of you-attitude should exclude readability and document design; only you-attitude is concerned with viewing a real-world situation from the reader’s perspective and then preparing a text that conveys a sensitivity to that perspective.” In general, readers respond better to information presented from their point of view rather than from the writer’s point of view. Using you-attitude throughout the document paces the reader’s natural concern for how the memo, letter, or report influences him or her. You-attitude does *not* mean that you ignore your own concerns, but simply that you have taken the reader’s concerns into account.

The you-attitude writing style requires more than just you using the word ‘you’ as a pronoun often. A writer who fills a message with ‘you’s can actually still miss the reader’s needs and concerns.

PARTICIPANTS

Thirteen individuals were chosen to reflect diversity in gender, age, job category, and religious and/or spiritual practice. Of that number, 7 were female and 6 were male. Table 1 delineates the demographic information:

Table 1: Participant gender, age group, educational qualification, work experience, and type of industry/organization

Gender	Age group		Educational Qualification		Work Experience		Type of Industry/Organization	
Female 7	20-30	3	MBA	4	<5 years	2	Education	5
	31-40	4	Ph.D/M.Phil	4	5-10	3	Corporate	7
Male 6	41-50	4	Others	5	10-15	2	Others	1
	>50	2			15-20	2		
					>20 years	4		

PROCEDURE

Interviews were conducted face-to-face with the participants. First of all, the participants were sensitized with the essence of “you-attitude” with the help of a few sentences and they were asked about how they felt on receiving those sentences. They were also given some written sentences with a few having you-attitude embedded and few without it. 13 out of 14 participants responded that they felt good, pampered, honoured, spoken politely to etc. when they received (read or listened to) sentences with you-attitude. One participant, however, responded in a neutral manner and felt there is no use of you-attitude in business. Having done so, an attempt was made to create a link between you-attitude and spiritual experience at the workplace with the 13 participants who felt positive about the usage of you-attitude/consideration. For this, 15 structured questions were asked to each participant.

DATA ANALYSIS

Participants were asked the following 15 questions. The first five questions were drawn from the study conducted by Mitroff and Denton (1999):

1. What gives you the most meaning and purpose in your work?
2. Do you believe in God or a higher power, and if so, how do define or describe it?
3. What meaning does religion have for you and how important is it in your life?
4. What meaning does spirituality have for you and how important is it in your life?
5. Do you see a difference between religion and spirituality, and if so, what is the difference?

Questions six to ten, which refer to the individual’s spiritual practice in the workplace, were adopted from the study conducted by Young (2011):

6. During your work day, do you engage in spiritual activities such as prayer, short meditation, quiet reflection, reading spiritual literature, for instance? If you do, then please describe.
7. Would you like your workplace to provide a space (such as a “quiet room,” etc.) where employees can go for quiet reflection during the day? Explain why or why not.
8. Would you like for your workplace to provide opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, etc. for employees to actively express their spirituality at work? Explain why or why not.
9. How do you react/respond when someone at the workplace says something negative to you?
10. How do you react/respond when someone at the workplace says something positive to you?

The next five questions were developed specifically for this study to explore the depth of the topic – Can spiritual experience at workplace be linked with the You-attitude in Managerial Communication?

11. Is your workplace communication receiver-centric? If yes, how do you make it so?
12. Is your choice of words while communicating at the workplace a result of your belief in spirituality? If yes, why do you feel so?
13. Is your workplace communication spontaneous or a result of your inner spiritual nature?
14. Does individual belief in spirituality at workplace facilitate in being a considerate communicator? How?
15. Can an empathetic individual find it easy to be receiver-centric in workplace communication? How?

FINDINGS

Participants’ responses were studied for common word usage, similar ideas, and shared meanings to discern emerging themes. These are categorized below, supported with examples from participant responses.

Q1: What gives you the most meaning and purpose in your work?

1. Helping and Connecting

- “The fact that I am able to give back to society what I gained from it – money, knowledge, skills and experience.” (Respondent 2)
- “Satisfaction in building Synergy – 1+1=3, connecting with people, creating shared vision and achieving goals defined by the shared vision.” (Respondent 3)
- “My passion for teaching. To reach out to the learners in such a way that they would be able to reach a level of ‘experienced learning.’” (Respondent 8)

2. Personal Satisfaction

- “I am doing such work that can bring positive change a life of individual. I earn so that I can spend for my family.” (Respondent 4)
- “For supporting my family financially, maintaining self-esteem and independence.” (Respondent 5)
- “In today’s world where everything is commercial... being part of a highly successful healthcare company that is ethical in Indian as well as Global context in terms of management as Novo Nordisk way, adds lot of pride and meaning to my work and life.” (Respondent 9)
- “Intellectual stimulation, satisfaction in the work & of course the wealth that I’m able to create.” (Respondent 11)

3. Acknowledgement from higher authorities

- “The scope for initiating new ideas and projects for developing the organisation in terms of human resource and also the motivation and inspiration I get from my seniors and subordinates after having successfully completed my task.” (Respondent 1)
- “To serve and come up to the expectations of the boss. Work is the necessary element of the office timings and are meant to ensure proper functioning within the organization.” (Respondent 6)
- “Acknowledgment & acceptance on achievements at the appropriate time provides the driving force to give your hundred percent. It is also critical that my senior accepts the fact that my efforts are to the maximum.” (Respondent 10)

Q2: Do you believe in God or a higher power, and if so, how do define or describe it?

1. Supreme Power

- “Yes, I have strong faith in that supreme power, which has made me walk through paths I thought I could never surpass, just to help me reach the right place in my life. I define my lord as the only thing I can blindly believe; I need not even wish for things, I believe, he has always had the best in store for me”. (Respondent 1)
- “Adwaitham – Everything is the manifestation of the higher power, including us.” (Respondent 3)

2. Source of Creation

- “There is a definite source of creation of this universe, it may be in the form of energy or any other form but it is an intelligent entity. Everything in the universe is part of that super power. It may keep changing the forms but ultimately goes and merge with the super power. That is what we call aatma and param aatma.” (Respondent 2)
- “I believe in God. I believe that Jesus is my Creator and my Heavenly Father and Prayer is the Fuel for my Life.” (Respondent 13)

3. Ray of Hope & Support

- “I feel His existence, He stops me if anything is going wrong, and He gives me signals that turn into the rays of hope.” (Respondent 4)
- “It’s the source, which gives a sense of support at the times of need. We may set ourselves accountable to him.” (Respondent 6)

Q3: What meaning does religion have for you and how important is it in your life?

1. Set of Rules

- “As per me, religion has played a very vital role in human life, as it has guidelines and set of instructions that helps man to live a civilized and beautiful life. It also helps the person to realize the goals of life and how one can become eternally immortal or attain salvation. Religions have inspired me a lot to survive my difficult days and the best part is, I don’t stick to one religion for help. I refer all and follow what suits my nature, being a little disloyal by not sticking to one, but that has been comfortable for me.” (Respondent 1)

- “Religion is nothing but a set of principles that enable us to reach the destiny in a defined manner. How "Pancha Boodham" is important for this world, the same is religion for me.” (Respondent 7)
- “Religion is the guidepost to life. Religion is highly important in my life.” (Respondent 13)

2. Part of Identity

- “Religion is part of my identity.” (Respondent 6)
- “As per ancient Hindu texts I have lot of respect for Hindu religion. I feel our upbringing and family values we choose to stand up for is a reflection of our religion and culture has taught us.” (Respondent 9)

3. Divides People

- “Religion is a column in every form & it is manmade thing to divide people. Like every human being in today’s world, you like to spell your religion, purely for security & I am no exception to the rule.” (Respondent 10)

Q4: What meaning does spirituality have for you and how important is it in your life?

1. Way to Peace/Solace

- “Spirituality is indeed important to keep mind stable. To stay calm, and not to lose temper in important situations.” (Respondent 4)
- “It holds very true in my life and is very important. Spirituality is the something abstract and gives solace and meaning to human life.” (Respondent 6)
- “It is very important for me. As per world health definition of health also, spirituality is a very important element in a person’s emotional and mental wellbeing.” (Respondent 9)

2. Connection

- “Spirituality means connecting with your soul beyond religion and rituals. Spirituality is identity of every human being, even if he is not practicing it.” (Respondent 2)
- “Spirituality is a mean to achieve my eternal life.” (Respondent 7)
- “Spirituality is to have my mind, body & soul in harmony and in sync with God’s will. It is extremely significant in my life.” (Respondent 13)

3. Personal Experience

- “Spirituality is reflecting on one’s self and how everything around affects and impacts our behavior, lives as such...” (Respondent 3)
- “Spirituality, for me, is a personal experience. So that factor of personalization has made it very important in my life.” (Respondent 8)

Q5: Do you see a difference between religion and spirituality, and if so, what is the difference?

1. Yes, there is a difference

- “Yes it has great difference, I believe, as days went by, religion has narrowed down to class/ grades and even identity which is wrong, religion is the best thing to streamline your lifestyle. And spirituality has nothing to do with religion, one can be spiritually inclined only if he / she thinks about attaining self-realization by various methods.” (Respondent 1)
- “Religion is about structures, scriptures, and rules which might not be relevant all the times. Gods of the past are no longer Gods now and Gods of the present will not be Gods tomorrow. Spirituality – peace that comes from reflection will remain...” (Respondent 3)
- “Yes, both are different. Religion is a way of practicing a particular way of living. And spirituality doesn’t bind anyone to follow any particular way to practice the art of living.” (Respondent 5)
- “Religion is way to do things. Spirituality is the connect of your soul and mind for the very purpose of your existence.” (Respondent 6)
- “Religion – an institutional set-up with rules, regulations, customs, rituals and practices. Spirituality – personalized experiences, which take you into the essence of that Higher Power.” (Respondent 8)
- “Religion today is a weapon used by the caretakers of that faith to divide people & build hatred. Spirituality is more about getting some quiet & peace to reflect on one's surroundings. Today the whole concept is mixed & it is becoming a pull factor that caretakers are using to build numbers.” (Respondent 10)
- “Religion is a word which has been taught to us, or either we can say this can change from one person to another person (one country to another country) but on the other side, Spirituality is having a definite definition which leads

individuals to their internal satisfaction and help them to connect with their soul. And connection between soul and body is known as spirituality.”

(Respondent 12)

2. No difference

- “Both are two rails of a track. Spirituality shall not exist without religion in one’s heart.” (Respondent 7)
- “Personally, I don’t see a difference.” (Respondent 11)

Q6: During your workday, do you engage in spiritual activities such as prayer, short meditation, quiet reflection, reading spiritual literature, for instance? If you do, then please describe.

1. Prayers/Meditation/Reading etc.

- “Yes, I do. I read a short paragraph or an enlightening write-up from a subscribed online spiritual magazine as speaking tree.” (Respondent 5)
- “Quiet Reflection.” (Respondent 6)
- “Through my prayers, I invite the eternal force to help in my work & ensure delivery with satisfaction.” (Respondent 7)
- “When I need instant positive energy during my hectic work-schedule, I always do deep breathing and chanting Gayatri-Mantra, which actually demolish negative aura around me, and help me to develop the positive aura towards the Golden color i.e. positive energy to channelize towards me.” (Respondent 12)
- “Yes, I pray for 10 minutes - every day while at home and for 3 minutes while at office at the start of the work. I meditate once in a week and I read spiritual literature at least once in a month.” (Respondent 13)

Q7: Would you like your workplace to provide a space (such as a “quiet room,” etc.) where employees can go for quiet reflection during the day? Explain why or why not.

1. Good Idea

- “Yes, I agree to this idea, most of the time, employees feel frustrated and uneasy with their monotonous nature of work and thus, it becomes important for them to take a break, not only physically, but mentally too. Having a quiet room will help them to rejuvenate their thoughts, revive their ability to bear their stress and also can disconnect themselves from their mundane thoughts

for some while and then get back to their work desk ever so fresh.”
(Respondent 1)

- “Yes – If used well, this can increase the productivity to a great extent.”
(Respondent 3)
- “Yes. A quiet place to meditate & reinvent the energy that is required for the day.” (Respondent 7)
- “Yes, that will be a nice Idea to embrace. People need room these days, because corporate life is mugged with so much dissatisfaction, hectic schedule, internal roughness and an idea like a quiet room will help them to improve their concentration power and moreover to burst their negative energy. This we can understand by the theory of TAPSYA in Himalayas. Himalayas is a place at very high altitude and pressure is very low where negativity can't stand for a long. So, to delete their negativity from its core, saints used to go for Tapasya. And you will be surprised to know, Temple/Church/ Mosque are the modern form of this meditation room where people can go and release their negativity easily.” (Respondent 12)

2. Concerns

- “You do not need artificial means to connect to yourself / GOD. You can be with HIM all the time while engaging yourself in different activities. If you are really looking for a physical enabling space then it is branhm Muhurt in the morning when you have total piece with no sound or light disturbance.”
(Respondent 2)
- “I don't think there is a need to have quiet room, being honest with work can help.” (Respondent 4)
- “No, I don't think it's needed, I can do it in my own cubicle. I feel comfortable there.” (Respondent 5)
- “I don't think so . . . the reason being it can be used (by most) & misused by individuals (a few), which can cause disharmony & friction between people, especially in our country where religion is so diverse & we have so many Gods.” (Respondent 10)
- “No. I don't think that is necessary. Religion or spirituality is a very personal concept that should be left at home & not brought to the workplace.”
(Respondent 11)

Q8: Would you like for your workplace to provide opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, etc. for employees to actively express their spirituality at work? Explain why or why not.

1. Good Idea

- “Spirituality is universal and there are no different individual spirituality. It is the human values and their practice that may vary. A good organization can expose their employees to these values by engaging them in service activities.” (Respondent 2)
- “Yes. It gives many new insights.” (Respondent 6)
- “Yes, in fact our University organizes such kind of workshops on regular interval. And personally I also used to conduct YAGYA / HAVAN in my company and all company workers feel very happy after these type of events, which is actually a kind of workshop for them where they can translate their knowledge and energy with some eminent personality whose aura is near to golden color (Buddhist theory of golden theory).” (Respondent 12)

2. Concerns

- “May be not – Spirituality needs to come from within, general inputs might be given.” (Respondent 3)
- “I don’t feel it should be there. Spirituality comes from within. It should not be imposed.” (Respondent 5)
- “Sincerely it’s not required to be expressed in a meetings or seminars about spirituality in an organization. Rather it should be applied internally by one self for their concentration & goodness towards others in a work environment.” (Respondent 7)
- “I do not much favor workshops or seminars to express spirituality in workplaces, since each one will be of a different view. Since spirituality is personalized experiences, only employees of the same wavelength will find it interesting to share their views if time permits. In depth discussions, workshops and seminars can be held on concepts but may not be that fruitful on the expressions of personalized spirituality.” (Respondent 8)
- “I don’t expect that from company. But respecting people for their upbringing and not taking an employees’ behavior wrong in the name of company culture,

project assumptions or their lessons learnt in life is what I expect from company.” (Respondent 9)

Q9: How do you react/respond when someone at the workplace says something negative to you?

1. Smile/Ignore

- “I smile a lot, and therefore, I have seldom experience of such situations. Most of the time, I take it in a funny way and respond with a humour and end it there. Coz, I don’t like to keep such things occupying my thoughts, having a humorous end to the conversation saves my relationship with that colleague and he / she keeps an amiable approach to me every next time we meet.” (Respondent 1)
- “I would not give an instant reaction & optimistically ignore if it doesn’t carry any value to me.” (Respondent 7)

2. Feel Bad

- “Feel bad - See the merit in what the persons says and ask him/her to give me objective points.” (Respondent 3)
- “First, I feel bad, but then I realize who said that... If it’s from a person who is always negative... Then it hardly matters... But if it’s from a genuine person, I try to find am I wrong, if I am I try to improve.” (Respondent 5)
- “Feel bad...generally don’t react at that time.” (Respondent 6)
- “Being a human, it’s quite natural to react for negative slang or negative wordings. But truly speaking, I don’t mind this thing until and unless it hurts my image in public.” (Respondent 12)

3. Respond Rationally

- “There is bound to be a reaction. Since I practice Rational Emotive Therapy, I am able to pull back myself before reaching a position of no return.” (Respondent 2)
- “I really try and give them time to people and situations. I don’t react. I try my level best to respond to people both personally and professionally.” (Respondent 9)

4. Analyze quietly

- “I try to analyze the reason, if it is really because of my mistake/fault, I accept and try to improve. If it is out of anger or jealousy, I ignore. I can save my energy and use to somewhere else.” (Respondent 4)
- “I will check to see, if I deserve that negative, in a constructive way. If helpful for me to grow, I shall accept it positively, if not I will treat those words as just noise.” (Respondent 8)
- “Concern. What did I do wrong? What’s the motive?” (Respondent 11)
- “I listen – filter - take in the constructive input if any – if there is no such input – will ignore. But if this is becoming a pattern - will ask the intent of such remarks and retaliate aptly.” (Respondent 13)

Q10: How do you react/respond when someone at the workplace says something positive to you?

1. Feel Good, Express Gratitude

- “I warmly thank the person for his interest in expressing his positive views and most of the time, this little act of appreciation helps me get a good colleague along with a great idea the person suggests. I always note such feedbacks so that I can use it as and when required.” (Respondent 1)
- “Feel good – Thank the person, may be say something good about the person then and there.” (Respondent 3)
- “I feel good, motivated and happy.” (Respondent 5)
- “If you deserve some appreciation after involving yourself for some hard/smart work, in that case it really boosts me and encourages me to deliver something more meaningful to the same domain.” (Respondent 12)

2. Accept in a Neutral Manner

- “I accept the same with an open mind & take it as a step forward.” (Respondent 7)
- “I take it in my stride and move.” (Respondent 9)
- “Tend to take it at face value, depending on the individual.” (Respondent 10)

Q11: Is your workplace communication receiver-centric? If yes, how do you make it so?

1. Yes

- “Communication is a two way process where transmitter and receiver have to be on same frequency for effective communication.” (Respondent 2)

- “Yes...because I am a good listener.” (Respondent 6)
- “Yes, it is receiver-centric. Among us in the workplace, each one provides a space for this receiver-centric atmosphere.” (Respondent 8)
- “Yes, I emphathize with the receiver before responding.” (Respondent 12)
- “Yes. Win win relationship with all to the possible extent.” (Respondent 13)

2. No

- “No, my workplace hasn’t yet developed that culture, but we are trying to inculcate that mode of communication by sending timely communication mails to employees on special occasions.” (Respondent 1)
- “It would be adventurous to say yes. In private organization one has to follow the orders irrespective of willingness. Not every time anyone gets a chance to have communication receiver centric.” (Respondent 4)
- “All the communications need not carry the exclusive meaning as receiver – centric. It is situation oriented.” (Respondent 7)
- “Workplace can never be that way, it is individuals who can make it that way, the onus on which lies with the team leader. As much as a company may spell out the pathway, if individuals opt to change the track, there is nothing a company can do about it.” (Respondent 10)

Q12: Is your choice of words while communicating at the workplace a result of your belief in spirituality? If yes, why do you feel so?

1. Yes

- “Yes, I believe it is. Because being spiritually inclined has helped me to keep myself at cool even at undesired situations. And I have colleagues who loves my presence at all times, and that’s how I can conclude of having a positive line of communication and interaction with my colleagues. And being an HR person, at the time of my appointment, HR seemed to be a nightmare to all of them, it took some time, but I have succeeded to change their belief.” (Respondent 1)
- “Yes, I take care that communication is at workplace should be professional. No one has a right to cross certain borders. When I believe in spirituality, I don’t allow myself to use harsh words.” (Respondent 4)

- “Yes, because spirituality lets me choose the words which should not harm or negatively affect people.” (Respondent 5)
- “Yes. Spirituality helps us to be more understanding, tolerant and selfless.” (Respondent 8)
- “Yes, I believe this very strongly that spirituality helps you to develop your personality and collections of words come with more positive energy. As I am born and brought up in a family whose roots are connected to Arya-Samaj culture and I have learnt so many things during my childhood especially after we lost our Mother in 2000, this spirituality held me tightly and helped me a lot to groom my vocabulary so emotionally and made me so strong and proactive in a different way.” (Respondent 12)
- “Yes. To a good extent. I tend to use positive and encouraging words as I communicate. I will not use harsh or threatening words.” (Respondent 13)

2. No

- “Spirituality can only be an integral part of the communication but should not be a prime factor in terms of choosing a word or phrase while communicating.” (Respondent 7)
- “Not really.” (Respondent 10)

Q13: Is your workplace communication spontaneous or a result of your inner spiritual nature?

1. Spontaneous

- “It’s spontaneous.” (Respondent 5)
- “In an organizational environment communication should be a measured & required one. Inner spiritual nature need not be a part of each & every communication.” (Respondent 7)

2. Result of Inner Spiritual Nature

- “It used to be spontaneous at one time now it is with love and understanding.” (Respondent 2)
- “Many a times, it’s not spontaneous, I generally take time. It’s result of inner spiritual nature.” (Respondent 4)
- “Like I told you before I respond, don’t react. So it’s a flow of my compiled thoughts.” (Respondent 9)

- “No, it’s not spontaneous at all. Because spontaneous reaction can’t be positive and full of energy every time in any situation. I find myself every time very energetic and full of positive and creative thoughts with me.” (Respondent 12)

3. Spontaneous but out of Spiritual Temperament

- “Most of the time its spontaneous and very rarely, I have come across bitter conversations at my work place. All credit goes to my routine activities of practicing spirituality.” (Respondent 1)
- “It’s spontaneous and since we are grounded in spirituality, communication springs from that aspect too, though we may not be using those terms.” (Respondent 8)
- “It is spontaneous – but with a light tinge of spirituality at times J – as what is in core heart surfaces occasionally.” (Respondent 13)

Q14: Does individual belief in spirituality at workplace facilitate in being a considerate communicator? How?

1. Yes

- “Yes, I definitely believe, it does. Having a close connection to one’s self can always help the speaker think before he speaks out as he become well aware of what he speaks and what effect it is going to have at the receiving end.” (Respondent 1)
- “More reflection helps to be a better person and a better communicator.” (Respondent 3)
- “Yes. I can analyze the comment, I think before I speak and it saves me from lot of problems, people value your opinion.” (Respondent 4)
- “It might. Because spirituality’s first teaching is to be considerate to all living being. If your communication is a negating thought or hurting means you are spiritually not right.” (Respondent 5)
- “Yes. You can put yourself in other’s shoes and have realistic expectations and be a better negotiator and mostly create a win-win situation. Otherwise also take things in your stride and move and tell yourself whatever happens..... God is with me to give me the best I’m yet to deserve.” (Respondent 9)

- “Yes. You never think that - you are the ultimate person – as you know, it is by God’s grace – you are what you are now.” (Respondent 13)

2. No

- “Even if you are spiritual, it does not mean that you are a good communicator. You need communication skills for effective communication, your spirituality can help you add love and understanding to your communication.” (Respondent 2)
- “Spirituality in work place is definitely a positive factor for one self & towards the organization & its growth. But at the same time it cannot exist in all communications in a work environment” (Respondent 7)
- “No. Spirituality can make people intolerant to people of other religion, faith or spirituality.” (Respondent 11)

Q15: Can an empathetic individual find it easy to be receiver-centric in workplace communication? How?

85% of the respondents accepted that an empathetic individual finds it easy to be receiver-centric in workplace communication.

- “Empathy, for a receiver – centric communication at workplace can be helpful. The empathetic ones will have the competency of communicating the exact way a receiver would like to hear from the sender. Moreover, such people can analyse the situation and accordingly communicate without hurting the receiver’s expectations.” (Respondent 1)
- “An empathetic individual may avoid pitfalls in receiving a communication, nothing beyond this.” (Respondent 2)
- “Receiver centric communication is easy for empathetic individual. Empathy starts from good listening practice and understanding the views of person.” (Respondent 4)
- “Yes. Empathetically it might carry meaning & value in communication.” (Respondent 7)
- “An empathetic individual can be receiver-centric depending on the words he/she chooses to communicate.” (Respondent 8)
- “Yes, as per my view one individual who is more compassionate can find it easier to be a receiver-centric in workplace communication. Because

kindhearted people can't manipulate the things and can handle the work-pressure more easily as compared to others.” (Respondent 12)

DISCUSSION

Overall, the data analysis reveals the following themes:

1. Self-satisfaction

Most of the participants were interested to connect spirituality within themselves rather than the community or others but they were sure that there is a difference between religion and spirituality. Even by the meaning and purpose of work they were defined, it contributed to self-satisfaction, where some of them connected it with the expectation by society and organization.

2. Belief System

For all participants, irrespective of which religion they followed, religion and spirituality is a part of their belief system. Most of them believed that the spirituality is very influential to control their everyday communication and interaction. It has the potential to control negative emotions or spontaneous reactions.

3. Mental wellbeing

The participants had a strong opinion that spirituality does enable positive communication. While facing a positive or negative response from people, it helps them to control their emotions and accept the reactions properly. Thus, their belief in spirituality is contributing to develop a positive attitude among them.

4. Managing Communication

Most of them opined that spirituality can manage thought process, listening and analyzing skills and can create energy also; and accepted that these skills are vital while communicating with people.

Since spirituality contribute towards positive interaction and mental wellbeing of participants, majority of them were not interested to bring those kinds of activities to the work place. 50% of them disagreed with this concept because they have a strong opinion that in work place, individual skills and capability will enhance our work performance rather than our beliefs, however the other 50% felt it could be a stimulus at work to perform better.

While discussing whether one's choice of words while communicating at workplace is a result of one's belief in spirituality, the word 'positive' referenced by participants in various ways is a value shared by them. It indicates that people with a spiritual bent of mind make

every attempt to choose an appropriate positive word while communicating, even subconsciously. Rodriguez (2001) posits that taking a spiritual view of communication focuses on what human beings share in common.

If one considers that “positive” and “negative” sentences speak of outcomes in communication, then we can look to 9 participants who, used the word “good,” “grateful”, and “thanks” while responding to the question on how they reacted when someone said positive about them. This indicates that positive comments generally lead to positive responses except in case of participant 9, who takes positive sentences in her stride and moves on and feels that such sentences might be flattery from peers.

Most of the male participants have different opinions about relation with spirituality and you-attitude in workplace communication. Contrary to female participants, they disagreed to take spirituality at workplace. To the question of facing a negative opinion about them, most of the male participants stated that it is difficult for them to accept that situation, and that it created a bad feeling. The male participants strongly agreed that for developing consideration in workplace communication, more than spirituality, skill in the use of appropriate words, tact, and empathy is required. There was no visible contrast observed when other demographic details were taken into account like: age group, educational qualification, work experience, type of industry/organization.

CONCLUSION

Results of this study directly address that regardless of whether individuals follow an organized religion, alternative practice or create a spiritual orientation to life from a variety of experiences, respondents expressed deep desire to practice positive, productive, respectful and receiver-centric communication. And though they were not always successful, respondents spoke about the ideal of mediating communication in the workplace through their concept of God, higher power, or a force or energy of that which is greater than oneself and always positive; or turning to their spirituality or religiosity to calm themselves when feeling angry, nervous or afraid, particularly important when the situation is challenging or potentially or directly negative.

Pause and reflect was commonly reported by participants. Respondent 2 said that “there is bound to be a reaction. Since I practice Rational Emotive Therapy, I am able to pull back myself before reaching a position of no return.” Respondent 9 said that she really tried and gave time to people and situations; and “I don’t react.” Respondent 1 bought time by smiling

when faced with a negativity and said, “Most of the time, I take it in a funny way and respond with a humour and end it there.”

Sensitive to the impact of their communication on others in the workplace, then, most interviewees aspire to spontaneously respond to people in a positive, productive manner to establish, maintain or nurture connection with others and to behave in accordance with their religious or spiritual beliefs and practices. Though most report that they are not always successful, they continue to strive for that ideal. Pause and reflect before responding is the action that most interviewees report that they take. Again, doing so exemplifies the wish for connection between themselves and the power or energy that guides their lives and connection to other human beings.

Thus, you-attitude recognizes that communication takes place between real persons, not between robots. The language, therefore, is personal, simple and direct. This personalized experience is most of the times, an outcome of the spiritual bent of mind of an individual, which is put to use subconsciously.

LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study is limited in various areas. First, it is a probe into only 13 participants who do not represent in equal proportion the various demographics. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of the same participants in different states of mind and in different situations can further be explored.

It would further add value if the study makes a comparative analysis of different industries, and different cultures. Finally, there is ample scope for expanding the sample size in future investigation on spirituality and you-attitude in workplace communication.

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