Workplace Spirituality and Readiness for Innovative Education in International Schools of Shaanxi, China: A Pilot Test

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the role of workplace spirituality in enhancing the readiness of academic staff to foster innovative educational practices in international schools in Shaanxi, China. The research employed a structured questionnaire designed to measure seven key constructs: workplace spirituality, readiness for innovative education, organizational justice, cross-cultural competency, work-life balance, school culture and support, and curriculum adaptation. To ensure the feasibility and effectiveness of the research design and methodology, a pilot study was conducted with a sample of 50 academic staff members selected using simple random sampling from various international schools in Shaanxi Province. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were rigorously assessed. Cronbach's alpha values for the constructs ranged from 0.76 to 0.85, demonstrating acceptable to excellent internal consistency. Additionally, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to evaluate the relationships between constructs, confirming the questionnaire's construct validity. The correlation matrix revealed significant positive correlations between workplace spirituality, readiness for innovative education, and school culture and support. The results of this pilot study indicate that the research instrument is both reliable and valid, providing a robust tool for assessing the interplay between workplace spirituality and readiness for innovative education among academic staff in international schools.

These findings have important implications for policy and practice, suggesting that fostering a spiritually enriched work environment can enhance educational innovation. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on workplace spirituality by highlighting its potential influence on educators' preparedness to adopt innovative teaching methods, thereby supporting the continuous improvement of educational practices in international contexts.

Keywords: Workplace spirituality; Readiness for innovative education; Academic staff; International schools; School culture and support.

1. Introduction

Workplace spirituality refers to the integration of an individual's spiritual beliefs and values within the organizational environment, aiming to create a sense of purpose, connectedness, and alignment with organizational values. It encompasses dimensions such as meaningful work, a sense of community, and alignment with personal and organizational values [1].

Workplace spirituality has gained significant attention in recent years due to its positive impact on various aspects of organizational life. Research indicates that a spiritually enriched work environment can lead to numerous benefits, including enhanced job satisfaction, increased employee commitment, improved overall well-being, and a greater sense of purpose and meaning at work [2]. Employees who find meaning and purpose in their work are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. This can lead to greater motivation, productivity, and engagement [3]. A sense of community and alignment with organizational values can foster a deeper commitment to the organization, reducing turnover rates and promoting long-term loyalty [2]. Spiritual well-being is associated with better mental health, lower stress levels, and a more positive outlook on life, contributing to overall well-being and resilience [4]. A supportive and meaningful work environment can enhance creativity and openness to new ideas, which are critical for innovation and continuous improvement [5].

In educational settings, workplace spirituality can play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of academic staff. Educators who experience a sense of purpose and community in their work are more likely to be open to adopting innovative teaching methods and integrating new technologies into their classrooms. This readiness for innovation is essential for maintaining high educational standards and meeting the evolving needs of students [6]. International schools often require educators to continuously update their skills and knowledge to stay aligned with global educational trends. Workplace spirituality can enhance the effectiveness of professional development programs by fostering a positive and supportive learning environment [7]. Educators in international schools need to adapt curricula to suit diverse student populations. A spiritually enriched work environment can support this process by encouraging creativity, collaboration, and a willingness to experiment with new teaching approaches [8].The increasing demand for quality education in China has led to a significant rise in the number of international schools. However, academic staff in these schools face unique challenges, including the need for professional development and curriculum adaptation. This study aims to explore the role of workplace spirituality in enhancing the readiness of academic staff to foster innovative educational practices. Before the main study, a pilot test was conducted to assess the reliability and validity of the research instrument. This research aims to

develop and pilot test a questionnaire assessing workplace spirituality and readiness for innovative education in international schools in Shaanxi, China. The study is motivated by the increasing recognition of the importance of spiritual well-being in the workplace and its potential influence on educators' readiness to embrace innovative teaching methods. A thorough literature review, followed by a structured methodology involving the design, validation, and pilot testing of the questionnaire, is presented. The results highlight key insights into the interplay between workplace spirituality and educational innovation readiness, offering implications for policy and practice in international educational contexts.

2. Methodology

Before commencing the main study, a pilot test was conducted to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of the research design and methodology. The pilot test serves several critical purposes. It allows the researchers to evaluate the clarity and effectiveness of the questionnaire, identify potential issues in data collection, and refine the research design and methodology based on feedback. Conducting a pilot study is a standard practice in research to identify weaknesses in the research design and methodology, thus enhancing the overall quality and effectiveness of the main study [9]. The pilot test involved 50 academic staff members from various international schools in Shaanxi Province. Participants were selected using simple random sampling to ensure a representative sample.

3.1 Sample and Procedures

The pilot test involved a small group of academic staff (n=50) from a selected international school in Shaanxi province. This sample size is considered adequate for a pilot study as it provides enough data to identify issues without requiring the resources of a full-scale study [10]. During the pilot test, the questionnaire was administered to the participants to evaluate the clarity and effectiveness of the questions. Participants were asked to provide feedback on the questionnaire's comprehensibility, length, and any difficulties they encountered while completing it.

3.2 Feedback and Refinement

The feedback obtained from the pilot study was utilized to refine the research design and methodology. Participants' responses highlighted areas where questions were ambiguous or confusing, as well as any logistical issues related to data collection, such as the time required to complete the questionnaire. Adjustments were made to the questionnaire based on this feedback to ensure that it was clear, concise, and easy to complete [11].

3.3. Instrument

The research instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire designed to assess seven key constructs that are crucial in understanding the dynamics of workplace spirituality and readiness for innovative education among academic staff in international schools in Shaanxi, China. Each construct is measured using five questions, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of each area. The constructs and their sources are as follows:

A. Workplace Spirituality

1. Workplace spirituality refers to the recognition and incorporation of employees' spiritual needs and values within the work environment. It encompasses dimensions such as a sense of purpose, meaningful work, and a feeling of connectedness among employees. The questions adapted from [1] focus on these dimensions to gauge the level of spirituality experienced by the staff in their work settings. Below are the sample questions:

1. I feel my work is meaningful.
2. I experience a sense of community in my workplace.
3. My work aligns with my personal values.
4. I feel connected to my colleagues at a deeper level.
5. My workplace supports my spiritual growth.

B. Readiness for Innovative Education

Readiness for innovative education refers to the preparedness and willingness of educators to adopt and implement new teaching strategies, technologies, and educational practices. The [12] provides a framework for assessing this readiness, focusing on factors such as professional development, openness to change, and support for innovation. Sample Questions:

2. I am open to adopting new teaching methods.
3. I regularly integrate technology into my teaching.
4. I feel confident in implementing innovative educational practices.
5. My school provides adequate support for educational innovation.
6. I actively seek out professional development opportunities related to innovation.

C. Organizational Justice

Organizational justice pertains to the perceived fairness of processes and outcomes within an organization. It includes distributive justice (fairness of outcomes), procedural justice (fairness of processes), and interactional justice (fairness in interpersonal interactions). The questions adapted from [13] cover these aspects to assess educators' perceptions of fairness in their workplace. Sample Questions:

1. I believe that outcomes at my workplace are fair.
2. The processes used to make decisions here are fair.
3. I am treated with respect by my supervisors.
4. The workload is distributed fairly among staff members.
5. I trust the decision-making processes in my school.

D. Cross-Cultural Competency

7. Source: Chen, 2019 Cross-cultural competency refers to the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. It involves understanding cultural differences, displaying cultural sensitivity, and adapting behaviors accordingly. The questions adapted from [14] focus on these competencies, which are especially relevant in the diverse environment of international schools. Sample Questions:

1. I am comfortable working with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds.
2. I adapt my communication style when interacting with people from different cultures.
3. I understand and respect cultural differences among my students.
4. I seek to learn about different cultures.
5. I feel confident in handling cultural conflicts in the workplace [14].

E. Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance pertains to the ability to manage work responsibilities alongside personal life and leisure activities. It is crucial for maintaining overall well-being and job satisfaction. The questions adapted from [15] assess the balance that educators are able to maintain between their professional and personal lives. Sample Questions:

1. I am able to balance my work and personal life effectively.
2. My job allows me enough time to spend with my family.
3. I feel that I have enough personal time outside of work.
4. My workplace supports a healthy work-life balance.
5. I rarely feel overwhelmed by my work responsibilities.

F. School Culture and Support

School culture and support refer to the environment and support systems within a school that foster a positive and productive atmosphere for both staff and students. It includes aspects such as leadership support, collegiality, and shared values. The questions adapted from [16] aim to measure the supportive nature of the school culture. Sample Questions:

1. The leadership at my school is supportive.
2. There is a strong sense of teamwork among the staff.
3. The school culture promotes mutual respect.
4. I receive adequate support from my colleagues.
5. The school values align with my personal values.

G. Curriculum Adaptation

Curriculum adaptation refers to the ability to modify and adjust the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of students. It is essential in international schools where students come from various educational backgrounds. The questions adapted from [17] assess the staff's capability and readiness to adapt the curriculum effectively. Sample Questions:

1. I am confident in adapting the curriculum to meet students' needs.
2. I regularly modify my teaching materials to better suit my students.
3. My school supports curriculum innovation and adaptation.
4. I feel equipped to handle diverse learning needs in my classroom.
5. I receive adequate training on curriculum adaptation techniques.

3. Research Procedure

The primary purpose of the pilot test in this study was to evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of the research design and methodology. Conducting a pilot test is a standard practice in research to identify any potential weaknesses or issues before implementing the full-scale study. This step is crucial for refining the research instrument, ensuring that the data collection process is smooth, and validating the constructs being measured. The pilot test helps in identifying ambiguous or confusing questions, logistical issues in data collection, and overall clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire [1]

The pilot test involved 50 academic staff members from various international schools in Shaanxi Province. This sample size was deemed adequate for a pilot study as it provides sufficient data to identify issues without requiring the extensive resources of a full-scale study [2]. Participants were selected using simple random sampling to ensure a representative sample of the target population. This method helps in minimizing selection bias and ensures that the sample reflects the diversity of the academic staff in international schools in Shaanxi.

The data collection for the pilot test was conducted online. An online survey platform was chosen for its efficiency and ability to reach participants easily. The questionnaire was distributed electronically to the selected participants, who were given a specified period to complete it. The online format also facilitated automatic data entry, reducing the potential for human error and making the data analysis process more straightforward.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. They were also provided with instructions on how to complete the questionnaire and were encouraged to provide honest feedback on the clarity and effectiveness of the questions.

4. Results and Analysis

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire are critical for ensuring that it accurately measures the intended constructs. To assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha is used, with a value higher than 0.70 considered acceptable Reference [18]. For validity, content validity is ensured through expert review, and construct validity is assessed using factor analysis. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha for each construct. A coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicates acceptable reliability.

4.1Reliability Analysis

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire are critical for ensuring that it accurately measures the intended constructs. To assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha is used, with a value higher than 0.70 considered acceptable Reference [17]. For validity, content validity is ensured through expert review, and construct validity is assessed using factor analysis. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha for each construct. A coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicates acceptable reliability.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Workplace Spirituality	0.78
Readiness for Innovative Education	0.83
Organizational Justice	0.76
Cross-Cultural Competency	0.82
Work-Life Balance	0.79
School Culture and Support	0.85
Curriculum Adaptation	0.80

The reliability analysis of the questionnaire used in this study, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha, demonstrates that it is a robust tool for assessing various constructs related to workplace spirituality and readiness for innovative education among academic staff in international schools. Each construct measured by the questionnaire displayed a Cronbach's Alpha value above the threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable to excellent internal consistency and reliability.

Workplace spirituality, which measures the extent to which individuals find meaning and purpose in their work, experience a sense of community, and feel alignment with organizational values, had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.78. This value indicates good internal consistency, suggesting that the items reliably measure the construct of workplace spirituality. Such a level of reliability is acceptable because it demonstrates that the scale items are sufficiently correlated to represent a cohesive construct.

The construct of readiness for innovative education, which assesses the preparedness and willingness of educators to adopt and implement new teaching strategies, technologies, and educational practices, exhibited a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83. This indicates excellent reliability, meaning the items on this scale consistently measure educators' readiness for innovation. This high level of reliability justifies the use of this construct as a reliable measure in evaluating innovative educational practices.

Organizational justice, which pertains to the perceived fairness of processes, outcomes, and interpersonal interactions within an organization, showed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.76. This demonstrates good reliability, indicating that the items measuring organizational justice are consistent and accurately reflect the fairness perceptions of the respondents. Such reliability is acceptable as it ensures that the construct is being measured

reliably across different respondents.

Cross-cultural competency, referring to the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds, had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.82. This signifies high reliability, suggesting that the items are consistently measuring cross-cultural competency. This high reliability is crucial in diverse environments such as international schools, where cultural competence is essential for effective teaching and communication.

The work-life balance construct, which measures the ability of individuals to manage work responsibilities alongside personal life and leisure activities, demonstrated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.79. This value indicates good reliability, meaning the items reliably measure the construct of work-life balance. This level of reliability ensures that the construct is consistently assessed, which is important for understanding how well educators manage their work and personal life.

School culture and support, which refer to the environment and support systems within a school that foster a positive and productive atmosphere, exhibited a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.85. This indicates excellent reliability, demonstrating that the items are highly consistent in measuring school culture and support. This high reliability is critical for accurately assessing the supportive nature of the school environment and its impact on staff.

Lastly, the construct of curriculum adaptation, which refers to the ability to modify and adjust the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of students, had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.80. This signifies good reliability, indicating that the items reliably measure the construct of curriculum adaptation. This reliability is essential for evaluating how well educators can adapt their teaching materials and methods to suit different student needs.

Overall, the Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs in this study are above the threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable to excellent reliability. This means that the items within each construct are sufficiently correlated and measure the same underlying concept consistently across different respondents. These high reliability values provide confidence that the questionnaire is a reliable tool for assessing the various constructs related to workplace spirituality and readiness for innovative education among academic staff in international schools. The good reliability for workplace spirituality ensures consistent measurement of the spiritual aspects of the workplace. The excellent reliability for readiness for innovative education supports the consistent assessment of educators' preparedness for innovation. Good reliability for organizational justice confirms consistent measurement of fairness perceptions within the organization. High reliability for cross-cultural competency ensures accurate assessment of cultural competence in diverse school environments. Good reliability for work-life balance indicates consistent measurement of educators' ability to balance work and personal life. Excellent reliability for school culture and support ensures consistent measurement of the supportive nature of the school environment. Good reliability for curriculum adaptation supports the consistent assessment of educators' ability to adapt the curriculum. Collectively, these reliability scores justify the acceptance of the questionnaire as a valid and reliable instrument for the main study, which will explore the relationship between workplace spirituality and academic staff readiness for innovative education in a larger sample.

4.2. Validity Analysis

Construct validity was assessed using Pearson's correlation coefficient to evaluate the relationships between constructs. The corrected item-total correlation was also used to ensure each item accurately represented its construct.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Construct	WPS	RIE	OJ	CCC	WLB	SCS	CA
Workplace Spirituality	1.00	0.68	0.52	0.61	0.59	0.65	0.60
Readiness for Innovative Education	0.68	1.00	0.49	0.62	0.58	0.63	0.66
Organizational Justice	0.52	0.49	1.00	0.54	0.50	0.55	0.53
Cross-Cultural Competency	0.61	0.62	0.54	1.00	0.57	0.64	0.60
Work-Life Balance	0.59	0.58	0.50	0.57	1.00	0.62	0.59
School Culture and Support	0.65	0.63	0.55	0.64	0.62	1.00	0.64
Curriculum Adaptation	0.60	0.66	0.53	0.60	0.59	0.64	1.00

The analysis of the correlation matrix reveals important insights into the relationships between the seven constructs measured in this study, which include Workplace Spirituality (WPS), Readiness for Innovative Education (RIE), Organizational Justice (OJ), Cross-Cultural Competency (CCC), Work-Life Balance (WLB), School Culture and Support (SCS), and Curriculum Adaptation (CA). Each construct was found to have significant correlations with the others, indicating strong construct validity and interrelatedness within the educational context of international schools in Shaanxi, China.

Workplace Spirituality (WPS): The highest correlations for Workplace Spirituality were observed with Readiness for Innovative Education (0.68) and School Culture and Support (0.65). This suggests that a strong sense of spirituality in the workplace is closely related to educators' readiness to adopt innovative practices and the overall supportive culture of the school. These findings imply that when educators feel a deeper sense of purpose and community in their work, they are more likely to be open to and supportive of innovative educational methods. Additionally, the moderate correlations with Cross-Cultural Competency (0.61), Work-Life Balance (0.59), and Curriculum Adaptation (0.60) indicate that workplace spirituality positively influences these constructs as well, albeit to a slightly lesser extent. The lowest correlation for Workplace Spirituality is with Organizational Justice (0.52), which still suggests a significant, though less pronounced, relationship between perceived fairness in the organization and spiritual well-being at work.

Readiness for Innovative Education (RIE): The construct of Readiness for Innovative Education showed the highest correlation with Curriculum Adaptation (0.66). This finding highlights that educators who are prepared to embrace innovative education practices are also adept at adapting curricula to meet the diverse needs of their students. Additionally, there were significant correlations with Workplace Spirituality (0.68), Cross-Cultural Competency (0.62), School Culture and Support (0.63), and Work-Life Balance (0.58). These results suggest that readiness for innovation is strongly associated with a positive and supportive work environment, cultural competence, and a balanced approach to work and personal life. The lowest correlation for Readiness for Innovative Education was with Organizational Justice (0.49), which still indicates a meaningful connection

between fairness perceptions and readiness for innovation, though less strongly than the other factors.

Organizational Justice (OJ): Organizational Justice demonstrated moderate correlations with all other constructs, with the highest being with School Culture and Support (0.55) and Cross-Cultural Competency (0.54). This indicates that perceptions of fairness are related to the overall school culture and the ability to manage cultural differences effectively. The correlations with Workplace Spirituality (0.52) and Readiness for Innovative Education (0.49) were lower but still significant, suggesting that fair treatment within the organization is linked to these constructs, though not as strongly. These findings highlight that while fairness is important, it may be slightly less influential in driving innovation and spiritual well-being compared to other constructs.

Cross-Cultural Competency (CCC): Cross-Cultural Competency exhibited high correlations with Readiness for Innovative Education (0.62), School Culture and Support (0.64), and Workplace Spirituality (0.61). This indicates that competence in managing cultural diversity is strongly linked to readiness for innovation, a supportive school culture, and a spiritual workplace. Moderate correlations were also observed with Work-Life Balance (0.57) and Curriculum Adaptation (0.60), suggesting that cross-cultural competency is related to these areas, though to a lesser degree. The lowest correlation for Cross-Cultural Competency was with Organizational Justice (0.54), still indicating a significant connection.

Work-Life Balance (WLB): Work-Life Balance showed moderate to high correlations with all constructs, with the highest being with School Culture and Support (0.62) and Cross-Cultural Competency (0.57). This suggests that balancing work and personal life is strongly associated with a supportive school environment and cultural competence. Significant correlations were also found with Workplace Spirituality (0.59), Readiness for Innovative Education (0.58), and Curriculum Adaptation (0.59), indicating that work-life balance positively influences these areas. The lowest correlation for Work-Life Balance was with Organizational Justice (0.50), though it is still significant.

School Culture and Support (SCS): School Culture and Support demonstrated the highest correlations with Workplace Spirituality (0.65), Readiness for Innovative Education (0.63), and Cross-Cultural Competency (0.64). This indicates that a supportive and positive school culture is strongly linked to these constructs. Significant correlations were also observed with Work-Life Balance (0.62) and Curriculum Adaptation (0.64), suggesting that a positive school culture supports these areas as well. The lowest correlation for School Culture and Support was with Organizational Justice (0.55), which still shows a meaningful connection.

Curriculum Adaptation (CA): The construct of Curriculum Adaptation had high correlations with Readiness for Innovative Education (0.66), School Culture and Support (0.64), and Workplace Spirituality (0.60). This indicates that the ability to adapt curricula is strongly linked to readiness for innovation, a supportive school culture, and a spiritual workplace. Significant correlations were also found with Cross-Cultural Competency (0.60) and Work-Life Balance (0.59), suggesting that curriculum adaptation is related to these constructs. The lowest correlation for Curriculum Adaptation was with Organizational Justice (0.53), though still significant.

The results indicate significant correlations between all constructs, suggesting good construct validity. The higher

correlations between Workplace Spirituality, Readiness for Innovative Education, and School Culture and Support highlight the interconnectedness of these constructs in the educational context. The moderate correlations with Organizational Justice suggest that while fairness perceptions are important, they are slightly less influential compared to other constructs in this study.

The significant correlations among the constructs support the validity of the questionnaire and its ability to measure the intended dimensions effectively. These results emphasize the importance of fostering a spiritually enriched work environment, promoting readiness for innovation, ensuring organizational justice, enhancing cross-cultural competency, supporting work-life balance, cultivating a positive school culture, and encouraging curriculum adaptation to improve overall educational outcomes in international schools. By addressing these interconnected factors, international schools in Shaanxi, China, can create a more supportive and innovative educational environment for both staff and students.

5. Conclusion

The pilot test results indicate that the questionnaire demonstrates acceptable reliability and validity. Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs were above 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. The correlation matrix shows significant positive correlations between constructs, supporting the questionnaire's construct validity. The pilot testing of the questionnaire for assessing workplace spirituality and readiness for innovative education in international schools of Shaanxi, China, demonstrated its reliability and validity. The findings suggest that the questionnaire is a reliable and valid tool for the main study. Future research will use this instrument to explore the relationship between workplace spirituality and academic staff readiness for innovative education in a larger sample.

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