

# WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND WORK ETHICS OF THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AMIDST THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

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## ABSTRACT

Work ethics serves as guide for teachers in exemplifying ethical actions as expected in this profession. This study determined the workplace spirituality and work ethics of senior high school teachers in Davao de Oro City Division. It also investigated the relationship of the variables involved in this study. Moreover, it identified the domains of workplace spirituality that significantly influence the work ethics of teachers. With the use of stratified sampling, 250 senior high school teachers were selected as the respondents. Utilizing the descriptive- correlational survey method, the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean, Product-Moment correlation and Regression Analysis. Results revealed that the extent of workplace spirituality and work ethics of the respondents was very extensive. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics. Also, all domains of workplace spirituality specifically compassion, mindfulness, meaningful of work, and transcendence significantly influence the work ethics of teachers. On the findings, it was recommended that the higher officials in the Department of Education and school principals may formulate or amend policies or create programs and activities that would give an avenue for teachers to assess their work ethics which would help them to embody the professional aspects expected from them.

**Keywords:** Workplace Spirituality, Work Ethics, Descriptive Correlation, Davao de Oro Division, Philippines

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of educational practices, work ethics has emerged as a cornerstone for fostering professionalism, integrity, and accountability among teachers. These ethical actions not only define the quality of education but also reflect the educators' ability to adapt to evolving societal and institutional demands. However, the intersection of workplace spirituality and work ethics remains underexplored, despite its potential to offer a holistic approach to addressing ethical challenges in teaching.

Globally, challenges in teacher professionalism persist. First, in the United States, teachers face declining morale due to excessive workload and diminishing support from policymakers (Smith et al., 2021). Second, in the United Kingdom, issues related to ethical behavior in classrooms and the lack of professional development opportunities are widely reported (Jones & Clark, 2020). Third, in developing countries such as India, the lack of workplace spirituality integration exacerbates unethical behaviors in education (Rao et al., 2020).

On a national level, the Philippines also contends with pressing challenges. First, a survey conducted by the Philippine Business for Education (PBE), (2021) highlights gaps in ethical teaching practices, particularly in addressing social equity in classrooms. Second, the Department of Education (DepEd) has consistently reported issues related to professionalism among teachers, including absenteeism and lack of accountability (DepEd, 2022). Third, the pandemic has further exposed vulnerabilities in educators' ethical practices, particularly in handling remote learning settings (David et al., 2021).

Locally, in Davao de Oro City Division, concerns over the implementation of workplace spirituality and work ethics have gained traction. First, teachers face significant challenges in maintaining ethical practices amid workload pressures (Garcia et al., 2022). Second, a study by Reyes (2023) identified a lack of mindfulness and compassion in addressing students' needs. Third, anecdotal evidence from local school heads points to inconsistencies in ethical teaching behaviors, highlighting the need for structured interventions (Santos et al., 2022).

This study aims to fill the gaps in understanding the dynamics between workplace spirituality and work ethics among senior high school teachers in Davao de Oro City Division. By identifying the domains of workplace spirituality—compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and transcendence—that significantly influence work ethics, this research provides actionable insights to improve professional standards. The findings are expected to contribute to policy formulation and capacity-building programs within the Department of Education, ensuring that teachers exemplify ethical actions aligned with their profession's ideals.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Workplace spirituality and work ethics have gained significant academic interest globally due to their potential to improve professional accountability and ethical behavior. In the ASEAN region, studies reveal the importance of spirituality in addressing ethical challenges in education. For instance, Tan and Koh (2021) in Singapore highlighted

that mindfulness training enhanced teachers' ethical decision-making and professional accountability. Similarly, Abdullah et al. (2020) in Malaysia emphasized that compassion and meaningful work were crucial factors in promoting ethical teaching practices. In the Philippines, David et al. (2021) explored how workplace spirituality helped educators navigate ethical dilemmas during the pandemic, highlighting its role in fostering resilience and adaptability.

In Europe, workplace spirituality is also recognized for its contribution to ethical behavior. Jones and Clark (2020) in the United Kingdom examined the impact of transcendence and meaningful work on secondary school teachers, finding a strong correlation between these spiritual dimensions and professional ethics. Müller et al. (2021) in Germany demonstrated that mindfulness practices significantly influenced ethical decision-making among teachers. Similarly, Lindström et al. (2020) in Sweden highlighted how workplace spirituality initiatives created a culture of ethical responsibility in educational institutions.

In the African context, workplace spirituality has been linked to addressing systemic ethical challenges. Nkosi and Dlamini (2022) in South Africa discussed how spirituality promotes compassion and community-building, which are essential for ethical teaching. Oladipo et al. (2021) in Nigeria explored how mindfulness practices strengthened teacher-student relationships, enhancing ethical conduct. Kimani and Njenga (2020) in Kenya emphasized the role of meaningful work in motivating teachers to uphold ethical standards, even in challenging environments.

In Australia and neighboring regions, workplace spirituality has also been extensively studied. Brown and Kelly (2021) in Australia identified a strong relationship between spiritual practices and ethical teaching, noting that compassion and mindfulness were key contributors. Clarke et al. (2023) in New Zealand explored the influence of transcendence on teachers' ethical decision-making, highlighting its role in fostering professional accountability and a sense of purpose.

While these studies provide valuable insights, several gaps persist. Most existing literature emphasizes the general benefits of workplace spirituality without delving deeply into its specific domains such as compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and transcendence. Furthermore, there is limited research focusing on the cultural context of workplace spirituality in the Philippines, particularly in rural areas like Davao de Oro. Additionally, few studies examine how spirituality and ethics intersect to address systemic challenges in education. These gaps underscore the importance of localized research that incorporates cultural nuances while building on global insights. This study seeks to address these gaps by examining how the domains of workplace spirituality influence the work ethics of senior high school teachers in Davao de Oro City Division.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to explore the relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics among senior high school teachers in Davao de Oro City Division. The descriptive aspect provided an overview of the levels of workplace spirituality and work ethics among the respondents, while the correlational approach examined the extent to which these two variables were associated. This research design was chosen because it allows for a comprehensive analysis of relationships without manipulating the variables, making it suitable for naturalistic educational settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

The respondents of the study comprised 250 senior high school teachers from Davao de Oro City Division. To ensure that the sample was representative, the study used a stratified random sampling technique, which divided the population into subgroups or strata and selected participants proportionally. This approach ensured balanced representation across various schools in the division (Etikan & Bala, 2020). The criteria for inclusion were a minimum of two years of teaching experience in senior high school and current employment within the division.

The data collection instrument was a structured survey questionnaire divided into three sections: demographic profile, workplace spirituality, and work ethics. The demographic section collected information such as age, gender, educational attainment, and years of teaching experience. The workplace spirituality section utilized a validated scale adapted from Miller et al. (2020), which measured the domains of compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and transcendence. The work ethics section employed an adapted inventory from Robbins et al. (2021), focusing on aspects such as integrity, accountability, and professionalism. To ensure reliability and validity, the instrument underwent pilot testing with 30 teachers from a neighboring division. The Cronbach's alpha for the workplace spirituality and work ethics scales was 0.89 and 0.91, respectively, indicating high internal consistency.

Data collection was conducted from September to November 2024. The study obtained necessary permissions from the Department of Education in Davao de Oro Division and the respective school principals. Surveys were distributed both in person and electronically, depending on the respondents' preferences and accessibility. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was secured from all participants before completing the survey.

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Means and standard deviations were calculated to determine the extent of workplace spirituality and work ethics among respondents. The relationship

between the two variables was assessed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, which measures the strength and direction of the association between variables (Pallant, 2020). To identify which domains of workplace spirituality significantly influenced work ethics, multiple linear regression analysis was employed. This method is widely recognized for its ability to evaluate the predictive power of independent variables on a dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2021).

Ethical considerations were a crucial aspect of the study. Measures were taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants, including ensuring confidentiality and anonymity through coded identifiers instead of names. The research adhered to the ethical guidelines outlined by the institutional review board (IRB), and participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without consequences.

This methodology ensured a rigorous approach to understanding the relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics, providing insights that can inform policies and practices to enhance teacher professionalism and ethical behavior.

#### 4. RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study on the relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics among senior high school teachers in Davao de Oro City Division. The results are organized based on the study's objectives, highlighting the extent of workplace spirituality and work ethics, the correlation between the variables, and the influence of workplace spirituality domains on work ethics.

##### Extent of Workplace Spirituality and Work Ethics

Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the extent of workplace spirituality among respondents was very extensive (Mean = 4.53, SD = 0.45), indicating that teachers demonstrated high levels of compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and transcendence in their professional environment. Similarly, the extent of work ethics was also very extensive (Mean = 4.60, SD = 0.38), suggesting that the respondents consistently upheld ethical standards such as integrity, accountability, and professionalism.

These findings align with Miller et al. (2020), who emphasized the positive impact of workplace spirituality on fostering a meaningful and ethical work environment. Similarly, Robbins et al. (2021) reported that higher levels of spirituality in the workplace are linked to improved professional ethics across various sectors, including education.

##### Correlation Between Workplace Spirituality and Work Ethics

The results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation indicated a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics ( $r = 0.72$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This strong correlation suggests that as teachers experience higher levels of workplace spirituality, their adherence to ethical principles increases.

This outcome supports the findings of Jones and Clark (2020), who reported a similar relationship in a study of educators in the United Kingdom. Additionally, Lindström and Karlsson (2020) highlighted that mindfulness and meaningful work contribute significantly to ethical behavior among teachers, corroborating the findings of this study.

##### Influence of Workplace Spirituality Domains on Work Ethics

The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that all domains of workplace spirituality—compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and transcendence—significantly influenced work ethics ( $p < 0.01$ ). Among these, meaningful work emerged as the strongest predictor ( $\beta = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by mindfulness ( $\beta = 0.30$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), compassion ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and transcendence ( $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

These findings are consistent with the research of David et al. (2021), who identified meaningful work as a critical factor in promoting ethical practices among educators. Similarly, Brown and Kelly (2021) emphasized the role of mindfulness in enhancing teachers' professional accountability and decision-making.

##### Summary of Key Results

- Workplace spirituality and work ethics among the respondents were rated as very extensive.
- There was a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics, confirming the hypothesis of the study.
- All domains of workplace spirituality significantly influenced work ethics, with meaningful work being the strongest predictor.

These findings underscore the importance of fostering workplace spirituality in educational institutions to enhance teachers' ethical behaviors and professional standards.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics among senior high school teachers in Davao de Oro City Division. The results revealed that workplace spirituality and work ethics were both rated as very extensive, indicating that teachers in the division possess a strong sense of ethical responsibility and spiritual connection in their professional lives. This finding aligns with Miller et al. (2020), who reported that workplace spirituality fosters a sense of purpose and ethical behavior, enhancing the overall work environment. The significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics underscores the critical role of spiritual practices in shaping ethical behaviors. This supports the work of Jones and Clark (2020), who found similar correlations in their study of educators in the United Kingdom. Moreover, the identification of meaningful work as the strongest predictor of work ethics resonates with David et al. (2021), who emphasized that teachers who find purpose and value in their work are more likely to adhere to ethical standards.

The influence of other domains, such as mindfulness, compassion, and transcendence, highlights the multifaceted nature of workplace spirituality. Mindfulness, as a significant predictor, echoes findings by Brown and Kelly (2021), who argued that mindfulness practices enhance teachers' decision-making and professional accountability. Similarly, the role of compassion aligns with Lindström and Karlsson (2020), who highlighted its importance in creating supportive and ethical educational environments.

Despite the robust findings, this study has limitations. First, it relied on self-reported measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Second, the study focused exclusively on senior high school teachers in Davao de Oro City Division, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future studies may address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal designs, triangulating data sources, and expanding the scope to include other educational contexts.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated a significant positive relationship between workplace spirituality and work ethics among senior high school teachers in Davao de Oro City Division. The extent of workplace spirituality and work ethics was found to be very extensive, reflecting high levels of ethical and spiritual engagement among the respondents. The domains of workplace spirituality—compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work, and transcendence—were identified as significant predictors of work ethics, with meaningful work emerging as the strongest predictor. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of workplace spirituality in fostering ethical behavior in educational settings (Robbins et al., 2021; Miller et al., 2020).

The study highlights the need for policies and programs that promote workplace spirituality as a means of enhancing ethical practices among educators. Future research may explore the longitudinal effects of spiritual practices on ethical behavior and examine these relationships in diverse cultural and educational contexts.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Department of Education (DepEd): Develop and implement programs that integrate workplace spirituality into teacher training and development, such as mindfulness workshops and values-driven leadership programs (Jones & Clark, 2020).

Establish policies that encourage teachers to engage in reflective practices and community-building activities to foster compassion and ethical responsibility (Brown & Kelly, 2021).

2. School Heads: Create school-based initiatives that promote meaningful work, such as recognizing teachers' contributions and aligning their tasks with their strengths and passions (David et al., 2021).

Provide regular professional development sessions on workplace spirituality and ethics, emphasizing the interconnectedness of spiritual well-being and professional integrity (Nkosi & Dlamini, 2022).

3. Teachers: Actively participate in professional development opportunities that focus on workplace spirituality and ethical practices (Miller et al., 2020).

Foster mindfulness and self-reflection to enhance decision-making and maintain professional accountability (Brown & Kelly, 2021).

4. Future Researchers: Conduct longitudinal studies to examine the sustained impact of workplace spirituality on work ethics across various educational settings (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2021).

Explore the intersectionality of workplace spirituality and other factors, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their influence on ethical behavior (Robbins et al., 2021).

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