

## **The Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Talent Retention: Evidence from Insurance Sector in Punjab**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – In this competitive era, organizational sustainability is dependent on managing and retaining talented workers, by making the workplace more attractive and meaningful. This becomes possible through workplace spirituality (WS). Therefore, this paper was to analyze the effect of spirituality at workplace constructs; spiritual orientation, alignment of organizational values, compassion and meaningful work on talent retention.

**Methodology**–This cross-sectional study was conducted on 396 respondents from private and public insurance companies operating in Punjab by applying a purposive sampling method. This study used Smart PLS 3.3.3 version software to test hypotheses.

**Findings** – Results of PLS-SEM analysis that spirituality at the workplace construct (spiritual orientation, alignment of organizational values and meaningful work) have statistically significant and positive impact on talent retention. Compassion was insignificantly linked with talent retention in the insurance sector.

**Originality** – The present study provides profound and essential insights for upcoming research and management practices, strengthening the workplace spirituality concept as a promising topic in HRM and organizational behavior field. This research has tested the influence of spirituality at the workplace on talent retention for the first time from the perspective of the insurance sector in Punjab (India). This research uses a unique approach and presents a new insight that provides exclusive findings regarding Indian insurance sector experts.

**Keywords:** workplace spirituality, alignment of organizational values, compassion, meaningful work, spiritual orientation, insurance sector and talent retention

### **1.Introduction**

Managing talent is a main concern in today's world of globalization and stiff competition; however, organizations have challenges in attracting and keeping talent all over the world (Mukherjee et al., 2019; Schuler et al., 2011; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Due to the beginning of a knowledge-based economy, companies are grappling with the main challenge of retaining their talented workforce with tacit knowledge(Charity, 2016; Mou, 2013).

Talented workforces are those, who are responsible for the accomplishment of the business and provide a competitive edge. Although keeping a talented workforce is essential for the achievement of any company (Charity, 2016; Chew & Entekin, 2011). Recent studies indicated academics and researchers have given lesser attention to talent retention (Charity, 2016) and (Stein, 2000; Parker & Wright, 2001). The influence of workplace spirituality on talent retention is an essential lens to undertake this study. The existence of workplace spirituality encourages a sense of responsibility, engagement, and participation (Devendhiran & Wesley, 2017) and (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). As a result of the foregoing debate, it can be concluded that workplace spirituality among employees increased retention and lowered turnover intentions. However, there is a lack of studies that is facilitating the role of spirituality at work on talent retention particularly in Punjab's Insurance Sector. Because it is a high-growth business, the Indian Insurance sector plays a major part in the country's economic growth. The Insurance Industry has witnessed enormous growth and investment opportunities due to occupancy and competitive average rates. Today's service sector workers use not just their minds and hands, but also their hearts and spirits in the activity for which they are compensated. Professionals in the insurance industry spend large portion of their lives, as much as "a quarter or possibly a third of one's waking life" at work (Richman, 2006). Persons find meaning, purpose, and fulfilment when they apply their hearts and spirits to their job (Fernando, 2005). The "ideal workplace" is one in which employees are intentionally and passionately engaged (Rastogi et al., 2018; Honiball et al., 2014; Dernovsek, 2008); where one may freely express their perspective. Such spiritual inclinations tend to enhance engagement, satisfaction and employee retention (Van Mierlo & Bakker, 2018; Jena & Pradhan, 2015; Ashforth & Pratt, 2010). At work, a spiritually- focused culture improves retention and lessening turnover intention (Gull & Doh, 2004; Guillory, 2000). Therefore, this research draws readers' interest in this field, because the retention of skilled professionals is consistently, which is becoming important for the insurance sector. Such capable and experienced professionals not only provide value to the organization but also assist insurance firms in achieving their strategic objectives. However, when these experts leave the company, they leave behind significant information, talents, and expertise, leaving a gap that is difficult to fill. As a result, the following research question is addressed in this paper:

**Does workplace spirituality encourage talent retention in the insurance sector?**

## **2. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Talent Retention**

"Talent retention" is defined as "attracting, identifying, recruiting, developing, motivating, promoting, and retaining people with a strong potential to succeed within an organization" (Schweyer, 2004). Similarly, (Creelman, 2004) it also argued that "talent retention is the process of inviting, attracting, engaging and retaining talented workforce". In other words, it is an act in which an organization sets aside certain elements to attract, develop & retain workers while also directing their skills to do tasks that are beneficial to the organization. Furthermore, even though that organization has a large number of employees, some are considered to be skilled.

## **2.2 Spirituality at Workplace**

Spirituality at work is defined as people's yearning to find purpose and meaning in their life via the application of intense personal ideals. This paper examines the impact of spirituality at the workplace on talent retention from three viewpoints (human, philosophical, and interpersonal). Spirituality, from a human standpoint, improves the quality of life and well being of employees. According to a philosophical view, spirituality gives a feeling of meaning and purpose at the job, while spirituality gives a sense of belonging to employees, according to an interpersonal perspective. Previous research has identified two types of spirituality workplace (organizational) spirituality and individual (personal) spirituality. According to the individual's view, spirituality is a function of an individual's personal spirituality to the working atmosphere. This implies that an individual might experience spirituality individually through his/her working atmosphere, even though the employer does not support this experience. At the individual level, it refers to a set of ideas that promote individual transcendence experiences via work activities, as well as facilitating the sensation of being linked with others while also offering a sense of completeness and fulfilment. Spirituality according to organizational point of view based on the spiritual character of the employer itself rather than the employee (Walt & Klerk., 2014) and (Kolodinsky, Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2008, 2004). The organizational level refers to the framework of the organizational culture's principles that helps employees to have a transcendent experience while at work, promoting connectedness with others while also offering a sense of completion and pleasure (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Employees that experience spirituality at work are better equipped to deliver services to customers, which can impact the quality and satisfaction of customers (Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Beehner & Blackwell, 2016; Vandenberghe, 2011).

## **2.3 The Aspect of Workplace Spirituality**

The current study used four factors to assess workplace spirituality, as explained below: Alignment of organizational value -The first component of workplace spirituality is the resemblance between corporate ideals and individual workers' inner life. It also has an item that necessitates executive participation and connection with the larger business aim of contributing to society's members (Mitroff & Denton, 1999). Secondly, compassion is a type of empathic concern relationship with another that is action-oriented with the purpose of reducing or alleviating others' suffering. (Delgado, 2005) defined, "compassion is a desire for reciprocal caring and support". Thirdly, meaningful at work, whereby every individual looks meaning in their job. "Meaningful work, defined as work that is both significant and positive in valence (meaningfulness), may aid people in expanding their understanding of themselves and the world around them, thereby facilitating personal growth; thus, this aspect aids in capturing the broader life context of people's work" (Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012). Lastly, spiritual connectedness or orientation refers to how people seek personal significance in the context of the larger cosmos (Pradhan & Jena, 2016).

## 2.4 Hypothesis Development

There are several studies (Quatro, 2004) that support the positive effect of spirituality at the workplace. Recently conducted study on teaching staff by (Aboobaker et al., 2019) investigated the association among workplace spirituality, wellbeing & intention to remain. The study indicated that spirituality at workplace dimensions improved the well-being of employees and retention of employees. Another study inspects a positive correlation between spirituality at workplace dimensions and the workers retention. The study findings depicted that spirituality at the workplace may serve as a tool for attracting and keeping top talent (Jena & Pradhan., 2018). (Milliman et.al 2018) in their study analyzed the relationship among employee engagement, intention to remain and workplace spirituality. Results revealed that spirituality at the workplace has a positive link with retention. Similarly, (Yong et al. 2017) determined the link between spirituality at the workplace with retention. The findings depicted that organizations may improve employee retention by enhancing their spiritual climate, provided they receive adequate support from the organization. The research also revealed that organizations are increasingly developing into a place where employees endeavored to begin their path to search for meaning. A study conducted on the worker of foodservice organizations by Beehner & Blackwell (2016) indicated that workplace spirituality dimensions did not impact employee turnover intention. The researcher derived the following hypothesis based on the discussion above:

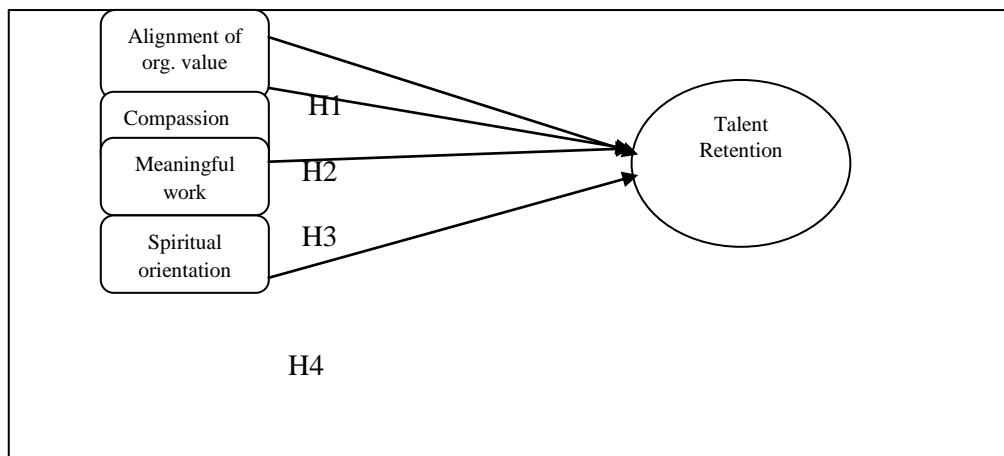
H1: Alignment of organizational value dimension was significant related to talent retention.

H2: Compassion dimension was significant related to talent retention.

H3: Meaningful work dimension was significant related to talent retention.

H4: Spiritual orientation dimension was significant related to talent retention.

**Figure1. Conceptual model**



## 3. Research Design and Method

### 3.1 Study sample

This paper was used a cross-sectional approach for data collection by applying the purposive sampling method through a survey questionnaire. The study respondents were working employees from private and public insurance companies operating in Punjab (India). Out of

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the total 435 survey questionnaires; 410 were returned by respondents. Moreover, 14 survey questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis owing to missing data, unengaged respondents, or a combination of the two. After applying this filter, 396 usable surveys were found, which were then utilized for data analysis.

## 3.2 Measuring Materials

In this study, various standardized scales were chosen to measure the constructs derived from the previous studies. To measure the workplace spirituality of employees a well-established scale (Pradhan et al., 2017) was used. This scale of spirituality at the workplace consists of twenty items with four dimensions. The construct like an alignment of organizational values consists of five items (e.g., “My personal values are similar with the value systems of this organization”), compassion consists of four items (e.g., “I can easily feel the distress of others”) meaningful work contains five items (e.g., “I enjoy the work to the fullest”) and spiritual orientation contains six items (e.g., “Sometimes I experience a sense of enlightenment for my job”). Finally, the talent retention was measured the scale of (Kyndt et al., 2009). This scale has nine items, four of which are reverse items (e.g., “I intent, within a period of three years, to go working in another company”). The scales used to assess all constructs in this paper are based on a 5-point likert scale, anchoring at (“1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree”).

## 4. Result

### 4.1 Demographic characteristics

The demographic analysis of this study is well reported in (table 1). Seventy-four percent (n=294) of the respondents were male, but there was sufficient representation from female respondents also (n=102, 26 percent). Age-wise, the majority of the respondents (n=255, 64.3 percent) were found to be between 30 to 40 years followed by less than 30 years (n=72, 18.2 percent) and only 17.4 percent were above the age of 40. Experience wise, 28.0 percent of respondents had experience below 9 years and 55.6 percent experience between 10 to 20 year and 16.4 percent of respondents had more than 20 years of experience. Around 39.8 percent of respondents were working with the present employer for less than 5 years, whereas around 38.9 were working for the last 6 to 10 years. 13.6 percent of respondents had spent 11 to 15 years at their present organization and 7.5 percent of respondents had been working in the current company, more than 15 years. Education -wise, 4percent were diploma holders, 62 percent were graduates, 30 percent were post-graduates and the remaining 4 percent had other types of qualification. Around 56 percent of respondents were from public sector insurance companies and the remaining around 44 percent were from private sector insurance companies. Branch wise, 45percent were in life insurance and 55 percent in the general insurance business.

**Table 1: Sample demographics (N=396)**

Variable	Categories	Count	Percentage
Gender	Male	294	74.2%
	Female	102	25.7%
Age Group	Below 30 years	72	18.2%
	30 to 40 years	255	64.3%
	Above 40 years	69	17.4%
Total Experience	Below 9 years	111	28.0%
	10 to 20 years	220	55.6%
	Above 20 years	65	16.4%
Experience with the present organization	Below 5 years	158	39.9%
	Between 6 to 10 years	154	38.9%
	Between 11 to 15 years	54	13.6%
	Above 15 years	30	7.5%
Education	Diploma	16	4.0%
	Under-graduate	246	62.1%
	Post-graduate	118	29.8%
	Others	16	4.0%
Sector	Public	220	55.6%
	Private	176	44.4%
Branch	Life Insurance	178	44.9%
	General Insurance	218	55.1%

#### 4.2 Assessments of Measurement Model

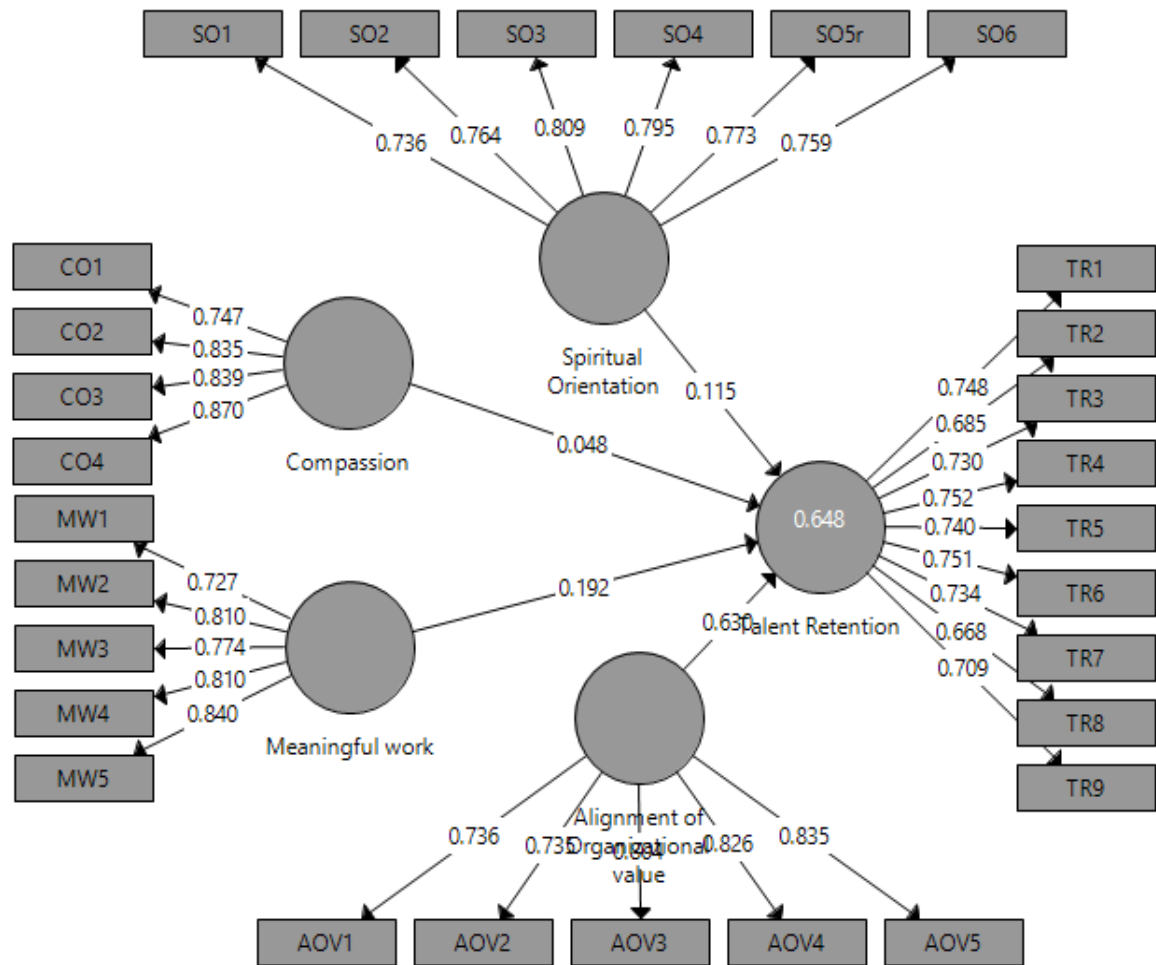
The measurement model was evaluated before data analysis. This paper examined outer model specifications using internal reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model. To evaluate all internal reliability Cronbach's alpha, Henseler's rhoA and CR were used, which were sufficiently above the threshold value of 0.70 (Shiva et al. 2020) and (Hair, Matthew & Christian 2020). The value of Cronbach's alpha was between 0.843-0.887, and the value of composite reliability (CR) hanging between 0.891-0.909, which was within the satisfactory limit. The average variance extracted (AVE) score (Hair et al., 2019) was used to establish the convergent validity. Table2 depicts that the average variance extracted score for all the variables range between 0.525-0.679, which were above the threshold limit of 0.50 in this model (Shiva et al. 2020), (Hair, Sarstedt & Ringle.,2019) and (Fornell & Larcker,1981).The result was described below (Table2, and figure2).

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**Table 2: Result of measurement model assessments**

Variables	Indicators	Type	Factor	C.A	rhoA	C.R	AVE
			Loading				
Alignment of Organizational Values	AOV1	Reflective		0.847	0.850	0.891	0.621
			0.736				
	AOV2		0.735				
	AOV3		0.804				
	AOV4		0.826				
	AOV5	0.835					
Compassion	CO1	Reflective		0.843	0.859	0.894	0.679
			0.747				
	CO2		0.835				
	CO3		0.839				
	CO4	0.870					
Meaningful work	MW1	Reflective		0.853	0.861	0.894	0.629
			0.727				
	MW2		0.810				
	MW3		0.774				
	MW4		0.810				
	MW5	0.840					
Spiritual Orientation	SO1	Reflective		0.866	0.870	0.899	0.598
			0.736				
	SO2		0.764				
	SO3		0.809				
	SO4		0.795				
	SO5		0.773				
	SO6	0.759					
Talent Retention	TR1	Reflective		0.887	0.888	0.909	0.525
			0.748				
	TR2		0.685				
	TR3		0.730				
	TR4		0.752				
	TR5		0.740				
	TR6		0.751				
	TR7		0.734				
	TR8		0.668				
TR9	0.709						

(Source: Author's Calculations)



**Figure2. PLS Algorithm**

Similarly, discriminant validity refers to how distinct a latent variable is from other latent constructs, which was investigated by using the FL criterion (Duarte & Raposo, 2010). The square root of the average variance extracted exceeds the correlations for each variable as depicted in table 3, signifying that the construct has adequate discriminant validity. Another option for dealing with discriminant validity issues in variance-based structural equation modeling is HTMT Ratio (Henseler et al., 2015). The threshold value of HTMT ratio is debatable; some researchers propose a range of 0.85 (Voorhees et al., 2016; Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt., 2015; Kline, 2011) and 0.90 (Gold,et al., 2001). The HTMT ratio values were the threshold limits in this study as depicted in (Table4), As a result, the uniqueness of all variables is established according to empirical criteria. Thus, discriminant validity has been satisfactorily demonstrated.



**Table 3: Discriminant validity assessments (Fornell and Lacker's 1981)**

Construct	Alignment of Organizational values	Compassion	Meaningful work	Spiritual Orientation	Talent Retention
Alignment of Organizational values	0.788				
Compassion	0.474	0.824			
Meaningful work	0.391	0.01	0.793		
Spiritual Orientation	0.377	0.127	0.400	0.773	
Talent Retention	0.772	0.363	0.485	0.436	0.725

(Source: Author's Calculations)

**Table 4: Discriminant validity assessments (HTMT ratio of correlations)**

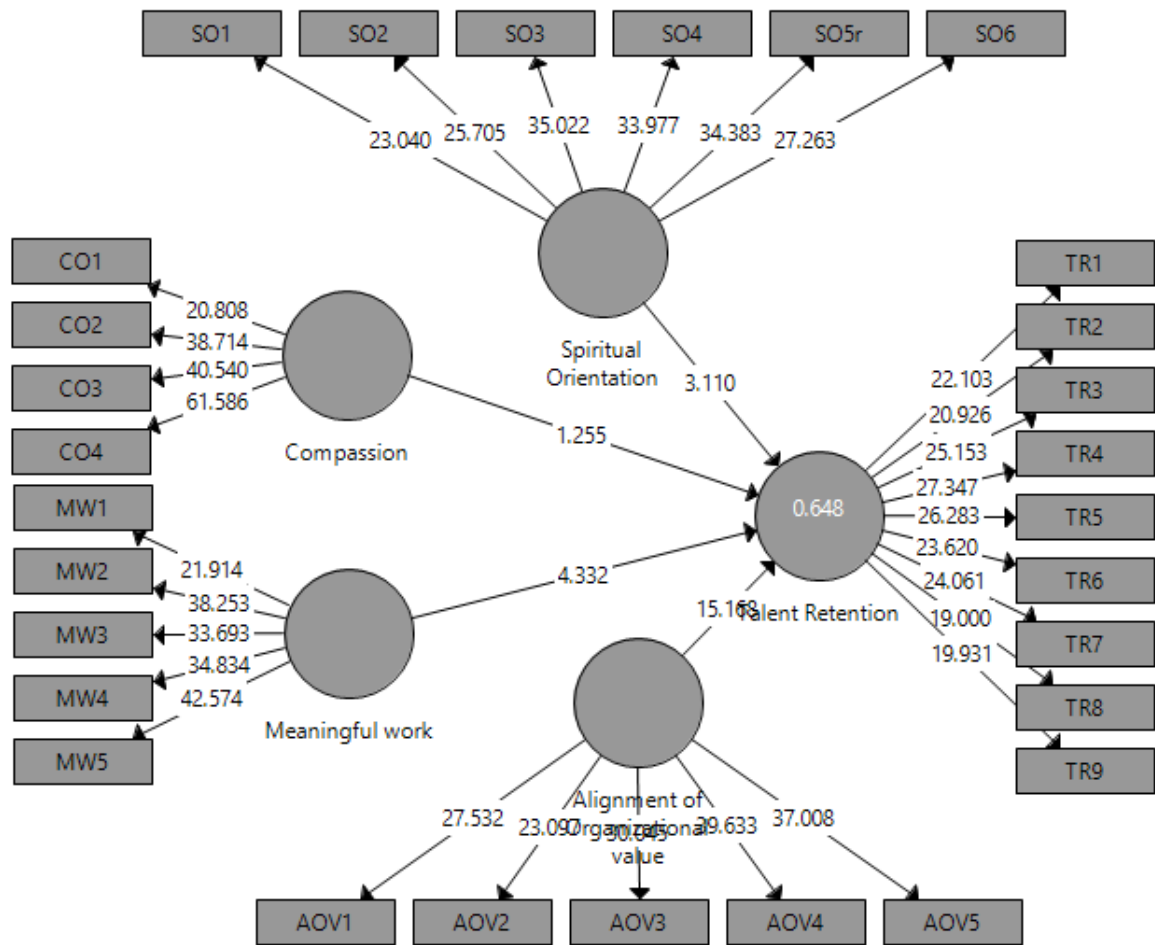
HTMT Criterion	Alignment of Organizational values	Compassion	Meaningful work	Spiritual Orientation	Talent Retention
Alignment of Organizational values					
Compassion	0.561				
Meaningful work	0.449	0.061			
Spiritual Orientation	0.437	0.146	0.459		
Talent Retention	0.887	0.409	0.551	0.493	

(Source: Author's Calculations)

#### 4.3 Assessments of Structural Model

In the structural model, the connection among the constructs and their predictive significance was investigated (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). To determine the needed p-values for the hypotheses presented in the study, the procedure was done by using the bootstrapping technique with suggested 5000 bootstraps without sign change (Hair et al., 2020). The VIF value was calculated to check for multicollinearity between the constructs. Multicollinearity arises when the variance inflation factor value is more than five (Hair et al., 2011). With alignment of organizational value (1.683), compassion (1.352), meaningful work (1.352), and spiritual orientation (1.279) on talent retention, the inner VIFs were found to be less than 3 (Diamantopoulos, 2008). VIF report in the study indicated that there were no issues with collinearity. So, analysis can be continued. The PLS Algorithm's bootstrapping process with 5000 subsamples was used to examine the relevance and significance of the path coefficients. The endogenous construct talent retention's coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) was found to be

significantly high, at 64.8 percent. The value of R square above 0.20 is regarded as high in behavioral sciences (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017).



**Figure3. Bootstrapping (structural model)**

As shown in (table 5), result depicted the positive and significant correlation between alignment with organizational value and talent retention (beta = 0.63,  $t = 15.168$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Results depicted that there is an imperative and positive association among meaningful work and talent retention, (beta = 0.192,  $t = 4.332$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and spiritual orientation and talent retention, (beta = 0.115,  $t = 3.110$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Findings also revealed the insignificant association between compassion and talent retention, (std. beta = 0.048,  $t = 1.255$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ).

**Table 5: Result of Structural model**

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Std. B	Sample Mean (M)	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H1	Alignment of Organizational value -> Talent Retention	0.630	0.628	15.168	0.000	Supported
H2	Compassion -> Talent	0.048	0.05	1.255	0.210	Not

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	Retention					Supported
H3	Meaningful work -> Talent Retention	0.192	0.193	4.332	0.000	Supported
H4	Spiritual Orientation -> Talent Retention	0.115	0.118	3.110	0.002	Supported

### 5. Discussion

This paper was to analyze the association among spirituality at workplace dimensions with talent retention. Spirituality at work refers to an employee's perception of their work as spiritual. If employees have a spiritual sense of self and believe their organization is essential to them, they will spend more time there and they will not quit. The study findings revealed that the significant influence of three constructs of spirituality at work namely alignment of organizational value, meaningful work and spiritual orientation were positively and significantly related to the retention of talented employees. These findings are similar to the results of earlier studies (Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Milliman et al., 2003, 2018; Aboobaker et al., 2019) have found that workplace spirituality and talent retention are correlated positively with each other.

### 6. Implications

This paper has thrown light on spirituality in the workplace since it leads to workers' cognitive and emotional alignment with their respective organizations, which in turn strengthens their commitment and gives them a sense of fulfillment. The validation of the spirituality at workplace-employee outcomes paradigm makes a major addition to organizational literature, in its efforts to understand the function of spirituality at work in organizational settings. In the workplace, "Spirituality" is an underused tool that improves talent retention. Promoting a spiritual atmosphere that fosters interpersonal interaction among department employees will aid in the development of much greater wellbeing and intention to stay. A spiritual environment facilitates the development of honesty, courage and empathetic connection among employees. The finding of the paper depicts that extreme care should be taken while designing jobs, so that people may find meaning and purpose at their job. Human resource practices must align with the companies' mission and values while also recognizing and nurturing workers' spiritual potential and growth during their careers.

HR managers must establish genuine connections with the workforce, assisting them in finding purpose and meaning in their work, assisting them in cultivating team spirit and positive inter-personal connections at the work, and aligning individuals' deeply held ethical and integrity values with those of the organization. Finally, the study finding suggested that insurance companies should introduce yoga and meditation practices, as well as personality development programs in the place of work. Such practices can affect on how workers feel about their jobs and workplaces, and hence on how long they will decide to remain within the company.

## 7. Limitations

Despite the contributions and implications, there were numerous limitations in this study. The first concern was the study results' generalizability. This paper was conducted in private and public insurance companies in Punjab, this limited the choice of personal and organizational values, and it is suggested that further study be performed on other industries such as manufacturing, small businesses, and educational institutions across different states and locations to see the workplace spirituality has a similar effect on talent retention. Secondly, future studies can explore different elements of workplace spirituality with bigger sample size and with opinions from the senior management as well. Similarly, it may be interesting to investigate if workplace spirituality differs between cultures, thus this suggested model may be tested in various cultural situations, such as Asian v/s Western culture, as well as across subcultures within a single country.

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