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The effect of workplace spirituality on employees' perception of stakeholder relationships

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between workplace spirituality and employees' perception of stakeholder relationships on a primary and secondary stakeholder level. The purpose of the research was to establish whether an employee with higher spiritual perspective, as manifested in the workplace, displays increased consideration for relationships with stakeholders. The quantitative research took the form of a cross sectional survey design to answer three research questions. The electronic survey was administered to a sample of post-graduate business students. A positive correlation was found between workplace spirituality and employees' perception of secondary stakeholder relationships.

Keywords: Workplace spirituality, spirit at work, stakeholder relationships

Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Name: Neelesh Pillay

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Date: 09 November 2011

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List of Abbreviations

SPS – Spiritual Perspective Scale

SRP – Stakeholder Relationship Perception

CHAPTER 1: Introduction to the Problem

1.1. Research Need

Both the academic and professional literature on management is replete with compelling examples of leaders who abuse power and act selfishly in business organisations (Maccoby, 2000). There is broad disenchantment with leadership as articulated by the surge in crises of confidence in leadership (Parameshwar, 2005).

Ethical scandals such as Enron, Arthur Andersen, and World.com and the recent 2008 global financial crisis or the subprime mortgage crisis where, to maximize short-term profits, banks continued to sell homes to people who they knew could not afford them (unethical practices), and some even showed people how to falsify documents to get a mortgage (illegal practices). These resulted in the vicious cycle of the bubble in home prices, overextension of credits, foreclosures and bankruptcies, as well as a global credit crunch (Corkery & Hagerty, 2008). The credit crisis, known as the worst recession since the Great Depression, is evidenced by the bankruptcy of large investment banks, declines in world stock indexes, and increased unemployment and loss of jobs worldwide.

Corporate character has been called into question, not only from a financial point of view but also from a human resource, ethical, environmental and community standpoint. The result is that within the past decade, academic interest in the concept

of spirituality has grown considerably (Cavanagh, 1999). Spirituality refers to an awareness of one's inner self and a sense of connection to a higher being, nature, others, or to some dimension or purpose greater than oneself (Reed, 1986).

This relatively new area in organisational development known as spirituality in the workplace has gained enough strength and interest that the Academy of Management has created a new special interest group for its membership. This group is helping to legitimise within academia the study of spirituality in the workplace while simultaneously paving the way for introducing this emerging concept into the leadership research agenda (Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005).

At the same time, the above mentioned accounting and ethical misconduct scandals combined with environmental disasters (e.g. BP, Shell Nigeria, Bhopal) has created a global stakeholder society "where companies are expected to be accountable not only to shareholders for financial performance, but to stakeholders for their wider economic, environmental and societal impacts" (Wade, 2006 pg 227). Long-term business success depends on the ability of a firm and its leadership to act responsibly with respect to all stakeholders in business, society and the environment (Freeman R. , 1984).

1.2. Research Problem and Purpose

Research has begun to show that the focus on the bottom line may not be what is best for the bottom line at all. Collins & Porras, (1994) found that companies that focused on core values and the founding vision outperformed companies that focused primarily on the bottom line. This is an extremely significant and paradigm busting finding (Neal & Biberman, 2004). Also, in the past few years, the very foundations of trust in corporate models have been shaken and trust is a key variable in spirituality in organisations (Fairholm, 1997).

Both areas of study are highly relevant to the South African situation. Spirituality within the context of work is about finding meaning and purpose at work and being connected with one's complete self, others, and the entire universe (Mitroff & Denton, 1999 b). Given the questionable ethical conduct in the South African workplace (Van Niekerk, 2003), there is much need for the above construct to be infused into the work lives of employees.

The stakeholder view has become more prominent with the move toward increased corporate governance and corporate social responsibility. The Institute of Directors in Southern Africa (2009 a, pg 11) published the King III Report that advocates for the 'integrated reporting' approach which includes reporting on the social, environmental and economic impact, which is the triple context in which business operates. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) has adopted the Socially Responsible Investment

Index (SRI) which identifies companies listed on the JSE that integrate the principles of the triple context of business and good governance thus contributing to the development of responsible business practice in South Africa.

These two areas of academia have commanded much interest due to their significance in the current business environment. Therefore, the primary focus of this research is to investigate the relationship between workplace spirituality and primary and secondary stakeholder relationships.

1.3. Research Significance

(Howard, 2002 pg230) argues that the “explosion of interest in spirituality as a new dimension of management” is “probably the most significant trend in management since the 1950s”. This new wave of meaning at work is also referred to as “the spirituality movement” (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000 pg 134). The value and importance of stakeholder relationships has been elucidated in the King III report which introduced a Governance Element Eight (Institute of Directors in Southern Africa. 2009b) that specifically relates to governing stakeholder relationships.

Given the importance of these two constructs as discussed, the goal of the research is to investigate whether a relationship between them exists. Should workplace spirituality, as measured by an employees’ spiritual perspective, be related in some way to their perception regarding the value of stakeholder relationships, then this

study will pave the way for future research to establish the reasons for this relationship. Should this relationship be positive, then the concept of spirituality at work becomes even more pertinent within the academic fraternity as it will be suggested that increased workplace spirituality contributes toward an important area of corporate governance which is the value perceived from stakeholder relationships.

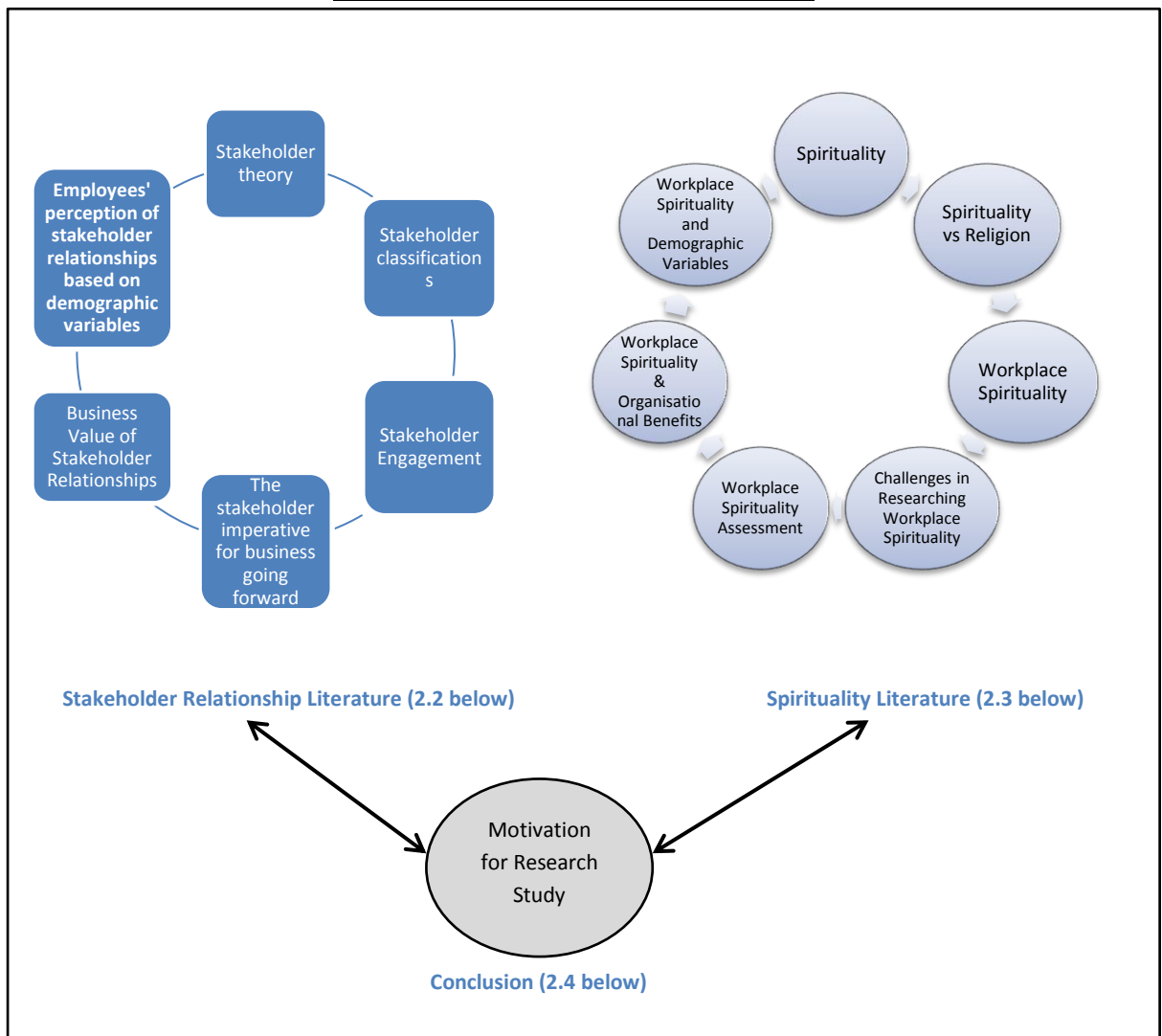
This also has many implications for leadership. As highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, many academics believe that there is a current crisis in confidence in leadership which is one of the reasons for the move toward increased corporate governance. Improving relationships with stakeholders starts with leaders perceiving them as important to their business. This study will investigate whether the spiritual perspective of the leader, or any employee, has an impact on the manner in which stakeholder relationships are perceived.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1. Overview

The literature review explores the areas of workplace spirituality and stakeholder relationships and is structured according to Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Overview of literature review



The aim of this literature review is to provide an argument for the relevance and appropriateness of stakeholder relationships in the current business environment as

well as to provide an argument for the importance of the emerging field of workplace spirituality in organisational development theory. Finally, in the conclusion section of the review (2.4.), a final argument is made to justify the need for this study by drawing from the two bodies of literature.

2.2. Stakeholder Relationship Overview

2.2.1. Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory is concerned with the nature of the relationship between the firm and its stakeholders. It can be understood as an alternative view to the neo-classical economic theory of the firm whereby increasing revenues was considered the primary obligation of the firm and that obligation was aimed at satisfying the only salient stakeholder, the investor (Hendry, 2001). It brings the perception that in a monopolistic-competition environment, those operations that supply nothing more than a company's selfish interests can have a negative or even harmful influence on society (Casidy, 2003).

Freeman's (1984, pg 46) defined stakeholders as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives". Savage, Nix, Whitehead, Blair (1991, pg 61) defined stakeholders as groups or individuals who "have an interest in the actions of an organisation and the ability to influence it". Both of these definitions suggest the interdependence and two-way relationship between the firm and its stakeholders.

In stakeholder theory, companies are involved in the social system and are therefore forced to enter and engage with different social subjects (Jancic, 1999). This presents varying expectations of the role and responsibilities of each of the involved parties within the corporate and social environment. In addition to economic and legal rights or duties, companies are required to perform social, ethical and environmental responsibilities as well. Therefore, the company's management is required to balance the different stakeholders' interests.

Firms are posited to pay attention to stakeholder influence for normative and instrumental reasons (Jones, 1995). Normative explanations of stakeholder theory move firm-stakeholder relations into an ethical realm, proposing that managers should consider the interests of those who have stakes in the organization. By contrast, instrumental stakeholder theories predict firm behaviour on means-ends reasoning, whereby the firm pursues its interests through managing relationships with stakeholders (Jones, 1995). The instrumental orientation sees firms as addressing the interests of stakeholders who are perceived to have influence.

Stakeholder theory provides a suitable framework to analyse the importance of the relationships between business and society, since it emphasizes values such as participation, inclusion and mutual dependence (Wheeler, Colbert, & Freeman, 2003)

2.2.2. Stakeholder Classifications

One of the first challenges for organizations is to identify their stakeholders. Stakeholders can be identified and categorised in different ways. Waddock, (2001) distinguishes between primary stakeholders that are essential for the business itself to exist (owners, employees, customers and suppliers) and critical secondary stakeholders who play a fundamental role in achieving business credibility and acceptance of its activities (e.g. communities, governments, business support groups, media, institutional forces, environment). Henriques & Sadosky (1999) classify four critical stakeholder groups:

- (1) regulatory stakeholders (e.g. governments, trade associations, informal networks, competitors);
- (2) organisational stakeholders (e.g. customers, suppliers, employees, and shareholders);
- (3) community stakeholders (e.g. community groups, environmental organisations and other potential lobbies); and
- (4) the media.

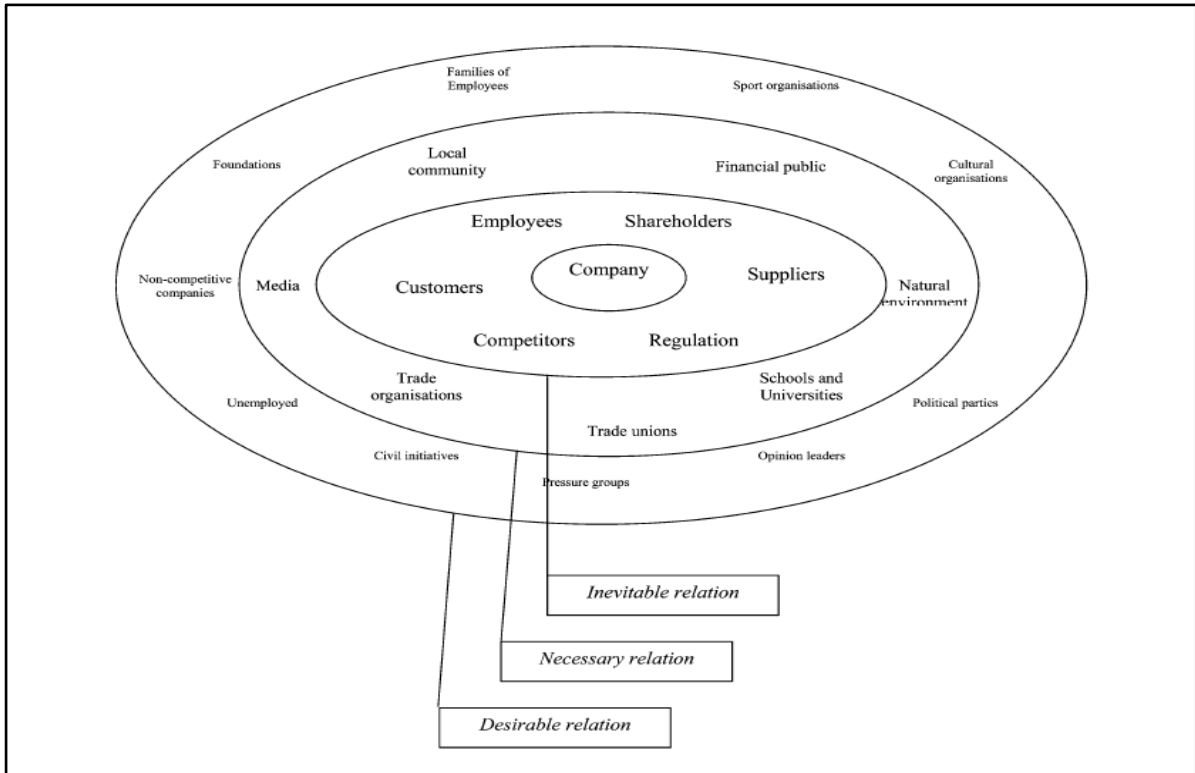
Wheeler D. S. (1997) classified stakeholders according to two dimensions: primary–secondary and social–non-social. Accordingly, four groups of stakeholders were suggested:

- (1) Primary social stakeholders (shareholders, investors, employees and managers, customers, local communities, suppliers and partners).

- (2) Secondary social stakeholders (government, social pressure groups, trade bodies, civic institutions, media and academic commentators, competitors).
- (3) Primary non-social stakeholders (natural environment, future generations, nonhuman species).
- (4) Secondary non-social stakeholders (environmental pressure groups, animal welfare organizations).

Podnar & Jancic (2006) introduces the idea that not all stakeholders are equally important for the company and its communications. It is argued that companies have three main levels of exchange and communication with numerous stakeholders. A company's primary stakeholders or key relationships are those with whom exchange and communication is inevitable. The second level presents stakeholders with whom exchange is necessary, and the final level represents those stakeholders with whom communication is desirable as depicted in Figure 2. The main emphasis of this model is on the breadth of relationships in which companies must be involved and be managed. According to different levels of exchange, the organization must properly accommodate its communication activities in order to sustain good relations with its numerous stakeholders.

Figure 2: Three main levels of exchange and communication with company stakeholders - adapted from Podnar *et al* (2006)



The nature of relationships between a company and its different and numerous stakeholders is dynamic. Stakeholder groups are liable to change and their power towards the company varies over time, context and environment. It is suggested that stakeholders can be classified according to how important they are to the company as it is argued that stakeholders are not all equally important and hence a company may categorise them differently (Podnar *et al* , 2006).

2.2.3. Stakeholder Engagement

The (ISEA, 1999 pg 91) defines stakeholder engagement as “the process of seeking stakeholder views on their relationship with an organisation in a way that may realistically be expected to elicit them”. Greenwood (2007) defines it as practices that the organisation undertakes to involve stakeholders in a positive manner in organisational activities. Stakeholder engagement is rising to a new level of importance in many companies. It is seen as a critical part of gaining feedback with respect to business strategy (Hutt, 2009). However, the manner in which positive engagement occurs between the company and stakeholders is a topic that currently, induces much academic interest.

Traditional stakeholder management techniques attempt to satisfy stakeholder needs and/or demands, whereas partnering activities allow firms to build bridges with their stakeholders in the pursuit of common goals. Some scholars have warned against the use of the term “stakeholder management,” as it implies that the firm can control and direct the interactions with its stakeholders (Jonker & Foster, 2002). (Svendson, 1998) introduces the approach of “stakeholder collaboration,” which focuses on building stakeholder relationships that are reciprocal, evolving and mutually defined.

Sethi (1975) developed a three tier model for corporate social responsibility which included

- i) Level 1: social obligation (a response to legal and market constraints) which can be described as avoiding harm in three dimensions of sustainability;
- ii) Level 2: social responsibility (congruent with societal norms) which can be described as meeting reasonable individual stakeholder expectations in three dimensions;
- iii) Level 3: social responsiveness (adaptive, anticipatory and preventive) which can be described as maximizing economic, social and environmental value.

Engaging stakeholders is the developmental exercise needed to enhance mutual understanding of sustainability and push the limits of cognitive, moral and emotional development (Waddock, 2001). Beckett & Jonker, (2002) note that stakeholder engagement establishes a more balanced conception of the organisation as a matrix of human relationships and competencies not necessarily limited to the borders of the organisation, and may offer the possibility to create a far wider and more dynamic concept of the sustainable organisation.

There are various ways and levels of engaging stakeholders and stakeholder engagement can mean different things in different contexts. (Gao & Zhang, 2001) argue that real and meaningful stakeholder engagement should be a process of sharing views through genuine dialogue between the stakeholders and the management of the organisation and further emphasise that dialogue should be a two-way process where stakeholders are not merely consulted or “listened to” but also responded to.

2.2.4. The Stakeholder Imperative for Business Going Forward

Sustainable development can be defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Rosenberg, 2004 pg 230). This concept has also been adopted by South Africa, where sustainable development has been built into the National Environmental Act and highlights three principles for sustainable development:

Social sustainability: A majority and not just a few must benefit from development;

Ecological sustainability: Any development activity should help sustain the Earth’s natural resources;

Economic sustainability: Economic activities are about sustaining people and plant – not about maintaining an economy.

Sustainable development is a responsibility for corporates as well. The King III Report states that “because the company is so integral to society, it is considered as much a citizen of a country as is a natural person who has citizenship. It is expected that a company will be and will be seen to be a responsible citizen. This involves social, environmental and economic issues – the triple context in which companies in fact operate”. This report has also moved from the triple bottom line reporting to the integrated report to show how the company has both positively and negatively impacted on the community in which it operated for the year under review.

The King III Report has also elevated stakeholder relationships to the board and called for it to feature on the boards agenda. Of particular interest is Governance Element Eight – Governing Stakeholder Relationships and it stipulates the following (Institute of Directors in Southern Africa, 2009 b):

- Directors are responsible for keeping communication with stakeholders honest and open;
- In this regard the Board should strive to achieve a balance between the interests of all its various stakeholder groupings and promote mutual respect between the company and its stakeholders;
- In return, consumers, employees, communities and investors can and will have a role to play in shaping the behaviour of corporations.

The five key principles of Governance Element Eight are:

- i) The board appreciate that stakeholders' perceptions affect a company's reputation;
- ii) The board should delegate to management to proactively deal with stakeholder relationships;
- iii) The board should strive to achieve the appropriate balance between its various stakeholder groupings, in the best interest of the company;
- iv) Companies should ensure the equitable treatment of shareholders;
- v) Transparent and effective communication with stakeholders is essential for building and maintaining their trust and confidence.

It is clear that the management of stakeholder relationships by the company has been given increased importance which is validated by the inclusion of the 'inclusive stakeholder approach' in the King III Report.

Further, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) has adopted the Socially Responsible Investment Index (SRI) which identifies companies listed on the JSE that integrate the principles of triple bottom line and good governance thus contributing to the development of responsible business practice in South Africa.

2.2.5. The Business Value of Stakeholder Relationships

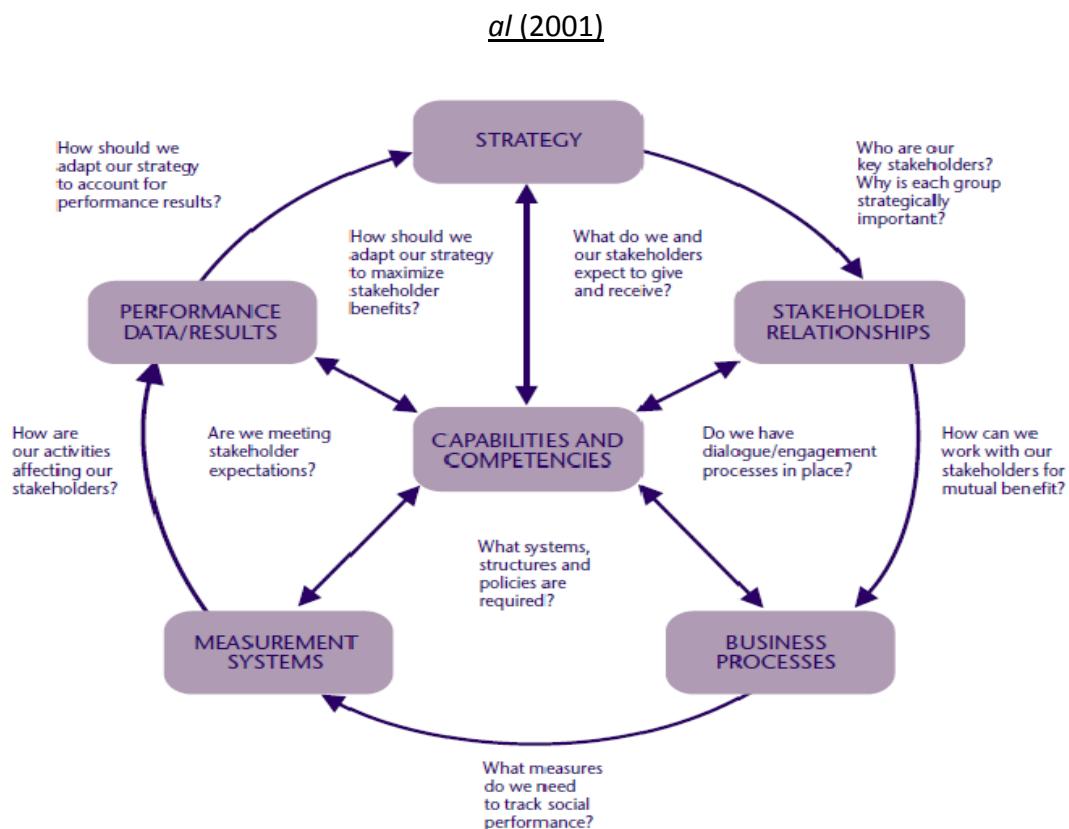
Svendsen, Boutilier, Abbott, & Wheeler (2001) found linkages between positive stakeholder relationships and competitive advantage in four areas: reducing shareholder risk, stimulating innovation, developing new markets, and enhancing brand value and reputation.

The resource-based view of the firm suggests that companies have resources, consisting of tangible and intangible assets, which give them distinctive capabilities. When those resources are not widely held or cannot be replicated by competitors (and cannot be replaced by other resources or purchased), they can produce a competitive advantage that can be sustained over the long term (Wernefelt, 1984; Barney, 1991).

Svendsen *et al* (2001) used this view to argue that when products become commodities, economic factors become more or less equal across competitors and

price, quality and service are no longer the differentiators or drivers of advantage. Advantage is more likely to accrue from the leveraging of intangible assets such as brand awareness, which encompasses both emotional and cognitive characteristics like product quality perceptions, lifestyle associations or perceived environmental or social responsibility of the firm and its products. Thus, the ability to engage stakeholders positively is a vital organisational capability in the current information based economy because stakeholders act as gatekeepers to resources that the firm requires. A model of the business value of stakeholder relationships was developed.

Figure 3: The business value of stakeholder relationships – adapted from Svendsen *et*



The steps to this model are described as follows:

- Ensure that strategy will meet the expectations and requirements of stakeholders and that opportunities are created for stakeholder dialogue;
- Through face to face and technology enabled stakeholder conversations, the company can refine strategies, adapt business processes and identify new opportunities to work collaboratively with stakeholders for mutual benefit;
- The company then establishes business processes that reflect stakeholder expectations and requirements;
- Measurement systems can help managers deal with a complex and rapidly changing environment and understand and respond to shifts in stakeholder and public expectations;
- Once measurement systems are in place and data has been collected, the company can determine how its activities are affecting stakeholders and also whether it is meeting stakeholder expectations. By considering its financial, environmental and social performance in an integrated manner, a company can adapt its strategy to improve corporate performance and maximize stakeholder benefits.

There are a few other significant studies which reveal a strong correlation between good stakeholder relationships and business success.

- Kotter & Heskitt (1992) showed that over an eleven-year period, sales and employment growth at stakeholder oriented companies were significantly higher

than at shareholder-focused companies. Specifically, stakeholder oriented companies reported four times the growth in sales and eight times the growth in employment. The authors argued that successful, visionary companies, although very diverse in other ways, put a lower priority on maximizing shareholder wealth and greater emphasis on serving the interests of a broad mix of stakeholders.

- Gulati, Huffman, & Neilson (2002) found that successful companies value their stakeholders to the extent that they include customers in product development decisions, share information with vendors, and generally rely on their ties to critical stakeholders as they refocus on their core businesses.
- Heugens, Van den Bosch, & Van Riel (2002) analysed the structures and processes underlying firm-stakeholder relationships and concluded that structural stakeholder integration techniques lead to legitimisation of the firm. They further suggested that processual stakeholder management practices result in positive learning outcomes.
- Rodriguez, Ricart, & Sanchez (2002) suggest that strengthened stakeholder relationships can result in significant competitive advantages in form of trust, reputation and innovation.

2.2.6. Employees' Perception of Stakeholder Relationships and Demographic Variables

Demirel (2008) performed research into the development of an integrated stakeholder relationships management model within the Turkish information technology sector. The purpose of the study was to determine how stakeholder relationships were managed within Turkish information technology organisations based on the perceptions of managers and employees. The study found no meaningful difference in stakeholder relationship perception with age group, a moderate relationship was found with gender and a strong relationship was found with the amount of work experience. The study did not test the demographic variables of race and employment level.

Graves & Waddock, (1997) argued that the quality of key stakeholder relationships is related to the overall quality of management of the firm and that there is a link between corporate social performance behaviours as fundamental responsibilities of management through management's treatment of stakeholders. This research provides insight into the importance for senior and executive managers to adopt and embrace the stakeholder view of business. Coombs & Gilley (2005) performed research into the effects of stakeholder management on chief executive compensation and found it to be more negatively than positively correlated.

2.3. Spirituality Overview

2.3.1. Spirituality

It is commonly believed that as human beings we are made up of body, mind, emotions and spirit and the interplay between spiritual yearnings, emotions, psychological capacity and the capacity to learn are all deeply interwoven (Howard 2002). Maslow (1970, pg 273) recognised the same when he stated “Man’s inherent design or nature seems to be not only in his anatomy and physiology, but also his most basic need, yearnings and psychological capacity. This inner nature is usually not obvious and easily seen, but is rather hidden”.

The term “spirituality” comes from the Latin word “spiritus” or “spiritualis” that means breathing, breath, air, or wind (Merriam-Webster). Spiritus is defined as “an animating or vital principle held to give life to physical organisms” (Merriam-Webster). This implies spirit is the life force that inhabits us when we are alive and breathing (Karakas, 2010a). Spirituality, as defined by Mitroff and Denton (1999 pg83), is “the basic feeling of being connected with one’s complete self, others and the entire universe”. Spirituality encompasses the way an individual lives out his or her sense of interconnectedness with the world through an ability to tap into deep resources and encompasses such terms as truth, love, service, wisdom, joy, peace and wholeness (Howard, 2002).

Heaton, Schmidt-Wilk, & Frederick (2004) distinguish between the two fundamental spiritual constructs of “pure spirituality” and “applied spirituality”. They suggest “pure

spirituality” to refer to a silent, unbounded, inner experience of pure spiritual awareness, devoid of perception, thoughts and feelings. They describe a non-localised, non-material, non-changing field of pure wakefulness at the source of the mind, which can be experienced when the mind is in its most settled state, the state of transcendence. It is suggested that all aspects of the personality are enriched and integrated from experiences of “pure spirituality”. “Applied spirituality” refers to the domain of practical applications and measurable outcomes that automatically arise from the inner experience of “pure spirituality”.

Howard (2002) suggests that spirituality can be seen to be about four sets of connections – with self, with others, with nature or the environment and with a higher power. Spirituality may be described as the awareness of the Divine Principle of our being and spirituality in the workplace is an attempt to get connected to this Divine Principle in the context of the workplace.

2.3.2. Spirituality versus Religion

Spirituality is clearly defined as being different from religion, which is about getting people converted to a specific belief system (Cavanagh G. , 1999). Spirituality does not necessarily involve a connection to any specific religious tradition, but rather can be based on personal values and philosophy.

Smith (1991) discusses the connection and difference between spirituality and religion. He uses an analogy of a wheel where the centre of the wheel is the Truth or Ultimate Harmony and Oneness. The circumference of the wheel is life and the spokes of the wheel are the differing religious traditions, each unique but all leading to the same Essential Oneness. In this view each individual is traveling on his or her own path from the circumference of the wheel to the same essential Truth. Mitroff (2003) states that religion divides people through dogma and the emphasis on formal structure, and excludes those who have different beliefs whilst spirituality is inclusive, tolerant and open-minded. In a study performed by Mitroff *et al* (1999) approximately 60 percent of participants had positive views of spirituality and negative views of religion.

2.3.3. Workplace Spirituality

There is increasing evidence that a major transformation is occurring in many organisations whereby organisations that have long been viewed as rational systems are considering making room for the spiritual dimension, a dimension that has less to do with rules and order and more to do with meaning, purpose and sense of community (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). Kinjerski & Skrypnek (2004) suggest that the reason for this is that employees are seeking work that is inspiring and meaningful, looking for work-life balance because many employees have become demoralised and experience spiritual disorientation as a result of downsizing, re-engineering and layoffs that have occurred over the past two decades. (Giacalone, Jurkiewicz, & Fry, 2005) state that society seeks spiritual solutions to ease tumultuous social and business

changes and that a profound change in values globally has brought a growing social consciousness and spiritual renaissance. Further, growing interest in Eastern philosophies has prompted a general increase in spiritual yearnings.

The increased attention directed toward spiritual issues in the workplace is undeniable with Cavanaugh (1999) reporting that it has become one of the fastest growing areas of new research and inquiry by scholars. Karakas (2010a) state that scholars report a steady increase of interest in spirituality at work issues and this trend is also evidenced by the increased popularity in books on the subject. Howard (2002, pg 230) argues the “explosion of interest in spirituality as a new dimension in management... is probably the most significant trend in management since the 1950s” and Wagner-Marsh & Conley (1999) suggest the mounting of the organisational fourth wave, the spiritually based firm.

Workplace spirituality involves the effort to find one’s ultimate purpose in life, to develop a strong connection to co-workers and other people associated with work, and to have consistency (or alignment) between one’s core beliefs and the values of their organization (Mitroff and Denton, 1999a). Accordingly, workplace spirituality can be defined as “... the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community” (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000, p. 137).

Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2003 p. 13) define it as "...a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy".

2.3.3.1. Challenges in researching Workplace Spirituality

The first challenge in researching workplace spirituality is the lack of a clear and widely accepted definition (Karakas, 2010a; Tischler, Biberman, & McKreage, 2002). As Laabs, (1995) states, it is much easier to explain what spirituality in business is not than it is to define what spirituality in business is. Much of the difficulty lies in the difficulty to explain and enunciate the spiritual experience at work because it is, by nature, intensely personal and occurs on a deeper level than most normal experiences (Konz & Ryan, 1999).

Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004) argue that the lack of a clear and accepted definition has delayed the development and widespread use of an accepted measure by researchers and practitioners which has resulted in delays in investigating how individuals develop spirituality at work and the factors that enhance or impede it.

However, Dean, (2004 ,pg13) performed an interview with Mitroff Denton on the subject whereby Mitroff Denton cautions that an "obsession with finding a single correct, overarching definition of workplace spirituality does not respect the myriad

traditions and belief systems embedded in the research arena. He argued that a guiding or working definition for the field is sufficient because if a complete, exact definition existed, there would be no point in studying the phenomenon (Dean, 2004 pg17).

The second challenge relates to the subjectivity of the experience of workplace spirituality. Lips-Wiersma, (2003) points out how the spiritual beliefs, values and attitudes of the researcher and research participants can influence the nature and results of research on spirituality. She asserts that as researchers on spirituality, one has to be particularly aware of interpretations that one is not open to or questions not thought of asking as they are so obvious or irrelevant within one's own worldview.

The third challenge is that workplace spirituality has not established itself as a legitimate discipline in organisational science. Giacalone *et al*, (2005) state that legitimising workplace spirituality requires a demonstrable positive impact of spiritual variables on workplace-related functioning and the areas identified as shortcomings include lack of an accepted conceptual definition, inadequate measurement tools, limited theoretical development and legal concerns.

2.3.3.2. Assessment of Workplace Spirituality

Most definitions of workplace spirituality include the notions of meaning, purpose and being connected to others (Ashmos *et al*, 2000; Conger, 1994; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz,

(2003); Mitroff *et al*, (1999b), Karakas (2010a). Therefore, in assessing the literature on workplace spirituality the areas of inner life, meaningful work and sense of community are discussed.

Inner Life

Workplace spirituality is about finding an opportunity at work to express many aspects of one's being, not merely the ability to perform physical or intellectual tasks (Ashmos *et al*, 2000). Understanding spirituality at work begins with acknowledging that people have both an inner and outer life and that the nourishment of the inner life can lead to a more meaningful and productive outer life (Fox, 1994). Duchon & Plowman (2005) concur by adding that the existence of the inner life is related to the two organizational behaviour constructs of individual identity and social identity. Individual identity is part of a person's self-concept, or inner view of themselves, and the expression of that inner life is, in part, an expression of social identity. Conger (1994) elaborates on the inner life by stating that spirituality has to do with feelings, with the power that comes from within and knowing our deepest selves and what is sacred to us.

Meaningful Work

The second fundamental component of workplace spirituality embodies the notion that that people seek a a deep sense of meaning and purpose in their work. This dimension of workplace spirituality represents how employees interact with their day-to-day work at the individual level (Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003). The

expression of spirituality at work involves the assumptions that each person has their own inner motivations and truths, and desires to be involved in activities that give greater meaning to their life and the lives of others (Ashmos *et al*, 2000).

The spirituality view is that work is not just meant to be interesting or challenging, but that it is about things such as searching for deeper meaning and purpose, living one's dream, expressing one's inner life needs by seeking meaningful work and contributing to others (Fox, 1994). Similarly, Moore (1992) observed that work is a vocation and a calling as a way to create greater meaning and identity in the workplace. Giacolone *et al* (2003) state that meaningful work is about performing cognitively meaningful tasks but it is also about work that creates a sense of joy which connects workers to a larger good and to things viewed by the worker as important in life.

A Sense of Connection and Community

The third dimension involves having a deep connection to, or relationship with others, which has been articulated as a sense of community. This has to do with the notion that as spiritual beings people live in connection to other human beings and mean to include the notions of sharing, mutual obligation and commitment that connect people to each other (Duchon *et al*, 2005).

This dimension of workplace spirituality occurs at the group level of human behaviour and concerns interactions between employees and their co-workers which involves a deeper sense of connection among people, including support, freedom of expression,

and genuine caring (Milliman *et al*, 2003). Some have argued that the workplace needs to be re-envisioned, from a view that it resembles a machine with distinct separation among parts to a view that the interconnections among parts of the system (or workers) are the most important aspects of the system (Stacey, 1995). This perspective stresses that organisations do not just produce goods but are also forms of human community that foster satisfying and meaningful experiences for individuals, families and society (Gull & Doh, 2004).

2.3.3.3. *Workplace Spirituality and organisational benefits*

Much of the current academic literature attempts to find empirical evidence to provide support for workplace spirituality and organisational effectiveness which is argued to relate to increased productivity and performance (Milliman,*et al* (2003); Rego & e Cunha (2008); Kinjerski *et al* (2004)). Ashmos *et al* (2000) developed and validated a measurement instrument for workplace spirituality on three levels of analysis: individual, work-team and organization. They extracted seven factors or dimensions for the individual level (conditions for community, meaning at work, inner life, blocks to spirituality, personal responsibility, positive connections with other individuals, contemplation), two for the work-team level (work-unit community, positive work-unit values) and two for the organization level (organizational values, individual and the organization).

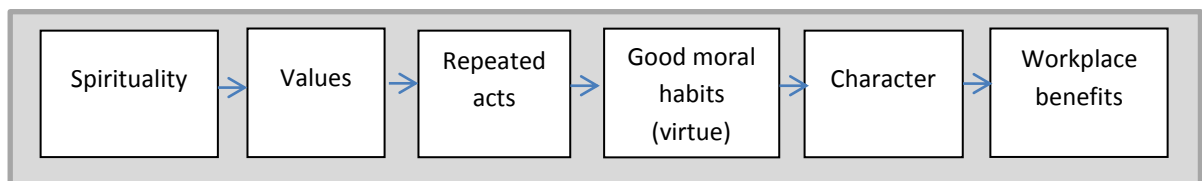
Milliman *et al.* (2003) examined how three of these workplace spirituality dimensions (meaningful work, sense of community, value alignment) explain five work attitudes: affective organizational commitment, intentions to leave, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement, and organizational-based self-esteem. The main findings of Milliman *et al.* were the following:

- The meaningful work dimension explains affective commitment, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement and self-esteem.
- The sense of community dimension explains all the attitudes.
- Value alignment explains commitment and intention to leave.

This was the first research, as far as the literature was reviewed, to empirically test the positive impact of workplace spirituality on organisational attitudes.

Other researchers have adopted the approach of investigating the effects of spiritual values on benefits in the workplace (Cavanagh & Bandsuch, 2002; Karakas (2010b); Jurkiewicz & Giacalone (2004). Cavanagh *et al* (2002) discussed virtue as a benchmark for spirituality in business and proposed a sequence of the influence of spiritual virtues that lead to workplace benefits.

Figure 4: The influence of spirituality on virtue, character and workplace benefits



Jurkiewicz *et al* (2004) developed a values framework for measuring the impact of workplace spirituality on organisational performance. This framework included the ten values of benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility and trust. They further suggested that organisations that integrate these values into the culture are believed to exhibit increased levels of workplace spirituality. However, whilst it is mentioned that the evidence suggests the framework is definable and that these values have a positive impact on employee and organisational performance, empirical work is required to validate the theoretical formulations introduced in their work.

Karakas (2010b) introduced nine spiritual anchors as value compasses of leaders in organisations. The typology of the anchors were developed based on 32 qualitative interviews conducted with managers in Turkey. It is stated that the concept of spiritual anchor refers to patterns of deeply held individual assumptions, values and priorities that provide direction, wholeness, meaning and connectedness to a person's life or work. The results introduced the spiritual anchors of perfection, compassion, passion, inspiration, investigation, dedication, appreciation, determination and co-operation.

Finally, Fry (2003) developed a causal model of spiritual leadership. This model is based on vision (performance), altruistic love (reward), and hope/faith (effort) and results in an increase in one's sense of spiritual survival (e.g. calling and membership) and ultimately positive personal, group and organizational outcomes. These include

increased ethical and spiritual well-being, positive human health, organizational commitment and productivity, and corporate social responsibility. He determined the virtues of trust, forgiveness, gratitude, integrity, courage, humility, kindness, compassion and patience as part of the altruistic love (reward) component of the model.

2.3.3.4. Workplace Spirituality and demographic variables

Kinjerski & Skrypnek (2006) developed a spirit at work scale (SAWS) which comprised the variables of 'engaging work', 'mystical experience', 'spiritual connection' and 'sense of community'. In the development of this scale, they performed research on the effect of spirit at work on the demographic variables of age, gender, education, occupation and marital status. The results of the study found that there was no relationship between spirit at work and age, gender and education. In terms of occupation, management and professional staff reported significantly higher levels of spirit at work than did administrative, clerical, technical, or trades staff. Individuals who were separated, divorced, or widowed reported more spirit at work than those individuals who were single.

In another study, Rego *et al* (2008) did not find any relationship between workplace spirituality and age or work experience whilst Stevinson, Dent, & White, (2009) found small but statistically significant relationships with gender and ethnicity.

2.4. Conclusion

The review above comprises of two separate bodies of literature. Based on the literature reviewed, this conclusion draws parallels between these two constructs to substantiate the motivation for this research study.

Karakas (2010a) discusses changes in management to include a shift from an economic focus to a balance of profits, quality of life, spirituality, and social responsibility concerns, a shift from self-centeredness to interconnectedness, a shift from self-interest to service and stewardship and a change from materialistic to a spiritual orientation.

Biberman & Whitty (1997) discusses the changing nature of work whereby the modern paradigm of work which embraces logic and rational decision making gives way to the spiritual paradigm that embraces emotion and intuition in decision processes. They argue that spiritual organisations, rather than believing in the preservation of the self at all costs, would be more concerned with existing in harmony with their environment and would thus be more supportive of the ecology and environment, and more concerned with meeting the needs of internal and external stakeholders. It is further suggested that employee ownership and community involvement, in partnership with employers, could evolve into an advanced form of co-management where all stakeholders shared power with spirituality forming the common ground for co-operation.

Mitroff *et al* (1999b, pg 90) state that in the socially responsible organisation, the founders are guided by strong spiritual principles or values that they apply directly to their businesses for the betterment of society. Mitroff & Denton, (1999b, pg83) further state that “ if a single word best captures the meaning of spirituality and the vital role it plays in people’s lives, that word is ‘interconnectedness’” which is the feeling of being connected to oneself, others, the community and the entire universe. This seems to resonate with Freeman’s (1984) landmark book where he introduced the concept of stakeholders which he defined as any group that can help or hurt the organisation and therefore included not just shareholders but customers, employees, suppliers, communities and government. This was a move toward understanding the company as being an entity that is ‘interconnected’ through many different stakeholders whose needs require consideration. In a sense, it might be construed that the stakeholder view was a move toward a more spiritual outlook.

Jurkiewicz *et al* (2004) developed a values framework for measuring the impact of workplace spirituality on organisational performance. The values included were benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility and trust and was discussed above in the literature review. It is argued that the stakeholder view of management where there is a requirement to build strong stakeholder relationships, fosters more of these values in the workplace than the narrow shareholder view.

Mitroff *et al*(1999, pg85) performed research into one of the key components of workplace spirituality by researching the question: “What gives people meaning in their work?”. The results were as follows:

1. “The ability to realise my full potential as a person”
2. “Being associated with a good organization or an ethical organization”
3. “Interesting work”
4. “Making money”

The key observation from the result is that “being associated with a good organisation” was more important to employees than “making money”. As discussed in the literature review, the King Report on Governance for South Africa (2009) makes the point of a company being a good corporate citizen and advocates the stakeholder view as one of the many recommendations.

Finally, Marques (2007) conducted a study on Starbucks to draw inferences on spiritual performance from the three perspectives of employees, customers and suppliers and societies. She concluded that Starbucks exemplifies the spiritual component of interconnectedness in the manner in which it seeks to develop effective ways to establish a connection with stakeholders at all levels. The other key spiritual component was the deep sense of meaning that the company articulated which can be identified as the key motive behind its actions. The company subscribes to what it calls ‘enlightened self-interest’ which ensures the decisions taken benefits multiple stakeholders.

The above discussion on the literature provides evidence that the two areas of academia may have a relation to each other. The purpose of the research is to establish if this is indeed the case.

CHAPTER 3: Research Questions

The study investigates the relationship between demographic variables, workplace spirituality and employees' perception of primary and secondary stakeholder relationships. The research questions to be investigated are:

3.1. RESEARCH QUESTION 1 (RQ1)

The first research question investigates whether an employees' perception of stakeholder relationships is affected by demographic variables.

The alternative hypothesis can be stated as follows:

H_{01} : There is a relationship between employees' perception of stakeholder relationships and demographic variables.

The statistically significant relationships based on the demographic variables of age, gender, race, employment level and work experience will be determined.

3.2. RESEARCH QUESTION 2 (RQ2)

The second research question investigates whether workplace spirituality is affected by demographic variables.

The alternative hypothesis can be stated as follows:

H₀₁: There is a relationship between workplace spirituality and demographic variables.

The statistically significant relationships based on demographic variables of age, gender, race, employment level and work experience will be determined.

3.3. RESEARCH QUESTION 3 (RQ3)

This is the main research question for this study and the rationale for this question follows directly from the literature that highlights the possible positive relationship between the constructs of workplace spirituality and stakeholder relationship perception.

The alternative hypothesis can therefore be stated as follows:

H₀₁: There is a positive correlation between workplace spirituality and employee's perception of primary and secondary stakeholder relationships.

CHAPTER 4: Research Methodology

The primary purpose of this research was to identify whether there is a relationship between an employee's spiritual perspective and their perception of stakeholder relationships on a primary and secondary level. In this chapter, the chosen research methodology to address the research problem is described. The approach and process for this descriptive study, the questionnaire design, the target population, the sampling method, the collection method, the data analysis tool and limitations are discussed.

4.1. Research Design

Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler (2008) state that descriptive studies provide descriptions of characteristics associated with the subject population and also enable the discovery of associations among different variables. Therefore the research design that was chosen was quantitative and descriptive in nature.

A cross-sectional survey was used which enabled the collection of primary data. Blumberg *et al* (2008), state that the discovery of associations among different variables is labelled a correlation study which is a sub-set of descriptive studies. For this study, the aim was to establish whether there is indeed a correlation between the variables of spirituality and primary and secondary stakeholder relationship perception.

Zikmund (2003) defines a survey as a research technique that is used to collect data from a sample population by means of a questionnaire. Given the context of this study, this instrument was apt as it assisted in understanding the characteristics of the variables of spirituality and employee stakeholder perception. The reason for using a survey was to obtain a representative sample of people that are employed or was previously employed.

The survey was piloted through a group of Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) MBA students (n=8) and each respondent was prompted to provide feedback on the content, time taken to complete, and to provide recommendations on the questions that were complex or unclear. The chosen method for administering the surveys was computer-delivered, self-administered. An electronic survey was hosted by Survey Monkey and represented over 90% of the responses. The remainder of the survey responses was achieved through manual administration. The survey was designed electronically to ensure that questions which required responses were completed before the respondent could proceed to the next question. The number of missing responses was therefore negligible; however, approximately 9% of respondents that started the electronic survey did not complete it. These responses were discarded from the analysis.

An advantage of using questionnaires is that respondents can be assured of confidentiality and thus are more likely to be truthful in their responses (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Surveys are also efficient, inexpensive, accurate and quick (Zikmund,

2003). According to Leedy & Ormrod (2005), a disadvantage of survey questionnaires is that the response rate is usually poor and the data can be biased based on the participants' levels of comprehension and understanding. The response rate for the survey was in the range of 15-20%. Another disadvantage is that surveys are not able to provide a deeper understanding of respondents' opinions which cannot be clarified (Cooper & Schindler, 1998).

4.2. Population and Sample

4.2.1. Population

For the purpose of this study, the population which (Zikmund, 2003, pg739) defined as "a complete group of entities sharing some common set of characteristics" was determined to be all current or previously employed persons. Therefore the unit of analysis which was the level at which the data was collected and the analysis conducted (Zikmund, 2003) was any person who was currently or previously employed. No restriction in terms of the person being employed in South Africa or being a South African citizen was placed as the variables that were investigated by this study were not limited to the South African context.

4.2.2. Sample and sampling method

The convenience sampling method was used for this study. Blumberg *et al* (2008), defines this type of sampling as non-probability samples that are unrestricted and

consequently the least reliable but also the cheapest and easiest to conduct. The sample was all post graduate business students and the sampling frame was the current business students at the GIBS. This sampling frame was used, firstly, because it represents managers from diverse industries and cultural backgrounds which are typical of the South African workplace. Secondly, the questionnaire on stakeholder relationships required a certain level of business knowledge to accurately answer the questions. The survey tested for the employment status of the respondent and respondents that were not currently or previously employed were discarded. Demographic questions were included for descriptive statistics purposes and to answer research question 1 and 2. The survey was open until the required number of responses of 80 had been gathered.

4.3. The Research Instrument

The research instruments used for this study were two questionnaires, one for the testing of spiritual perspective and the second for the testing of employee's perception of stakeholder relationships. The initial part of the survey requests biographical information as well as information on the employment status, level and experience of the respondent (included as Annexure B).

4.3.1. The Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS) Questionnaire

Reed (1986) developed the SPS which measures the saliency of a spiritual perspective in a person's life. Specifically, the 10-item SPS measures participants' perceptions of the extent to which they hold certain spiritual views and engage in spiritually-related interactions. In general, spirituality refers to an awareness of one's inner self and a sense of connection to a higher being, nature, others, or to some dimension or purpose greater than oneself (Reed, 1986). The ten item self-report questionnaire (included as Annexure D) was answered on a six point Likert scale.

The psychometric properties of the SPS are very good. It was initially tested on over 400 adults of all ages, including healthy, hospitalized, and seriously ill groups. Reliability, estimated by Cronbach's alpha, was rated consistently above .90 with very little redundancy among the items. The Cronbach's Alpha for this study was 0.917. Average inter-item correlation's ranged from 0.54 to 0.60 across the adult groups. The SPS has demonstrated criterion-related validity and discriminate validity (Reed, 1986). Researchers who have used the SPS since 1987 continue to confirm the reliability and validity of the instrument (Marschke, 2008; Dailey & Stewart (2007); Humphreys, (2000)). The SPS continues to be used very successfully in a wide variety of adult populations.

4.3.2. The Stakeholder Relationship Perception (SRP) Questionnaire

For this element of the questionnaire a series of scenarios and questions were developed based on the literature review to test for stakeholder relationship perspective (included as Annexure C). The construct of stakeholder relationships was broken down into questions pertaining to primary and secondary stakeholders.

Discriminant validity is the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The two measurement scales of the SPS and SRP were checked for discriminant validity by setting the correlations between the two instruments to one and then confirming that the resultant model was sufficiently different from the two construct model. Also, there were no cross-loadings between the items of the two instruments which further justified the high discriminant validity, suggesting that the constructs are unique.

4.4. Data Analysis

The data was imported into the statistics package, Statistica, version 10. The appropriate data types were allocated to the various data variables. Gender and race represented nominal data, whilst age, employment level and work experience was classified as ordinal data.

Thereafter, tests for reliability were performed on the constructs and sub-constructs. The negative items in each construct were reverse-coded to ensure consistent

direction of response. Non-contributing items were identified and decisions were taken on whether to exclude them from the analysis due to the significantly higher Cronbach's alpha value attained by its exclusion and the negative or non-significant pair-wise correlations between the items that resulted. Two items were excluded from the SRP on this basis, one from the primary and one from the secondary sections of the questionnaire.

A single continuous variable was thereafter created based on the means of the responses for each of items of the scales. Descriptive statistics was then performed and the constructs were thereafter tested for normality which was rejected for both constructs and resulted in non-parametric tests being used. The appropriate statistical analysis was then completed based on the research questions.

For research question 1 and 2, where gender and race was analysed, the Mann Whitney U test was administered. It is a nonparametric test for independent samples of ordinal data that allows for testing group differences when a normal distribution cannot be assumed (Zikmund, 2003). For the analysis of age, employment level and work experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used which is the appropriate test to compare three or more groups of independent samples with ordinal data where rank is important. Testing was performed at the 5% level of significance.

For research question 3, a non-parametric technique called the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationships between the ordinal data of the workplace spirituality and primary and secondary SRP constructs.

4.5. Research Limitations

- The first limitation is in regard to the sample used. GIBS postgraduate students were chosen for the study because of the administrative convenience and their understanding of business related terms applicable to the SRP instrument such as 'stakeholder relationships'. However, it remains possible that the spiritual perspective or stakeholder perception of business students may not represent that of the population which includes all employed or previously employed persons. Further, certain demographic differences were present in the sample, including a heavy bias toward 20-30 and 31-40 age groups as well as work experience largely ranging in the 6-10 and 11-15 year categories. These differences could also have a bias on the spiritual perspective or stakeholder perception of the sample;
- The second limitation is in regard to the secondary SRP questionnaire which included scenarios or questions on society/community and environment only. Subsequently the environmental question justified its exclusion from the analysis so the secondary SRP was biased in favour of only one stakeholder. Additional questions to include environment, governments and business

support groups should be included. The questions should be less complex and more succinct and this should adequately cater for their inclusion without making the survey too lengthy for the respondent;

- Finally, the Cronbach's alpha for the primary and secondary SRP's were low which questions the reliability of these instruments. Certain questions that justified exclusion were left out from the analysis to provide the best reliability possible.

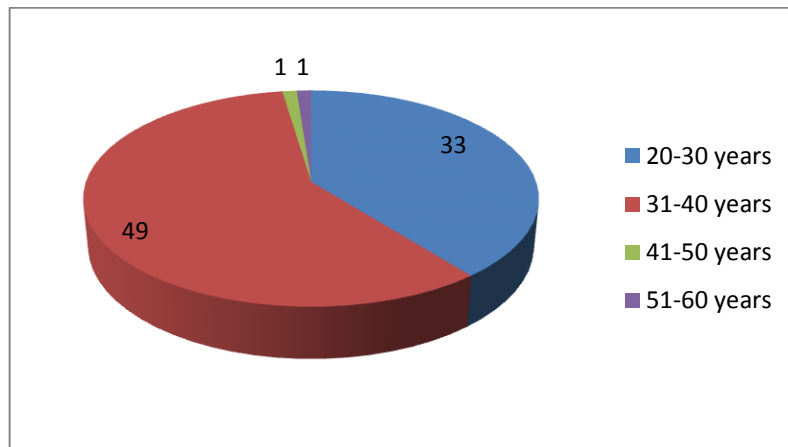
CHAPTER 5: Results

This purpose of this chapter is to present the results obtained from the survey questionnaires that were administered. The first part of the chapter discusses the demographic and related information, the reliability of the constructs and the mean workplace spirituality and SRP derived from the sample. The second part of the chapter presents the results obtained from the analysis of workplace spirituality and SRP with demographic variables. Finally, the result of the correlation study between workplace spirituality and SRP is presented.

5.1. Respondent demographics and related information

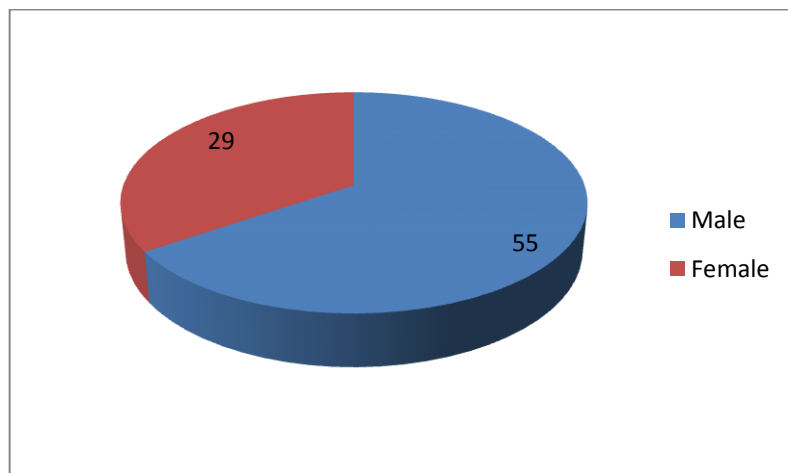
The total number of responses received was 84. The biographical characteristics of the sample are described as they have bearing on the results of the relationships under investigation. The first question in this section related to the age of the respondents. Figure 5 depicts the age distribution of the sample. The sample comprised of post graduate business students, therefore the age distribution was biased towards the groups of 21-30 and 31-40 years which are the typical ranges for business students. The largest group of respondents was in the 31-40 years of age cohort with only one respondent from the 41-50 year cohort and one from the 51-60 year cohort.

Figure 5: The age distribution of respondents (n=84)



The gender distribution is detailed in Figure 6. More than 65% of the respondents were male and approximately 35% were female.

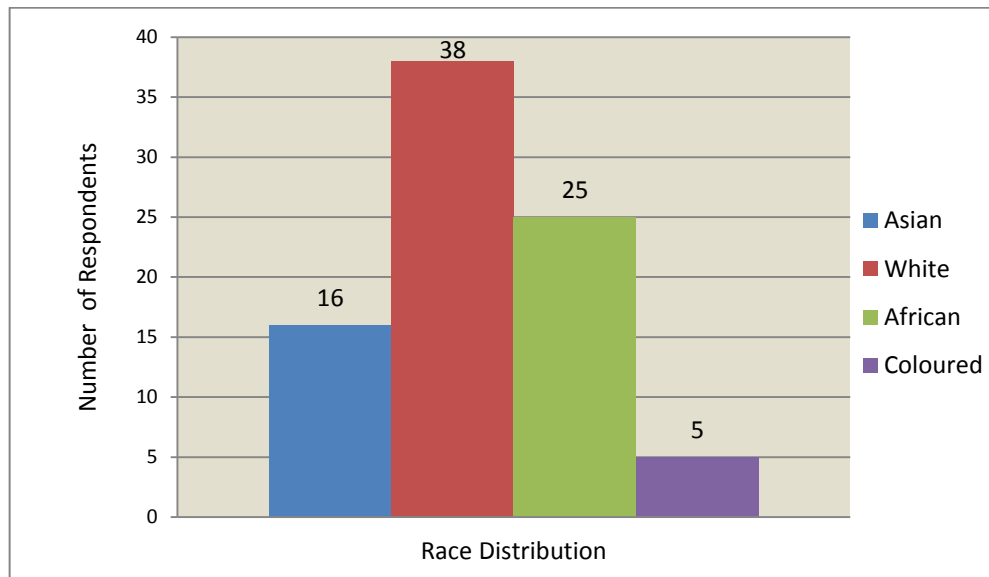
Figure 6: The gender distribution of respondents (n=84)



The race distribution of the sample is depicted in Figure 7. The White race group was the largest and represented 45% of the total sample. The African race group

comprised 30%, followed by Asian at 19% and then the Coloured group at 6% of the total sample.

Figure 7: The race distribution of respondents (n=84)



The work experience and employment level of respondents is detailed in Figure 8 and Figure 9 respectively. Approximately 54% of the respondents have between 6-10 years of experience, followed by 32% that has between 11-15 years. Given the fact that the sample was post graduate business students, this statistic is expected. Executive or senior management positions represent 39% of the sample, followed by junior or middle management that represent 36% with the remaining 25% of the respondents in specialist or technical positions.

Figure 8: The work experience of respondents (n=84)

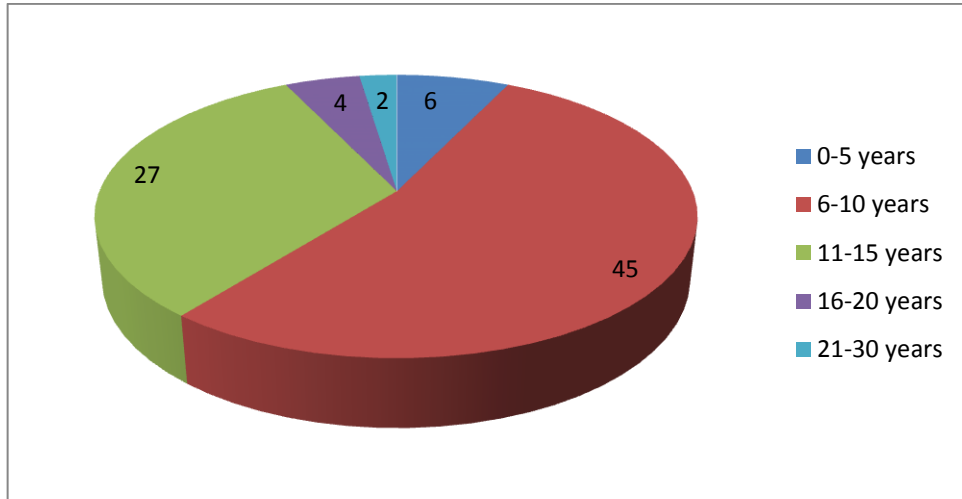
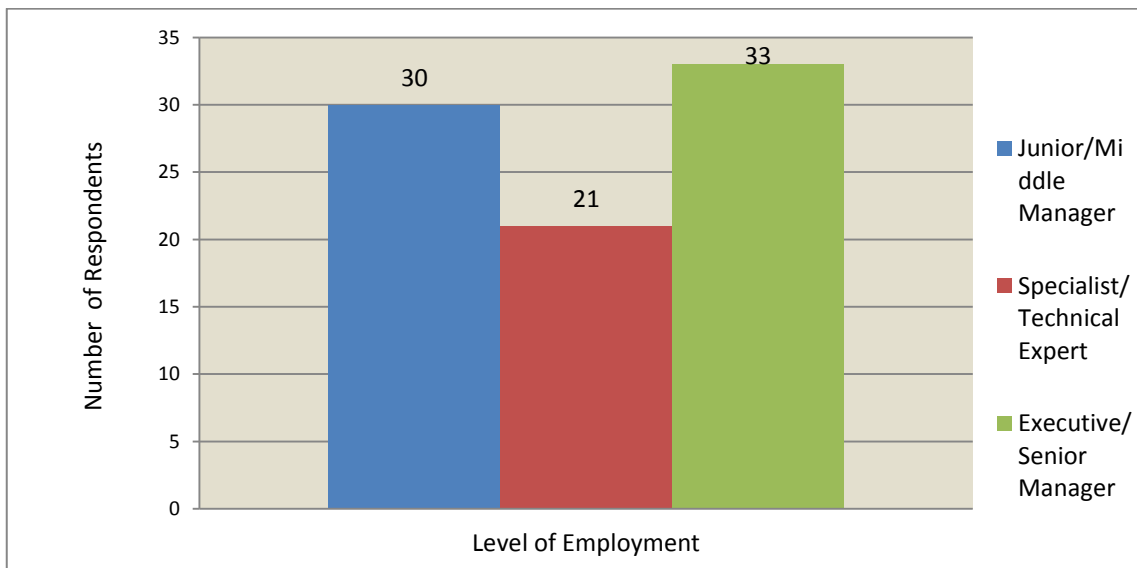


Figure 9: The level of employment of respondents (n=84)



5.2. The Measures

The measures were based on a six-point Likert scale with one being in least agreement and six in most agreement. The Likert scale was preferred because it was easy to administer, provided an appropriate range for respondents' to answer which ensured that variance in the results was achieved, is a well-accepted measurement scale and made statistical testing simpler by enabling the testing for difference in means between two samples.

The first measure was aimed at determining the respondent's perception of stakeholder relationships. The second measure pertained to workplace spirituality. The factor analysis performed on the data supported the creation of the sub-constructs of primary and secondary stakeholders. Therefore the study investigates workplace spirituality as measured by the Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS) and employees' perception of primary and secondary stakeholder relationships.

The Cronbach's alpha co-efficient is a measure of the internal-consistency reliability in terms of items ability to measure the intended underlying construct. It ranges from 0-1, whereby the closer to 0, the poorer the level of consistency reliability, or degree of agreement within the set of questions, the closer to 1 the higher the level of consistency. The Cronbach's alpha for the three measures are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The Cronbach's alpha co-efficients of the measures

Variables	Coefficient
The Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS) Questionnaire	0.917
Stakeholder Relationship Perception (SRP) Questionnaire - Primary Stakeholders	0.40
Stakeholder Relationship Perception (SRP) Questionnaire – Secondary Stakeholders	0.50

The Cronbach's alpha co-efficient of 0.6-0.94 is the range that represents fair to strong reliability of an instrument. The SPS which consists of 10 questions has an alpha value of 0.917 which shows strong reliability. The SRP – Primary instrument consisted of 4 questions and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.40. This low score reveals poor reliability of the instrument and is attributed to the long, complex questions and the reverse scaled questions used in the survey. The SRP – Secondary instrument consisted of 2 questions and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.50. This score also reveals low reliability for the same reasons as the SRP-Primary instrument.

The pilot test for the SRP survey was performed using eight respondents and feedback was gained in terms of the length and complexity of questions, as well as the overall time taken to complete. All eight respondents suggested only minor alterations to a few of the questions. However, in hind-sight, additional rigour should have been demonstrated in probing the key concerns expressed above that contributed to the

lower reliability of the SRP instrument. The data suggested that the length and complexity of the questions should have been adjusted toward shorter, more direct and easier to understand questions as evidenced by the 9% of total respondents that did not complete the survey.

5.3. Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality was measured by the SPS (Reed, 1986). In order to analyse the relationship between workplace spirituality and SRP, it is important to determine the level of workplace spirituality in the current sample. Table 2 details the means scores of the variables of the SPS based on a six point Likert scale.

Most respondents ranked “Forgiveness as being part of their spirituality” as the highest (mean 5.36), followed by “how often do I engage in private prayer or meditation” (mean 5.24) and thirdly “My spiritual views have had an influence upon my life” (mean 5.1). The lowest ranked variables were “How often do you share with others the problems and joys of living according to your spiritual beliefs?” (mean 3.89), followed by “How often do you read spiritually-related material?” (mean 4.27) and lastly “In talking with your family or friends, how often do you mention spiritual matters?” (mean 4.50). Strong workplace spirituality on variables is expressed by means of around 4.8. Therefore, overall, there appears to be a strong representation of workplace spirituality in the present sample.

Table 2: Means and Rankings of Workplace Spirituality Variables

Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS)			
Variable	Statement	Mean	Rank
SPS1	In talking with your family or friends, how often do you mention spiritual matters?	4.50	8
SPS2	How often do you share with others the problems and joys of living according to your spiritual beliefs?	3.89	10
SPS3	How often do you read spiritually-related material?	4.27	9
SPS4	How often do you engage in private prayer or meditation?	5.24	2
SPS5	Forgiveness is an important part of my spirituality.	5.36	1
SPS6	I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life.	4.61	7
SPS7	My spirituality is a significant part of my life.	4.92	4
SPS8	I frequently feel very close to God or a “higher power” in prayer, during public worship, or at important moments in my daily life.	4.64	6
SPS9	My spiritual views have had an influence upon my life.	5.10	3
SPS10	My spirituality is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.	4.77	5
Average		4.73	

5.4. Stakeholder Relationship Perception (SRP)

The SRP has two categories: Primary and Secondary. The first question, SRP1, from the Primary instrument and SRP2 from the Secondary instrument were excluded from the statistical analysis. This was done to increase the reliability of the instruments and was justified on the basis of the non-significant pair-wise correlation between these questions and other items. In order to analyse the relationship between workplace spirituality and stakeholder relationship perspective, it is important to determine the level of primary and secondary SRP in the current sample. Table 3 details the mean scores of the variables of Primary-SRP based on a six point Likert scale.

Table 3: Means and Rankings of Primary SRP Variables

Stakeholder Relationship Perspective (SRP) – Primary			
Variable	Statement (condensed)	Mean	Rank
*SRP1	An employee’s family member suddenly falls ill ...	4.40	3
SRP3	Your company has a monopoly in the industry ...	4.27	5
SRP4	Shareholders are unhappy with the returns received over the past year ... (R)	4.75	2
SRP6	Employee loyalty and morale is low due to recent retrenchments at your company ...	4.3	4
SRP8	A customer satisfaction survey performed at your company has revealed a decreasing trend ...	4.8	1
Average		4.50	

* excluded from sample

(R) – reverse keyed items

The highest mean ranking was for SRP8 (mean 4.8) which focused on the customer as the stakeholder, followed by SRP4 (mean 4.75) which focused as shareholders as the stakeholder. There is evidence to suggest that the sample placed highest emphasis and consideration for these two primary stakeholders with the least emphasis being placed on the suppliers (SRP3 – mean 4.27) and employees (SRP6 – mean 4.3). Strong SRP on variables is expressed by means that are around 4.8. Therefore, there appears to be moderate to strong SRP in the present sample based on Primary SRP.

Table 4 details the means scores of the variables of the Secondary-SRP based on a six point Likert scale.

Table 4: Means and Rankings of Secondary SRP Variables

Stakeholder Relationship Perspective (SRP) – Secondary			
Variable	Statement (condensed)	Mean	Rank
*SRP2	Your company, together with other companies have been unknowingly polluting the environment ... (R)	3.76	3
SRP5	Philanthropy should be included as part of a company's strategy	4.76	1
SRP7	A major tsunami has hit your country and decimated many coastal regions ... (R)	4.26	2
Average		4.26	

* excluded from sample

(R) – reverse keyed items

The highest mean ranking was for SRP5 (mean 4.76) and SRP7 (mean 4.26) which focused on society or community as the secondary stakeholder. The environment consideration SRP2 (mean 3.76) was ranked lower. Strong SRP on variables is

expressed by means that are around 4.8. Therefore, there appears to moderate to strong SRP in the present sample based on Secondary SRP.

Overall, the combination of primary and secondary SRP reveals moderate to strong SRP in the present sample.

5.5. The Relationship between Employees' Perception of Stakeholder Relationships and Demographic Variables

This section presents the results of the analysis to answer the first research question. The relationship between employees' perception of stakeholder relationships and the following biographic variables were investigated: age (with categories of 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60), gender, race, employment level (with categories Junior/Middle manager, Specialist/Technical expert, Senior/Executive manager) and work experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-30, >30 years).

For investigations involving gender and race the Mann Whitney U test was administered. It is a nonparametric test for ordinal data that allows for testing group differences when a normal distribution cannot be assumed (Zikmund, 2003). For the analysis of age, employment level and work experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used which is the appropriate test to compare three or more groups with ordinal data where rank is important. Testing was performed at the 5% level of significance.

Age:

One of the six primary and secondary SRP variables showed a statistically significant relationship with age. The variable is SRP5 “Philanthropy should be included as part of a company’s strategy” and relates to the secondary stakeholder of society. For this variable the mean rating for respondents 31-40 (mean 5.02) was greater than from 20-30 years of age (mean 4.33). The sample size for the ranges of 41-50 (1 respondent) and >50 years (1 respondent) were too small for statistical analysis. Philanthropy is more important to people within the age category of 31-40 as compared to the younger category of 20-30 years of age. Table 5 summarises the SRP with age. The mean ratings of the variables that were not statistically significant were excluded. There was no statistically significant relationship between primary and secondary SRP with age.

Table 5: Mean of significant SRP variable with age

Age (years)	Number of respondents	SRP7 p=0.039
		Mean SRP7
20-30	33	4.33
31-40	49	5.02
40-50	1	-
>50	1	-

Gender:

One of the six primary and secondary SRP variables showed a statistically significant relationship with gender. The variable is SRP3 “Your company has a monopoly in the

industry ...” and relates to the primary stakeholder of a supplier to the company. For this variable the mean rating for female respondents (mean 4.62) was greater than that for males (mean 4.09). Table 6 summarises the stakeholder relationship perception relationship with gender. The mean ratings of the variables that were not statistically significant were excluded. There was no statistically significant relationship between primary and secondary SRP with gender.

Table 6: Mean of significant SRP variable with gender

Gender	Number of respondents	SRP3
		Mean SRP3
		p=0.0477
Female	29	4.62
Male	55	4.09

Race:

Two of the six primary and secondary SRP variables showed a statistically significant relationship with race. The variables are SRP5 “Philanthropy should be included as part of a company’s strategy” and SRP7 “A major tsunami has hit your country and decimated many coastal regions ...” and both relate to the secondary stakeholder of society. There is evidence that the mean rating for white respondents was lower than the respondents of other races indicating a decreased consideration for societal welfare. Table 7 summarises the stakeholder relationship perception relationship with race. The mean ratings of the variables that were not statistically significant were

excluded. There was a statistically significant relationship between secondary SRP with the White race group.

Table 7: Mean of significant SRP variable with race

Race	Number of respondents	SRP5 p=0.0455	SRP 7 p=0.0072
		Mean SRP5	Mean SRP7
White	38	4.45	3.71
African	25	5.16	4.8
Asian	16	4.63	4.63
Coloured	5	5.6	4.6

Employment Level and Work Experience:

None of the six primary and secondary SRP variables showed a statistically significant relationship with employment level or work experience. There was therefore no statistically significant relationship between primary and secondary SRP with employment level or work experience.

5.6. The Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Demographic Variables

This section presents the results of the analysis to answer the second research question. The relationship between workplace spirituality and the following biographic variables were investigated: age (with categories of 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60), gender, race, employment level (with categories Junior/Middle manager,

Specialist/Technical expert, Senior/Executive manager) and work experience (0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-30, >30 years). For investigations involving gender and race the Mann Whitney U test was administered. For the analysis of age, employment level and work experience, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. Testing was performed at the 5% level of significance.

Age:

None of the ten workplace spirituality variables as measured by SPS showed a statistically significant relationship with age.

Gender:

Two of the ten SPS variables showed a statistically significant relationship with gender. The variables are SPS5 “Forgiveness is an important part of my spirituality.” and SRP6 “I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life”. The mean rating for female respondents was higher than the male respondents in both cases. Table 8 summarises the workplace spirituality relationship with gender. The mean ratings of the variables that were not statistically significant were excluded.

Table 8: Mean of significant SPS variable with gender

Gender	Number of respondents	SPS5	SPS 6
		p=0.04	p=0.014
		Mean SPS5	Mean SPS6
Female	29	5.66	5.17
Male	55	5.20	4.78

Race:

Two of the ten SPS variables showed a statistically significant relationship with race. The variables are SPS6 “I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life” and SPS7 “My spirituality is a significant part of my life”. The mean rating for Asian respondents was higher than respondents from other race groups in both cases. Table 9 summarises the workplace spirituality relationship with race. The mean ratings of the variables that were not statistically significant were excluded.

Table 9: Mean of significant SPS variable with race

Race	Number of respondents	SPS6 p=0.01	SPS 7 p=0.011
		Mean SPS6	Mean SPS7
White	38	4.34	4.63
African	25	4.52	5.00
Asian	16	5.50	5.56
Coloured	5	4.20	4.60

Employee Level and Work Experience:

None of the ten workplace spirituality variables as measured by SPS showed a statistically significant relationship with employee level or work experience.

5.7. The Relationship between Workplace Spirituality and Employees' Perception of Stakeholder Relationships

This section presents the results of the analysis to answer the third research question. The relationship between workplace spirituality and employees' perception of stakeholder relationships is considered. The SRP construct was broken down into the two sub-constructs, namely primary and secondary stakeholders. To determine the relationships between the SPS variables and the two sub-constructs, a non-parametric technique called the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficient was used for the ordinal data. The overall correlation matrix for the relationships between workplace spirituality and the sub-constructs of primary and secondary SRP is detailed in Table 10. There appears to be no significant correlation between workplace spirituality and Primary SRP (0.024) as well as primary and secondary SRP (0.067). A moderate and significant relationship exists between workplace spirituality and secondary SRP.

Table 10: Correlation matrix for workplace spirituality and primary and secondary SRP

	Mean Spiritual Perspective (workplace spirituality)	Primary SRP	Secondary SRP
Mean Spiritual Perspective (workplace spirituality)	1.00	0.024	0.151*
Primary SRP	n/a	1.00	0.067
Secondary SRP	n/a	n/a	1.00

* Statistically significant at the 5% level of significance

The analysis of the relationship between workplace spirituality and primary SRP resulted in correlations that are close to zero or very weak. Only three statistically significant relationships revealed a moderate correlation in absolute value as depicted in Table 11. Overall, the Kendall Tau correlation co-efficient between primary SRP and workplace spirituality was 0.024 and statistically non-significant.

Table 11: The relationship between workplace spirituality and Primary SRP (Kendall's Tau correlation co-efficient)

SPS/Primary	SRP3	SRP4	SRP6	SRP8
SPS1	-0.116	0.038	0.111	0.114
SPS2	-0.018	-0.065	0.055	0.115
SPS3	-0.0393	0.020	0.118	0.073
SPS4	0.090	-0.185*	-0.123	0.002
SPS5	0.032	-0.118	0.099	0.065
SPS6	0.152*	-0.058	0.057	0.134
SPS7	0.055	-0.144	0.120	0.042
SPS8	0.031	-0.065	0.026	0.052
SPS9	-0.016	-0.056	0.099	0.052
SPS10	0.094	-0.154*	0.088	0.084

* Statistically significant at the 5% level of significance

Upon analysing the correlations for workplace spirituality and secondary SRP, they were close to zero, weak or moderate with no evidence of any strong relationships. Eight statistically significant relationships were determined which suggests that overall

there is a moderate relationship between workplace spirituality and secondary SRP as evidenced by a statistically significant Kendall Tau correlation co-efficient of 0.151. Table 12 details the relationship between secondary SRP and workplace spirituality.

Table 12: The relationship between workplace spirituality and Secondary SRP

SPS/Secondary	SRP5	SRP7
SPS1	0.063	0.113
SPS2	-0.071	0.057
SPS3	0.076	0.044
SPS4	-0.052	0.016
SPS5	0.278*	0.297*
SPS6	0.166*	0.193*
SPS7	0.203*	0.184*
SPS8	0.095	0.137
SPS9	0.114	0.107
SPS10	0.254*	0.276*

* Statistically significant at the 5% level of significance

Summary of the relationship between workplace spirituality and SRP

There are no strong linear relationships between workplace spirituality and primary and secondary stakeholder relationship perception. A summary of the cases where there is a significant relationship between these variables at the 5% level of significance is tabulated in table 13. A positive (+) sign refers to a positive correlation which means that the workplace spirituality and the SRP variable move in the same direction. A negative (-) sign refers to a negative correlation which means that the variables move in opposite directions.

Table 13: Summary of significant correlations between workplace spirituality and SRP

Workplace Spirituality	Primary SRP	Secondary SRP
SPS1	none	none
SPS2	none	none
SPS3	none	none
SPS4	SRP4-	none
SPS5	none	SRP5+, SRP7+
SPS6	SRP3+	SRP5+, SRP7+
SPS7	none	SRP5+, SRP7+
SPS8	none	none
SPS9	none	none
SPS10	SRP4-	SRP5+, SRP7+

SRP4 pertains to shareholders interest as a stakeholder of the company and is negatively correlated with SPS4 which relates to the amount of prayer or meditation undertaken by the employee. Additionally, SRP4 is negatively correlated with SPS10 which pertains to spirituality answering many questions about the meaning of life. SPS10 is further positively correlated with secondary stakeholder relationship perception (SRP5 and SRP7).

SPS5 (Forgiveness is an important part of my spirituality), SPS6 (I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life), SPS7 (My spirituality is a significant part of my life) and SPS10 (My spirituality is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life) are positively correlated to secondary SRP (SRP5 and SRP7).

SPS6 (I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life), whilst being positively correlated with secondary SRP is also positively correlated with SRP3 which relates to a decision to assist a distressed supplier to your business. Verbal descriptions for the above relationships are shown in Table 14 which follows. A SRP variable that has a plus (+) sign is perceived to have a positive effect on the workplace spirituality variable, while one that appears to have a minus (-) sign is perceived to have a negative effect on it.

Table 14: Verbal descriptions of significant correlations between workplace spirituality and SRP

Workplace Spirituality (SPS)	Statement
SPS 4	How often do you engage in private prayer or meditation?
SRP4-	Shareholders are unhappy with the returns received over the past year and threaten to change the current management. However, the CEO is aware that the company has a long-term strategy that will result in sustainable adequate returns after the next two years. Despite this fact, the CEO decides TO CHANGE strategy toward immediately increasing returns for the shareholders at the expense of the long term strategy. (R)
SPS5	Forgiveness is an important part of my spirituality
SRP5+	Philanthropy (donations of money, property, or work to needy persons or for socially useful purposes) SHOULD be included as part of a company's strategy.
SRP7+	A major tsunami has hit your country and has decimated many coastal regions. Your company has decided NOT TO get involved in

	the relief efforts due to the excessively high costs involved for these relief efforts. (R)
SPS6	I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life.
SRP3+	Your company has a monopoly in the industry. The profit margins, OF A SUPPLIER to your business, have been declining considerably due to higher input costs. The supplier has therefore requested a higher selling price to your company to enable it to remain in business. Your company decides to ACCEPT the supplier's request.
SRP5+	Philanthropy (donations of money, property, or work to needy persons or for socially useful purposes) SHOULD be included as part of a company's strategy.
SRP7+	A major tsunami has hit your country and has decimated many coastal regions. Your company has decided NOT TO get involved in the relief efforts due to the excessively high costs involved for these relief efforts. (R)
SPS7	My spirituality is a significant part of my life.
SRP5+	Philanthropy (donations of money, property, or work to needy persons or for socially useful purposes) SHOULD be included as part of a company's strategy.
SRP7+	A major tsunami has hit your country and has decimated many coastal regions. Your company has decided NOT TO get involved in the relief efforts due to the excessively high costs involved for these relief efforts. (R)
SPS10	My spirituality is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.
SRP4-	Shareholders are unhappy with the returns received over the past year and threaten to change the current management. However, the CEO is aware that the company has a long-term strategy that will result in sustainable adequate returns after the next two years. Despite this fact, the CEO decides TO CHANGE strategy toward immediately increasing returns for the shareholders at the expense

	of the long term strategy. (R)
SRP5+	Philanthropy (donations of money, property, or work to needy persons or for socially useful purposes) SHOULD be included as part of a company's strategy.
SRP7+	A major tsunami has hit your country and has decimated many coastal regions. Your company has decided NOT TO get involved in the relief efforts due to the excessively high costs involved for these relief efforts. (R)

(R) – reverse keyed items

CHAPTER 6: Discussion of Results

6.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss, explain and interpret the findings of the analysis that was presented in Chapter 5 in relation to the literature that was discussed in Chapter 2. The initial part of the chapter discusses the first two research questions which compares the results obtained from the demographic profiling to the results obtained from previous studies as discussed in Chapter 2. The final part of the chapter discusses the third research question which relates to the relationship between workplace spirituality and primary and secondary SRP. As far as the literature was reviewed, no previous study was conducted on this topic; therefore no comparison can be made in this regard.

It was discussed in Chapter 5 that the mean rating for primary SRP (mean 4.52) was greater than that for secondary SRP (mean 4.26) which implies that respondents perceived the interests of primary stakeholders to be more important than secondary stakeholders. Podnar *et al* (2006) argued that not all stakeholders are equally important for a company and that three levels of communication between companies and stakeholders exist. Key relationships are required to be developed with primary stakeholders because communication with them is inevitable. The second level represented secondary stakeholders where communication is necessary. Therefore, the higher mean rating achieved by this study for primary SRP concurs with the

literature which suggests that communication with primary stakeholders is inevitable and these relationships are therefore more important.

6.2. Research Question 1

The first research question enquired about the relationship between employees' perception of stakeholder relationships and demographic variables. The relationship with the following variables was investigated: age, gender, race, employment level and work experience.

One of the six primary and secondary SRP variables showed a statistically significant relationship with age at the 5% level of significance. The variable is SRP5 "Philanthropy should be included as part of a company's strategy" and relates to the secondary stakeholder of society. For this variable the mean rating for respondents 31-40 (mean 5.02) was greater than from 20-30 years of age (mean 4.33). This is in contrast to the finding of Demirel (2008) who found no difference between stakeholder relationship perception (SRP) and age.

One of the six primary and secondary SRP variables showed a statistically significant relationship with gender. The variable is SRP3 "Your company has a monopoly in the industry ..." and relates to the primary stakeholder of supplier to the company. For this variable the mean rating for female respondents (mean 4.62) was greater than

that for males (mean 4.09). This result is in agreement with Demirel (2008) who found a moderate relationship between SRP and gender.

Two of the six primary and secondary SRP variables showed a statistically significant relationship with race. The variables are SRP5 “Philanthropy should be included as part of a company’s strategy” and SRP7 “A major tsunami has hit your country and decimated many coastal regions ...” and both relate to the secondary stakeholder of society. There is evidence that the mean rating for white respondents was lower than the respondents of other races. As far as can be established from the literature, no previous study investigated the relationship between race and SRP.

None of the six primary and secondary SRP variables showed a statistically significant relationship with work experience. This is again incongruent with the findings of Demirel (2008) who found a large and significant relationship between SRP and amount of work experience.

In terms of level of employment, as related to SRP, none of the six primary and secondary variables showed any statistically significant relationship. Graves *et al* (1997) argued that the quality of key stakeholder relationships is related to the overall quality of management of the firm. In contrast to this, Coombs and Gilley (2005) argued that chief executive compensation was more negatively than positively correlated to stakeholder management implying that it could be in the CEO’s personal interest to have weak stakeholder management policies. In the current sample, 39%

of respondents were in executive or senior management positions, 36% in junior or middle management and 25% in specialist or technical roles. This study provides no evidence to suggest that employment level has any positive or negative influence on an employee's perception of primary or secondary stakeholder relationships. This is an important finding because executive and senior managers have more influence and decision making authority within organisations.

CONCLUSION

The results for SRP are mixed when compared to the literature reviewed. This research study found a weak relationship with age and no relationship with work experience, which is in contrast to the findings of Demirel (2008). One possible reason for these discrepancies could be attributed to the different backgrounds and influences of the respondents in the samples used. This research was conducted with South African business students as opposed to the literature which used a sample in the information technology sector in Turkey.

The investigation of the demographic variables has provided better insight into the important area of stakeholder relationships in business which has become increasingly popular as is evidenced by the King 3 report. Gulati (2002), Heugens (2002), Svendsen *et al* (2001) and Rodríguez (2002) provide evidence for a strong correlation between good stakeholder relationships and business success through improved information sharing, competitive advantages and structures and processes.

Based on the demographic profiling for SRP, the evidence of this study suggests that a non-white female in the age category of 31-40 years has the highest consideration for the interests of primary and secondary stakeholders. The level of employment and work experience are not relevant.

6.3. Research Question 2

The second research question enquired about the relationship between workplace spirituality as measured by the Spiritual Perspective Scale (SPS) and demographic variables. The relationship with the following variables was investigated: age, gender, race, employment level and work experience.

None of the ten workplace spirituality variables showed a statistically significant relationship with age. This concurs with the findings of Kinjerski *et al* (2006) and Rego *et al* (2008) where both studies found that age did not relate with perceptions of workplace spirituality.

Two of the ten SPS variables showed a statistically significant relationship with gender. The variables are SPS5 "Forgiveness is an important part of my spirituality." and SRP6 "I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life". The mean rating for female respondents was higher than the male respondents in both cases. The above result is incongruent with the findings of Kinjerski *et al* (2006) who found no gender difference. However, this result is in agreement with Stevinson *et al* (2009) who found

that spirit at work demonstrated small but significant correlations with gender in the manner that the female respondents' mean rating was higher than that of their male counterparts.

Two of the ten SPS variables showed a statistically significant relationship with race. The variables are SPS6 "I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life" and SPS7 "My spirituality is a significant part of my life". The mean rating for Asian respondents was higher than respondents from other race groups in both cases. This finding could be aligned to the finding of Stevinson *et al* (2009) which showed a small but significant relationship with ethnicity.

None of the ten workplace spirituality variables showed a statistically significant relationship with work experience and this concurs with the finding of Rego *et al* (2008).

In terms of level of employment, Kinjerski *et al* (2006) found that management and professional staff reported significantly higher levels of spirit at work than did administrative, clerical, technical, or trades staff. This was in contrast to the findings in this study which found no significant relationship between workplace spirituality and employee level.

CONCLUSION

The results of the demographic profiling are congruent with the results of previous research with the exception of level of employment where the literature suggested that management and professional staff possess higher levels of workplace spirituality than trade or administrative staff. The reason for this discrepancy could be attributed to the sample used in the current study, which included post graduate business students that largely occupied professional or management positions to the exclusion of trade and administrative positions. The strong mean rating for workplace spirituality in the current sample of 4.73, as discussed in Chapter 5, concurs with the literature once this discrepancy is considered.

The enquiry into the relationship between demographic variables appears to have provided better insight and understanding into this highly personal and philosophical construct (Milliman *et al*, 2003) that embraces meaningful work, inner life and a sense of community (Duchon *et al*, 2005) and strongly argues in favour of positive attitudinal outcomes for organisations (Milliman *et al*, 2003; Karakas, 2010a).

The results of the demographic profiling for workplace spirituality suggest that Asian female workers, in professional or management positions, display the highest levels of workplace spirituality. Age and work experience are not relevant.

6.4. Research Question 3

The third research question enquired into the relationship between workplace spirituality as measured through the SPS and SRP questionnaires. The relationships between these two constructs were analysed on an individual item level as well as on an overall construct level.

On an individual item level, two relationships were statistically significant. In the first, there was evidence to suggest a negative relationship between shareholder interests (SRP4) and workplace spirituality whereby two items of SPS (SPS4 and SPS10) revealed statistically significant negative correlations. The second individual item relationship suggested a positive relationship between supplier interest (SRP3) and workplace spirituality (SRP6). Both these relationships are substantiated by the literature whereby Biberman *et al* (1997) argued that spiritual organisations, rather than believing in the preservation of the self at all costs, would be more concerned with existing in harmony with their environment and more concerned with meeting the needs of internal and external stakeholders. The remaining individual item level positive correlations of SPS5, SPS6, SPS7, SPS10 with secondary SRP (SRP5, SRP7), were excluded as they are discussed on the overall construct level below.

On an overall construct level, a moderate, statistically significant relationship between workplace spirituality and secondary SRP was found. Waddock (2001) defines primary

stakeholders to be essential for the business itself to exist (owners, employees, customers and suppliers) and secondary stakeholders are those who play a fundamental role in achieving business credibility and acceptance of its activities (e.g. communities, governments, business support groups, media, institutional forces, environment). Primary stakeholders as opposed to secondary stakeholders engage in direct economic transactions with the business.

It was discussed in Chapter 1 that academic and professional literature on management is replete with compelling examples of leaders who abuse power and act selfishly and that there is broad disenchantment with leadership as articulated by the surge in crises of confidence in leadership. These have been evidence by ethical scandals, environmental disasters and the recent 2008 global financial crisis or the subprime mortgage crisis.

It is for these reasons that there is increasing evidence to suggest that business has moved toward an increased consideration for the interests of secondary stakeholders. As described by Freeman (1984), long-term business success depends on the ability of a firm and its leadership to act responsibly with respect to all stakeholders in business, society and the environment. This is supported by Wade (2006) who refers to a global stakeholder society whereby companies are expected to be accountable to stakeholders for their wider economic, environmental and societal impacts. Within the South African context this is evidenced by the move toward increased corporate governance and corporate social responsibility. The introduction of the King III Report

advocates reporting based on the triple context of social, environmental and economic aspects in which businesses operate. Also, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange has adopted the Socially Responsible Investment Index (SRI) which identifies companies listed on the JSE that integrate the principles of the triple context of business and good governance.

This study found a link between the secondary stakeholder aspects of society and community with workplace spirituality. This is supported by Mitroff *et al* (1999, pg 90) who stated that in the socially responsible organisation, the founders are guided by strong spiritual principles or values that they apply directly to their businesses for the betterment of society. Mitroff & Denton, (1999, pg83) further state that “ if a single word best captures the meaning of spirituality and the vital role it plays in people’s lives, that word is ‘interconnectedness’” which is the feeling of being connected to oneself, others, the community and the entire universe.

This has also been emphasised by Karakas (2010a) who suggests a shift from an economic focus to a balance of profits, quality of life, spirituality, and social responsibility concerns, a shift from self-centeredness to interconnectedness, a shift from self-interest to service and stewardship and a change from materialistic to a spiritual orientation.

CONCLUSION

The possible positive relationship between workplace spirituality and stakeholder relationships was suggested in the conclusion section of Chapter 2. This has been validated on a secondary stakeholder level by this research study. This is an important finding which suggests that if an organisation wishes to embrace the interests of the community and society, the level of spiritual perspective of its employees should be considered.

Neal & Biberman (2003) argue that spiritual practices and spiritual values may be among the most powerful variables related to personal, team and organisational effectiveness. This research suggests that these values have an added application of potentially increasing organisational effectiveness through the benefit realised from better managed secondary stakeholder relationships (Gulati 2002; Svendsen *et al* 2001).

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The first part of this chapter summarises the research findings and conclusions and thereafter provides recommendations. The second part focuses on suggestions for future research that could potentially add value to the thinking and insights into this body of knowledge.

7.2. Conclusions of the Study

Workplace spirituality is an emerging field of enquiry within the organisational development fraternity which has commanded much interest in the recent past (Cavanagh, 1999). This growing interest signifies the importance of recognising that employees have an inner life that is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community (Duchon *et al*, 2005). Similarly, there has been increased emphasis placed on the importance of managing stakeholder relationships in business (Institute of Directors in Southern Africa. 2009a). Both of these topics have stemmed from the recent shortcomings, failures and negligence of corporates to act responsibly towards the interests and benefits of all stakeholders as described in Chapter 1.

The study confirms that there is a moderate positive relationship between workplace spirituality and secondary stakeholder relationships. The focus of the workplace spirituality literature has been on organisational attitudes as it relates to performance

(Milliman *et al*, 2003; Karakas 2010a). This study adds to the current body of knowledge by establishing a previously untested but important relationship with secondary stakeholder relationships. Therefore, an employee with higher spiritual perspective, as it manifests in the workplace, shows increased consideration for the relationships with secondary stakeholders which include communities, society and the environment.

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that this study could also have applicability within the corporate governance arena. Recent emphasis has been placed on stakeholder relationships through the introduction of the Governance Element Eight of the King III Report. This study adds workplace spirituality as a construct to consider when engaging with secondary stakeholders.

This leads to the second key finding of this study. The level of employment of employees had no relationship to their perception of either primary or secondary stakeholders or workplace spirituality. Influential decision making within an organisation occurs at senior and executive level and this finding suggests these employees do not display a different perception toward stakeholder relationships or workplace spirituality.

The other results of this study revealed that the White race group showed moderately lower perception of secondary stakeholder relationships when compared to colleagues from other races. Females and the Asian race group displayed moderately higher

spiritual perspective than their male counterparts and the other race groups respectively.

7.3. Recommendations

The outcomes from this research could be useful to companies, academic fraternity and governing bodies. The first outcome determined that the typical demographic characteristics of an employee that displays high consideration for stakeholder relationships are:

- non-white
- female
- in the age category of 31-40 years

The typical demographic variables of an employee that displays high workplace spirituality are:

- Asian
- female
- workers in professional or management positions

This information could be useful to companies who seek to engage more with secondary stakeholders to develop sustainable win-win solutions on a social, community and environmental level. These results can be incorporated into the recruitment process of companies and could be especially important for non-governmental organisations.

The shift from the economic view toward the balanced view of profits (Karakis, 2010a) requires considering the interests of all stakeholders in the organisational decision making process and it is suggested through this study, that higher spiritual perspective could be an enabler for companies to strike that balance when it comes to secondary stakeholder interests. This information would be useful to companies, academics in the field of workplace spirituality and corporate governance, and governing bodies that attempt to regulate business practises.

7.4. Suggestions for Future Research

The recommendations for future research are discussed below and should be read in conjunction with the limitations section of this report.

- The first recommendation would be to confirm the relationships found in this study by performing the same research within different industries thus eradicating the limitation of this study in regard to the sample used;
- A second recommendation would be to use different stakeholder classifications as discussed in the literature review to investigate the stakeholder relationship perception of employees;
- The Spirituality Perspective Scale was chosen to measure workplace spirituality for this study because of its ease of use and simplicity. However, in future research this could be substituted for the Spirit at Work Scale (SAWS) which includes four sub-constructs of spirit at work. The Stakeholder Relationship Perception Questionnaire was developed for this research study but proved to

have limitations. A third recommendation would therefore be to perform this research using different survey instruments to confirm the results of this study.

- The final recommendation would be to determine the factors that influence stakeholder relationship perception and workplace spirituality.

The literature supports a new and balanced view for undertaking business, one that includes the interests of all stakeholders. This study suggests the inclusion of spirituality, where secondary stakeholders are concerned, to assist in achieving this balance.

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Appendix A

Consent Section:

I am doing research on the relationship between an employee's spiritual perspective and his/her perception of stakeholder relationships.

You will be asked to respond to 18 questions, the first 8 are in relation to your perception of stakeholder relationships and the second 10 relate to your personal spirituality. It should not take longer than 10-15 minutes of your time.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. Please be as honest as possible in your responses as all data will be anonymous and confidential. By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in the research. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or myself on the details below.

Researcher Name: Neelesh Pillay Email Address: neeshpillay@gmail.com Phone Number: 0837835857	Research Supervisor: Mr Gavin Price Email Address: priceg@gibs.co.za Phone Number: 011 771 4223
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Appendix B

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The following questions request biographical and lifestyle information. They will be used for purposes of this research only. Please circle the relevant answer:

1) Age:

- a) <20 years
- b) 20-30 years
- c) 31-40 years
- d) 41-50 years
- e) 51-60 years
- f) >60 years

2) Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female

3) Race

- a) African
- b) White
- c) Asian
- d) Coloured
- e) Other

Please answer the following questions by marking an "X" in the space below that group of words that best describes you

Are you currently employed or have you been employed previously?

YES	NO

If you have answered YES to the previous question, please answer the following two questions:

Please indicate which of the following employment levels best describes your current/previous job?

JUNIOR MANAGER	MIDDLE MANAGER	SPECIALIST or TECHNICAL	SENIOR MANAGER	EXECUTIVE MANAGER

What is/was your approximate work experience (please circle the relevant answer)?

- a) 0-5 years
- b) 6-10 years
- c) 11-15 years
- d) 16-20 years
- e) 21-30 years
- f) >30 years

QUESTIONNAIRE 1: STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIP PERCEPTION (SRP)

Introduction and Directions:

I am interested in your responses to the **8** scenarios/question/statements below about stakeholder relationships. Please answer each question as honestly as possible to ensure that your true views are expressed. Remember, all responses are anonymous. Please mark an “X” in the space below your answer.

1. An employee’s family member suddenly falls seriously ill. However, a very important meeting, to which the employee is integral, with one of the company's biggest customers has already been scheduled. The company is at risk of losing this customer.

It is ACCEPTABLE for the employee to miss the meeting.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Your company, together with other companies in the area have been unknowingly polluting the environment which has been proven to harm the surrounding community. The other companies have contested the matter in court mainly due to the serious financial impact any change will have to their businesses. Your company decides to institute court proceedings as well to prevent having to retrench staff.

Please indicate the extent to which you AGREE with the decision taken by your company.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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3. Your company has a monopoly in the industry. The profit margins, OF A SUPPLIER to your business, have been declining considerably due to higher input costs. The supplier has therefore requested a higher selling price to your company to enable it to remain in business. Your company decides to ACCEPT the supplier's request.

Please indicate the extent to which you AGREE with the action taken by your company.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Shareholders are unhappy with the returns received over the past year and threaten to change the current management. However, the CEO is aware that the company has a long-term strategy that will result in sustainable adequate returns after the next two years. Despite this fact, the CEO decides TO CHANGE strategy toward immediately increasing returns for the shareholders at the expense of the long term strategy.

Please indicate the extent to which you AGREE with the action taken by the CEO.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Philanthropy (donations of money, property, or work to needy persons or for socially useful purposes) SHOULD be included as part of a company's strategy.

Please indicate the extent to which you AGREE with the above statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Employee loyalty and morale is low due to recent retrenchments at your company and a significant investment is required to restore this. The CEO decides to UNDERTAKE this investment even though the company is under significant pressure to reduce costs. Further, this decision will result in the company missing the profit expectation of the market (profits will be lower than market expectation).

Please indicate the extent to which you AGREE with this action taken by the CEO.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. A major tsunami has hit your country and has decimated many coastal regions. Your company has decided NOT TO get involved in the relief efforts due to the excessively high costs involved for these relief efforts.

Please indicate the extent to which you AGREE with the above decision.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. A customer satisfaction survey performed at your company has revealed a decreasing trend over the past 24 months. The company is already far behind its profit budget. Nevertheless, management has UNDERTAKEN to invest in activities to improve customer satisfaction. This decision will also result in lower bonuses being paid to employees.

Please indicate the extent to which you AGREE with the above decision.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Appendix D

QUESTIONNAIRE 2 - SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE SCALE ©Reed, 1986

Introduction and Directions: In general, spirituality refers to an awareness of one’s inner self and a sense of connection to a higher being, nature, others, or to some purpose greater than oneself. I am interested in your responses to the **10** questions below about spirituality as it may relate to your life. There are no right or wrong answers. Answer each question to the best of your ability by marking an “X” in the space below that group of words that best describes you.

9. In talking with your family or friends, how often do you mention spiritual matters?

Not at all	Less than once a year	About once a year	About once a month	About once a week	About once a day

10. How often do you share with others the problems and joys of living according to your spiritual beliefs?

Not at all	Less than once a year	About once a year	About once a month	About once a week	About once a day

11. How often do you read spiritually-related material?

Not at all	Less than once a year	About once a year	About once a month	About once a week	About once a day

12. How often do you engage in private prayer or meditation?

Not at all	Less than once a year	About once a year	About once a month	About once a week	About once a day

Spiritual Perspective Scale (continued)

Directions: Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by marking an "X" in the space above the words that best describe you.

13. Forgiveness is an important part of my spirituality.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. I seek spiritual guidance in making decisions in my everyday life.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

15. My spirituality is a significant part of my life.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

16. I frequently feel very close to God or a "higher power" in prayer, during public worship, or at important moments in my daily life.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

17. My spiritual views have had an influence upon my life.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

18. My spirituality is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree more than agree	Agree more than disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

If possible, in the box below, please describe how you define spirituality, or provide any other comments you feel are important for the researcher to know about. Thank you.

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