

Workplace spirituality: the game changer of 21st century workplace

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Abstract To bridge the knowledge gap between the research field and practical organizational setting. WPS is gaining popularity among researchers but lacks real-time practice. This study provides an overview and intellectual structures of WPS on which researchers can further develop modules to practice WPS in real-time scenarios. The authors studied the intellectual structure and emerging themes of workplace spirituality using bibliometric techniques. This is a bibliometric study using scientific data extracted from the Scopus/Web of Science database with the topic "workplace spirituality". Using VOSviewer and RStudio, performance metrics and science mapping have been generated to identify potential concepts that can be incorporated in the workplace. Recent trends, thematic evolution, and thematic maps of WPS have been identified by influential constituents. WPS influential constituents can be useful for future research, as they display all influential matters, such as authors, countries, and affiliations. Science mapping displays visualizations of recent trends and thematic concepts of WPS, which can be useful to identify pathways to inculcate WPS in real-time organizational settings. The literature holds several empirical, review and clinical evidence on workplace spirituality, but this study attempts to perform bibliometric research on the WPS to date as a knowledge update mechanism.

Keywords: workplace spirituality, organizational change, change management, workplace, organization culture

1. Introduction

The 21st century workplace has provided space to level up organizational performance through change. Organizational practices seem to have been evolving for ages, and it has been found that workplace spirituality (WPS) has piqued the interest of organizational performance researchers in the last decade. Although WPS-oriented research has been booming since the late 1980s, recent decades have seen flourishing publications on the topic. Although WPS may sound like a topic related to management and behavioral science, research on WPS has been done across various fields, such as medicine, computer science, arts and humanities, psychology, and decision science (ref. Fig. 1). Is it necessary to have WPS in organizational settings? What could WPS potentially bring to level up current organizational scenarios? These prime questions could be on the minds of readers exploring the attributes of WPS for the first time. This study is aimed at answering such prime questions and providing a catalog of various influential constituents (say, influential authors, countries, affiliations, etcetera) of the WPS.

2. Existing Literature

WPS gravitated in the minds of researchers (especially Indian authors); however, it seldom functions in organizational settings (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000), and it is undeniable (Klerk, 2005) (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008). Therefore, firm heads should understand that focusing on individual corporations will be remarkable for now and the future, and it is also time to establish themselves as worthy firms, i.e., organizations with a higher sense of purpose (Garcia-Zamor, 2003). Recently, scientific publications have seen a surge in the topic of 'workplace spirituality', yet the practical implications for organizations seem to be less evident. Pioneers of the literature defined WPS 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 & Duchon, 2000). Widely, spirituality is confused with religious belief; likewise, the WPS is assumed to practice religious activities in the workplace. Although many people express their religious beliefs at work, it must be emphasized that WPS is not about religion (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). When WPS is connected to religion, it is ill-defined and untestable, and thus, it cannot contribute to scientific knowledge (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2020). Since WPS has gravitated attention among researchers, several dimensions have been proposed by authors across the world (Pandey et al., 2009). The most commonly used dimensions proposed by Ashmos and Duchon. Workplace spirituality comprises four dimensions: inner life, meaningful work, alignment of organization values and a sense of community (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). Meaningful work must be considered the ultimate, as bringing meaning to work adds meaning to life as well (Klerk, 2005). According to Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., humans are not supposed to be isolated and are meant to be connected with fellow beings, especially at work (*Ask HR : How Can I*

Manage Stress in the Workplace ?, 2022). The origin of empirical work on WPS was in the 1990s (Saxena, 2020). WPS is the game changer at the workplace, as it brings meaning to work (Milliman et al., 2003a). WPS can influence the general well-being of employees by adding value to work, creating a sense of community, and reducing stress at work (Karakas, 2010)(Saxena, 2020). Here, it is important to note the influence of WPS on work stress, as work stress can bring up deviant behaviors in employees, such as burnout and turnout (Miller et al., 1990). It is scientifically proven through empirical studies that WPS can influence employee attitudes such as job satisfaction (Sciences, 2019), job involvement and organizational commitment (Pawar, 2009a). Facilitating WPS at the workplace can yield positive outcomes (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003) (Hoffman, 2010). In practical scenarios, empirical studies on nurses have proven that the WPS can help them treat their patients respectfully and promote occupational ethics (Norouzi et al., 2018). Looking at the vice-versa scenario, employees with a lesser degree of WPS tend to have deviant behavior in the workplace (Dal et al., 2020). The literature evidently shows the control of WPS on workplace outcomes. However, there are factors that can influence WPS among individuals. The personality traits of an individual are crucial to deciding the degree of WPS the individual can pursue. For example, extraverts and conscientious people tend to have a higher degree of WPS (Tutar & Oruç, 2020). Like OCB, WPS also orients workplace behavior positively (Hafeez et al., 2022). From the literature, it is evident that WPS is the need of the hour, and it is well explained in the Alexander Krolof Model, which indicates that attributes such as thinking positively, learning, self-opening, participation, meaningful work, and interests in work could potentially drive employees to remain happy in the workplace (Dhamija, 2021). Thus, inculcating WPS or creating awareness about WPS practices in employee development programmes will promote healthier employee outcomes (Riasudeen & Singh, 2020), and it will drive higher positive affectivity, resilience, self-efficacy, work engagement (Dal et al., 2020), and employee engagement and mental health (Sharma & Kumra, 2020).

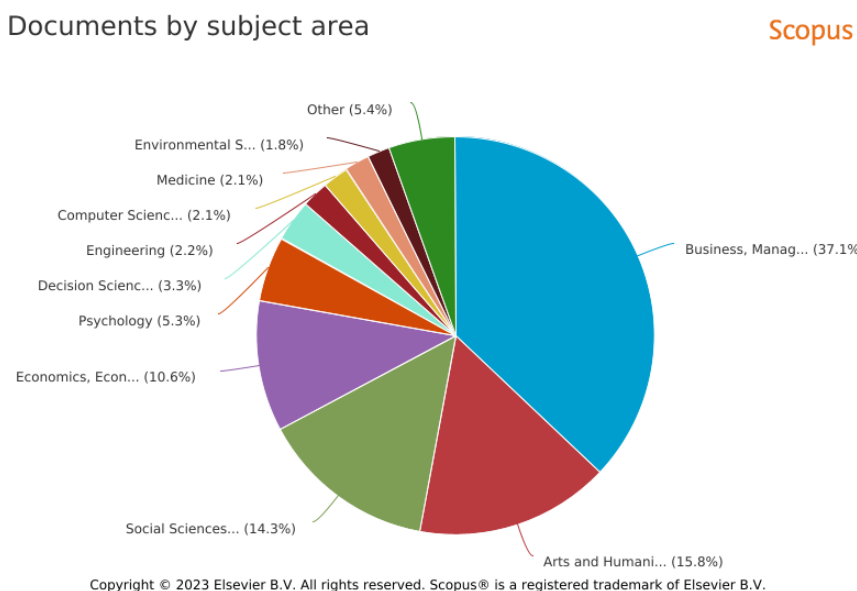


Figure 1 Scopus publications of WPS across various fields.

3. Methodology

The methodology behind mining the scientific data and the tools and techniques used to run performance analysis and science mapping are displayed below.

3.1. Data Collection

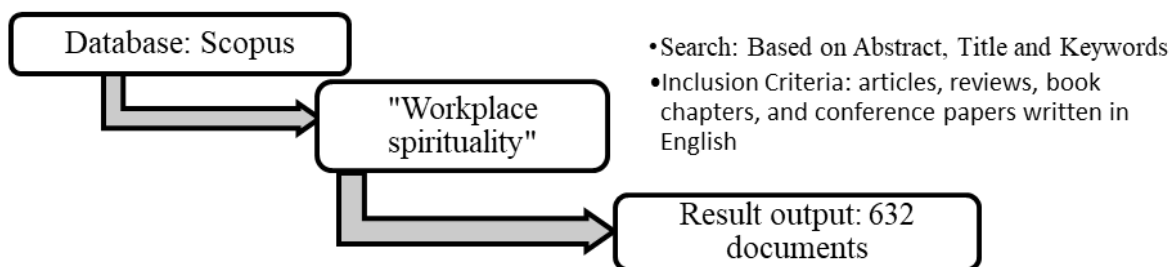


Figure 2 Scientific dataset mining method.



The data used in the study are referred to as a "dataset, which is extracted from Scopus publications on workplace spirituality from 1988 to 2023. The dataset mining followed a specific process (ref. Fig. 2), i.e., using "Workplace spirituality" as search terms in the Scopus window reflected a total of 632 documents. These 632 documents were filtered based on certain inclusion criteria (including only articles, book chapters, and conference papers that were written in English).

3.2. Tools and Techniques

Table 1 Objectives, tools, techniques, and analyzes of the study.

Techniques	Analysis	Tools	Objectives
Performance Analysis	Main information	Biblioshiny using RStudio	To process and understand number of influential metrics like authors, publications, keywords, etcetera behind the scientific data
	Influential Constituents	Biblioshiny using RStudio	To identify influential authors, countries, and affiliations of the dataset for future collaborations
Science Mapping	Cocitation analysis	VOSviewer	To analyze the relationships among cited publications to understand the development of the foundational themes in a research field.
	Co-occurrence analysis	VOSviewer	To explore the existing or future relationships among topics in a research field by focusing on the written content of the publication itself.
Trends	Thematic Mapping	Biblioshiny using RStudio	To determine emerging, motor, basic and niche themes of WPS
	Thematic evolution	Biblioshiny using RStudio	To understand evolution of concepts of WPS over periods.

4. Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion

The study aims to perform two different stages of analysis. Stage 1 includes a performance analysis that enumerates details of the scientific dataset as the main information. Stage 2 includes visualizations of science mapping such as cocitation analysis, bibliographic analysis, trend analysis, and co-occurrence analysis. Stage 3 includes thematic analysis and trend analysis.

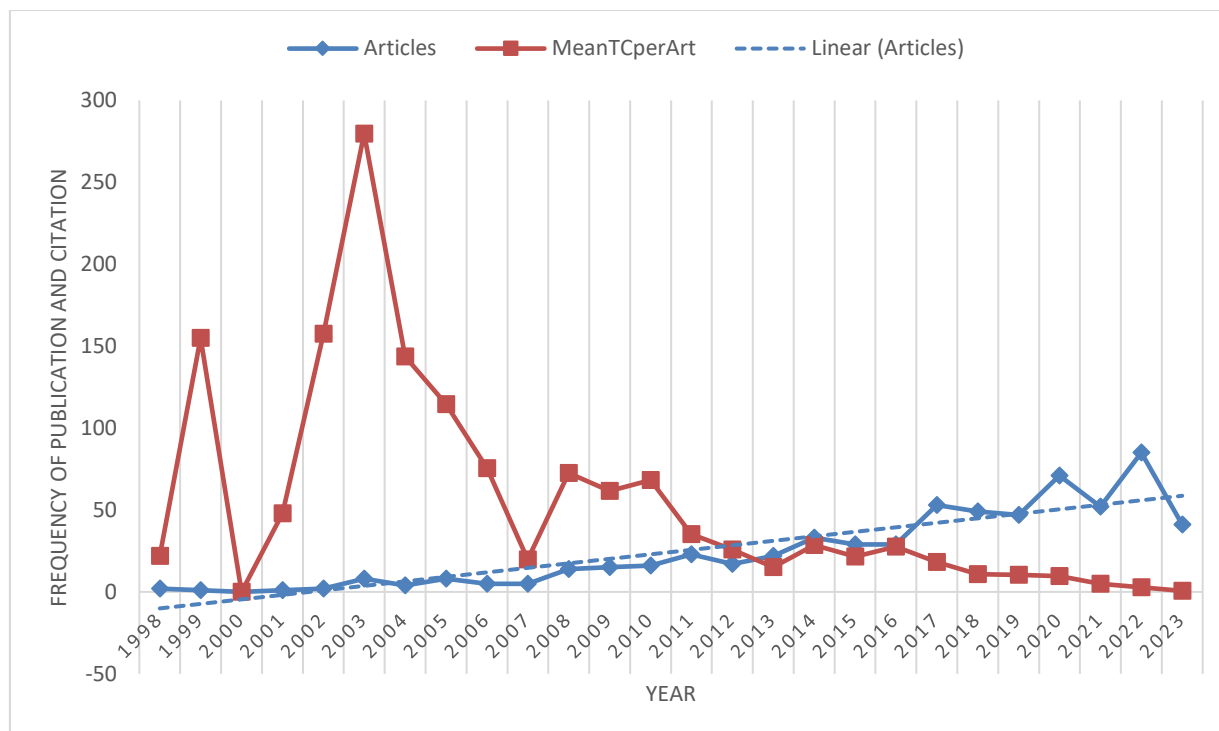


Figure 3 Production-performance overview of the dataset.

As the performance of any publication can be measured by the number of citations received by the specific publication, thus, the frequency of publication (yearwise) and average total citations of articles have been displayed; the linearity of publication could be evidently seen through the dotted line (ref. Fig. 3).



4.1. Main information

Table 2 Performance enumeration of the dataset.

Timespan	1998 to 2023
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	286
Documents	632
Annual Growth Rate %	12.84
Document Average Age	6.14
Average citations per doc	23.63
References	32827
Keywords Plus (ID)	580
Author's Keywords (DE)	1338
Authors	1153
Authors of single-authored docs	125
Single-authored docs	160
Co-Authors per Doc	2.39
International coauthorships %	13.45
Total article	509
Total book chapter	61
Total conference paper	27
Total review	35

4.2. Influential constituents

The constituents of the dataset are referred to as various elements, such as authors, keywords, sources, and affiliations. Therefore, influential constituents are the elements of the dataset that seem to influence the research field. The measure of influence of constituents can be based on two parameters: (1) frequency of occurrence or publication and (2) citation count.

4.2.1. Influential Sources

Influential sources in the dataset have been identified using both publication frequency and citation frequency. The top ten journals from each criterion are displayed (ref. Table III). "Journal of Business Ethics is considered the most influential source, with 2349 citations for 23 articles.

Table 3 Most influential sources of the dataset.

INFLUENTIAL SOURCES BASED ON CITATION COUNT		INFLUENTIAL SOURCES BASED ON PUBLICATION FREQUENCY	
Journal Name	TC	Journal Name	Articles
JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS	2349	JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT, SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION	73
LEADERSHIP QUARTERLY	1999	JOURNAL OF BUSINESS ETHICS	23
JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT, SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGION	1907	THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF WORKPLACE SPIRITUALITY AND FULFILLMENT	19
JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT	1381	JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE MANAGEMENT	14
LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL	326	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS	11
JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT	301	JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT	10
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS	186	PURUSHARTHA	9
JOURNAL OF HUMAN VALUES	155	HANDBOOK OF FAITH AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE: EMERGING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE	8
JOURNAL OF NURSING MANAGEMENT	146	INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ETHICS AND SYSTEMS	8
COGENT BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT	87	JOURNAL OF HUMAN VALUES	7

4.2.2. Influential authors

Influential authors in the dataset have been identified using both publication frequency and citation frequency. The top ten authors from each criterion are displayed (ref. Table IV). "FRY LW is considered the most influential author, with 1507 citations for six articles.

Table 4 Most influential authors of the dataset.

INFLUENTIAL AUTHORS BASED ON CITATION COUNT		INFLUENTIAL AUTHORS BASED ON PUBLICATION FREQUENCY	
Authors	TC	Authors	Articles
FRY LW	1507	GARG N	12
GARG N	248	HUNSAKER WD	12
JENA LK	99	PAWAR BS	9
PAWAR BS	480	JENA LK	8
DRISCOLL C	189	ABOBAKER N	6
GIACALONE RA	991	DRISCOLL C	6
HUNSAKER WD	92	FRY LW	6
JURKIEWICZ CL	991	HOUGHTON JD	6
MILLER DW	138	LIPS-WIERSMA M	6
ABOBAKER N	66	ADAWIYAH WR	5

4.2.3. Influential Countries

Influential countries in the dataset have been identified using both publication frequency and citation frequency. The top ten countries from each criterion are displayed (refer to Table V). The USA is considered to be the most influential country in the research field, with 5221 total citations from 331 articles.

Table 5 Most influential countries of the dataset.

INFLUENTIAL COUNTRIES BASED ON CITATION COUNT		INFLUENTIAL COUNTRIES BASED ON PUBLICATION FREQUENCY	
Country	TC	Country	Articles
USA	5221	USA	331
INDIA	1616	INDIA	303
CANADA	780	INDONESIA	102
THAILAND	672	MALAYSIA	101
UNITED KINGDOM	587	CHINA	74
PORTUGAL	429	PAKISTAN	69
MALAYSIA	385	SOUTH AFRICA	48
PAKISTAN	360	UK	41
CHINA	275	SOUTH KOREA	40
SOUTH AFRICA	219	IRAN	34

4.2.4. Influential affiliations

Influential affiliations in the dataset have been identified using publication frequency. The top ten affiliations from the criterion have been displayed (ref. Table VI). "Cochin University OF Science AND Technology" is considered to be the most influential affiliation in the research field, with 18 publications.

Table 6 Most influential affiliations of the dataset.

Affiliation	Articles
COCHIN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	18
KYUNGPOOK NATIONAL UNIVERSITY	14
UNIVERSITAS JENDERAL SOEDIRMAN	14
WOODBURY UNIVERSITY	14
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT	13
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN UNIVERSITY	10
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA	10
UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA	10
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY	9
DELHI TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY	9

4.2.5. Co-occurrence analysis

The co-occurrence of author keywords helps to extract themes of science and linkages between themes. This phenomenon of cword analysis provides distinct clusters in the visualizations that are generated using VOSviewer.

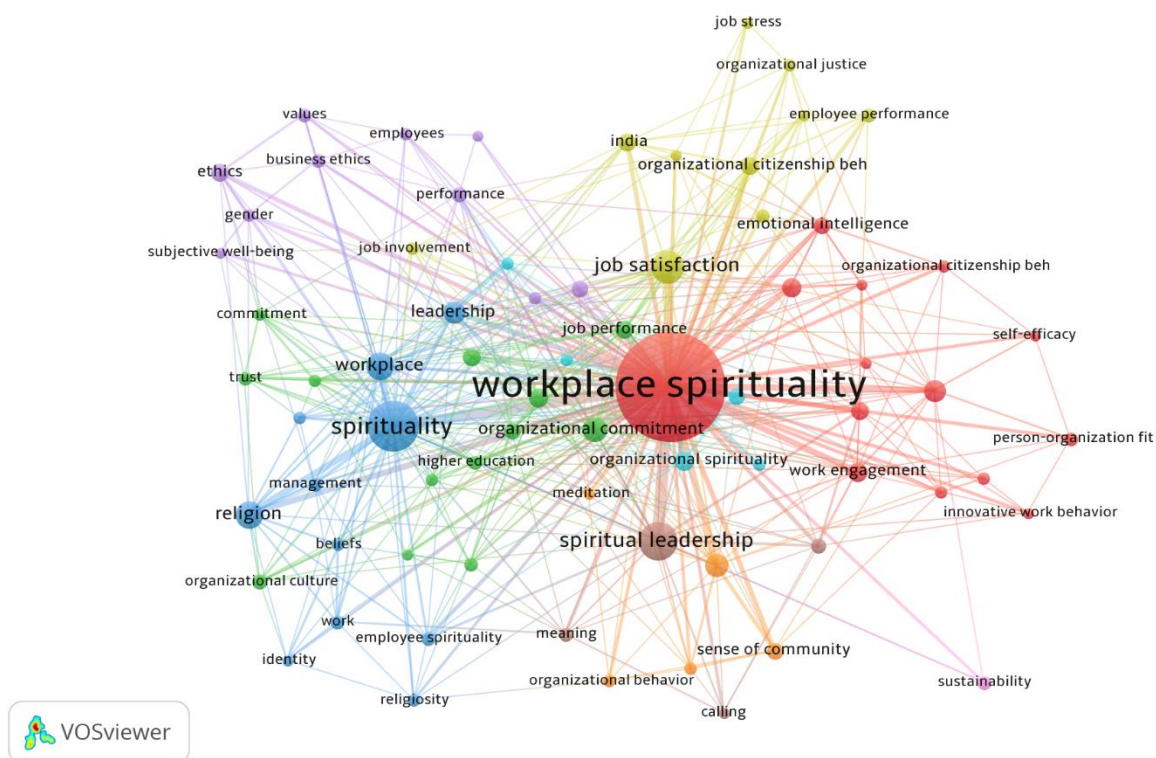


Figure 4 Co-occurrence of author keywords.

Based on the coword analysis, the visualization has eight distinct clusters. However, the major clusters accumulate the majority of coword existence (i.e., a higher frequency of co-occurrence of author keywords). In such scenarios, clusters with the colors red, blue, purple, and green have evident weight. As the principal cluster, red holds the keyword "workplace spirituality," which coexists with job satisfaction, workplace stress, organizational commitment, work engagement, religion, business ethics, emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and other organizational behavior elements and employee attitudes. Thus, studies with these words indicate a significant relationship among the words, making workplace spirituality the ultimate game changer in the workplace.

4.2.6. Cocitation analysis

Cocitation of cited references helps to extract themes of science and linkages between themes. This phenomenon of cocitation analysis provides distinct clusters in the visualizations that are generated using VOSviewer.

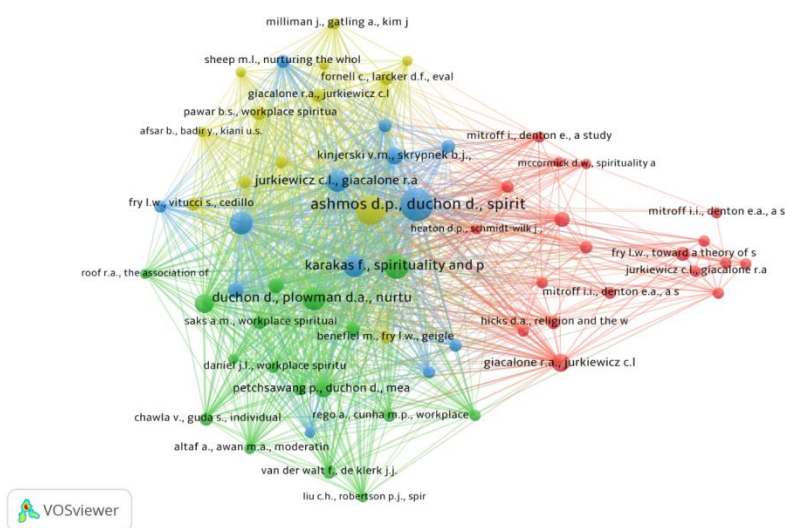


Figure 5 Cocitation of cited references.



Cocitation analysis uses the shared references among published documents in the dataset. The higher the degree of sharing of a reference, the higher the dominance of such a reference document, and aligned dataset documents are said to have similar themes. The link strength is also determined using the degree of sharing of cited references. Based on the cocitation analysis, the visualization has four distinct clusters. References such as (Pawar, 2009b), (Milliman et al., 2003b), (Petchsawang & Duchon, n.d.), (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003), and (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000) have been cited by many authors who published WPS-related articles in Scopus.

4.2.7. Thematic mapping

Thematic mapping is a technique that analyzes the author keywords of the chosen dataset and generates four distinct quadrants that explain various themes of the research area. Themes include basic themes that are rigorous studies already done in the area, motor themes that consist of potential areas of current research activities in the area, niche themes that mostly include topics that are in the declining stage, and finally emerging themes that consist of topics that could be studied in the future aligning with the chosen research area.

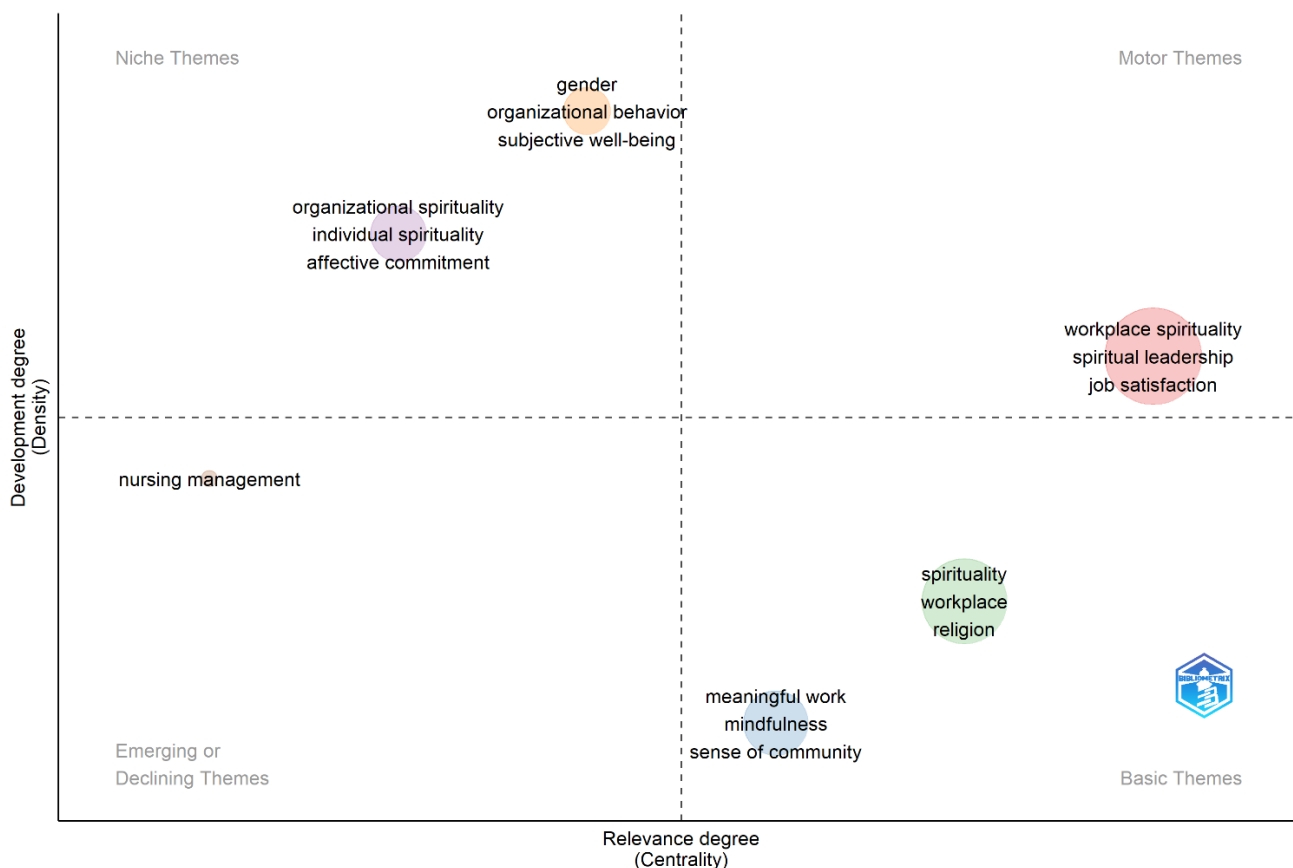


Figure 6 Thematic map of the dataset.

From the analysis, themes such as mindfulness, spirituality in the workplace, and a sense of community have been studied and discussed in the literature. However, WPS and job satisfaction seem to have been studied too recently, and the relation of WPS with commitment, organizational behavior and well-being is age old. Nursing management with WPS is also declining.

4.2.8. Thematic evolution

Thematic evolution is the process of generating visualizations that portray how the topics of the chosen research area have evolved over a period of time. The study used the author keyword in the Louvain algorithm to determine the thematic evolution in four different time slices.

It is evident that spirituality and workplace spirituality have evolved into the studies of employees’ attitudes during 2006–2010. Later, it developed into spiritual leadership during 2011–2015 and then involved studies related to OCB during 2016–2021. Recently, employee engagement, organizational justice, and innovative work behavior have seen surges along with WPS during 2022–2023.



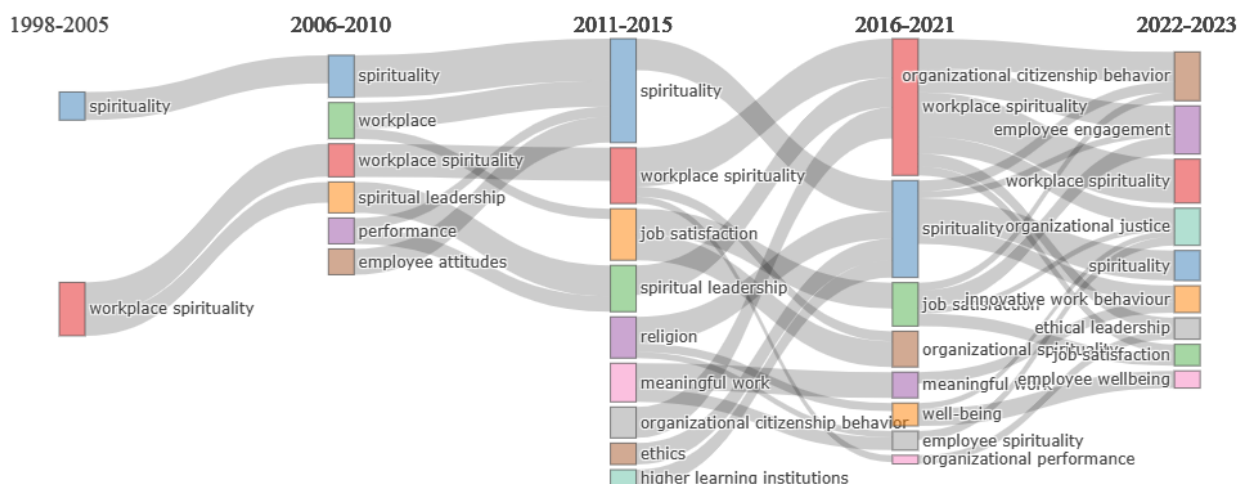


Figure 7 Thematic evolution of the dataset.

5. Final considerations

As we know, change is inevitable, as is mankind. Management practices have seen changes over eras, and modern management thrives on WPS at the workplace to attain the well-being of employees and promote concord in organizational settings. Very few firms created awareness about WPS among their employees. The concept of WPS can yield positive outcomes in all organizational settings, irrespective of cultural and demographic differences.

5.1. Limitations

The study has limitations in two aspects: first, the dataset includes only Scopus original publications of WPS; adding original publications from other platforms such as Web of Science and PubMed can add value. Second, the methodology of the study involves rigour in bibliometrics and provides an overview of WPS; however, adding a meta-analysis along with the study will be comprehensive.

5.2. Future directions

From the literature, it is evident that inculcating WPS or creating awareness of WPS practices in employee development programs will promote healthier employee outcomes and drive higher positive affectivity, resilience, self-efficacy, work engagement, and employee engagement and mental health. However, determining methods and modules to implement WPS in the workplace setting is crucial and can be studied in the future. Developing a conceptual model and validating it through empirical evidence on the relation between WPS and stress could be even more interesting and can open avenues for further in-depth analysis. Meta-analysis and scopic reviews on the topic could be performed in the future to add holistic value to the study.

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