

# The digital transformation in the psychology of workplace spirituality

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – There is evidence that spirituality at the workplace has positive effects on work outcomes, and there are different models conceptualizing the construct. To date, there is no discussion highlighting how digitalization is affecting workplace spirituality and vice versa. The present review tries to close this gap by discussing the psychological dynamics in light of digitalization and spirituality in the context of work.

**Design/methodology/approach** – This is a conceptual discussion based on an extensive narrative review. The conceptual design is further tested with a real-life case study.

**Findings** – The result is a model that may guide future research, which consists of the four highly interdependent domains, namely psychology (with the dimensions of emotion, cognition and behavior), digitalization (with the dimensions of platforms, data and algorithms), spirituality (with the dimensions of meaning, self-transcendation and belonging), as well as the workplace (with the dimensions of work tasks, location, community and culture and values). The discussion includes implications for the future of work, suggestions for management decisions and potential future research directions.

**Originality/value** – To date, there are many discussions about digital transformation and a limited amount of them have invested in analyzing psychological dimensions. The application to spirituality and the workplace – especially when the two are combined – is almost wholly absent, which makes the present discussion both innovative and original.

**Keywords** Psychology, Review, Spirituality, Workplace, Digitalization, Conceptual discussion

**Paper type** Conceptual paper

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, both public as well as private life has been shifting more and more from the physical into the digital sphere, a societal process often referred to as digitalization or digital transformation (Bohlin, 2022; Musik & Bogner, 2019). Even though the process of digitalization began well in the 20th century, it was greatly accelerated during the Corona pandemic of the 2020s, due to political decisions and social concerns that led large parts of the economy to physically isolate itself (Amankwah-Amoah, Khan, Wood, & Knight, 2021). Consequently, work became a lot more digital, which was not only true functionally but also in terms of where the work was done – namely at home, enabled by cloud infrastructures.

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Whereas this might not have been commonplace in every industry *before* the pandemic, home-office has now become the new norm (Hofmann, Riedel, & Piele, 2020). The digital trends including the new forms of work are not likely to end anytime soon because of innovations like platform economies (Meijerink, Jansen, & Daskalova, 2021), edge computing and the blockchain (Panda, Elngar, Balas, & Kayed, 2020), as well as rapid developments in artificial intelligence (Fletcher, 2021).

Digital technology creates new spaces for people to interact with one another, to develop themselves and to process their tasks. However, the emerging private as well as work-related platforms are more than simple tools, they are new spaces that modern people inhabit, meaning that many hours a day, people *live* in these new places. This does not occur physically but mentally, meaning that the digital worlds that are created by companies become *mental habitats* where we start to feel at home. An interesting metaphor would be that a system update feels like the renovation of an apartment or an office (Mukherjee, 2020). According to Latzer (2022), digital transformation processes can be characterized by what he refers to as the “digital trinity”. This means that there are three defining trends that characterize digitalization: (i) platformization, (ii) algorithmization and (iii) datafication. In other words, our virtual transactions are increasingly occurring on platforms where a tremendous amount of data is gathered, which eventually led to automated decision-making effected by algorithms.

In the past two decades, a discipline known as *workplace spirituality* has become increasingly popular (for an introduction, see In Altman, Neal, & Mayrhofer, 2022). It deals with the notion that humans have a strong desire to apply their subjective meaning-making mechanisms onto their everyday actions, which also spills over to what they do at the workplace (Marques, 2019). Since there is a digital transformation occurring on the levels of societies, economies and businesses, daily work as well as the workplace itself are subject to digital change. So far, there is no in-depth conceptual discussion in the body of literature about the question of how digitalization may affect workplace spirituality and how this can be conceptually modelled. Hence, the present review contributes to this lack as it probes the question by introducing a preliminary conceptual model that is useful for future research dealing with digital transformation, workplace spirituality and the future of work.

## 2. Digitalization and spirituality

### 2.1 Spirituality

Often, the word *spirituality* elicits associations of *religion* and *religiosity*. There are psychological discussions that attempt to make sense of the two (Plante, 2012). Religiosity is the subjective disposition to elements found in formulated religions, which can be psychologically modelled along the five dimensions of the *Centrality of Religiosity Scale* (Huber & Huber, 2012). The dimensions are the following: public practice (i.e. church attendance), private practice (i.e. prayer), ideology (i.e. beliefs), intellect (i.e. critical questions) and experience (i.e. feeling a unity with God). Especially the latter is often perceived to be something inherently spiritual, although the concept of spirituality can also be uncoupled from religion itself. Much like religiosity, spirituality can be measured and psychometrically mapped on several dimensions. Over time, there were diverse constructs that emerged, such as the *Spirituality Scale* by Delaney (2005) implementing three dimensions: self-discovery, relationships and eco-awareness. The so-called *Intrinsic Spirituality Scale* measures the construct by asking participants a series of six questions pertaining to how central subjects deem their spirituality to be in their lives (Hodge, 2003). The problem with this is that the questionnaire presupposes that people already have a shared and unilateral understanding of what spirituality is supposed to be. A qualitative study framed spirituality in three major categories, which were *transcendence*, *religious beliefs*, and *positive emotions* (Braghetta *et al.*, 2021). A critical review on the validity of spirituality questionnaires

concluded that the quality was often relatively low. The authors identified three flaws that were often found, which were (i) limited psychometric evaluations, (ii) lack of a consistent terminology and (iii) tautological implementation of the idea of well-being (de Jager Meezenbroek *et al.*, 2012).

Historically, the idea of spirituality was accompanied with the notion of religiosity (Sheldrake, 2009), which meant that researchers for a long time were influenced by Christian concepts of spirituality (Downey, 1997), although the studies were largely psychological and not theological (Perrin, 2007; Schneiders, 2011). Since both theistic as well as non-theistic notions of spirituality are difficult to narrow down, authors in the pursuit of a clear definitory concept tried to “unfuzzifying the fuzzy” (Zinnbauer *et al.*, 1997, p. 549). One researcher calmed expectations when saying that the demand for a definition of spirituality “cannot be answered with a consensual definition. In fact, literature on spirituality in higher education offers various definitions” (Speck, 2005, p. 3). Although there are differing intuitions concerning the notion of spirituality (King, 2017), there is more or less agreement in that it is a concept that can go beyond religious and cultural boundaries. It can be characterized by faith, a search for meaning in life, feeling connected with the social surroundings, self-transcendation and a sense of inner peace, which may improve life satisfaction (Delgado, 2005). In modern societies, there is a new form of secular spirituality (van der Veer, 2009) and one of the most famous protagonist is the vocal atheist Sam Harris (2015) in his book *Waking up: A guide to spirituality without religion*.

Methodologically, the study of spirituality is approached from two sides, one that emphasizes its interdisciplinarity (drawing from psychology, sociology and history all the way to philosophy and theology), and another that emphasizes that it can be analyzed as a field *sui generis* (Waaijman, 2002, p. 5). Either way, healthcare professionals claimed that spirituality became an integral part of treating patients holistically as it made sense of their longing for God, purpose, hope, connection to others, belief systems, and self-expression (Dyson, Cobb, & Forman, 1997). However, since there appeared to be an ambiguity inherent to the term, there were debates about how exactly the concept can be integrated into healthcare practices (Tanyi, 2002). This led one reviewer to entitle his discussion, “Spirituality: Everyone has it, but what is it?” (Lepherd, 2015). Rather than posing it as a question, Moberg (Moberg, 2010, p. 99) made a bold statement: “Because spirituality pervades everything that is human, its study is central to investigations of the essence of human nature.”

Since the historical context of how spirituality was framed was evolving (Sheldrake, 2009), the way the construct was measured and reported also changed with it (Koenig, 2008). Perhaps surprisingly, as Western society became more secular, the idea of spirituality, which was associated with religiosity for so long, did not vanish, but in fact turned broader and became more present in the cultural narrative. This manifestation of contemporary spirituality was sometimes referred to as “the spirituality revolution” (Tacey, 2004) and it came along with intense sociological study (Flanagan & Jupp, 2007). Some of the most intriguing findings in the domain of spirituality show its positive role in social environments, health and wellbeing (as can be seen in Table A1 of the supplementary materials).

In general, it can be summarized that spirituality has positive psychosocial and physiological effects. As a working definition, spirituality can be perceived as a mental state that is characterized by three key features (Estanek, 2006; Frohlich, 2001; Reinert & Koenig, 2013): (i) subjective meaning-making mechanisms, (ii) self-transcendation, and (iii) belonging.

These features show that there is an inherent positive normativity as spirituality is presently defined. It is not surprising, then, that the vast majority of research has elaborated on the positive effects of spirituality and only little has been published concerning its potential negative effects. After Johnstone *et al.* (2012) discussed a host of positive effects, a few years later, his team added that there may also be negative spiritual beliefs that lead to negative outcomes, such as increased suffering and pain (Jones *et al.*, 2015). Example of

negative spiritual beliefs could be karmic ideas that it is one's own fault to be suffering or the notion that God punishes people for their sins. Nevertheless, it is usually not spirituality per se (in terms of meaning-making mechanisms, self-transcendation and belonging) that is responsible for the negative effects, but it is associated beliefs or practices that are responsible for them. These negative 'side effects' of spirituality could manifest, amongst others, in a disconnection from reality and a neglect of evidence that counters one's ideology, escapism from difficult situations, dogmatism and extremism, self-judgment and guilt, disconnection from others if they do not belong to the same group, or vulnerability to exploitation by powerful people like Gurus (Geppert & Pies, 2020). Nevertheless, there is a lot more research needed on potential negative effects in the domain of religiosity and spirituality.

## 2.2 Workplace spirituality

*Workplace spirituality* is also discussed under the headings of *spirituality at the workplace* (Miller & Ewest, 2018), *spirituality in the workplace* (Burack, 1999), *spirituality and the workplace* (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2019), or *simply spirituality at work* (Butts, 1999). In principle, it is nothing else than the application of the dynamics found in spirituality to the domains of work and the workplace. Deduced from the above, this may lead to three prevailing questions:

- (1) **Subjective meaning-making mechanism:** How do employees find purpose and a "higher meaning" in their work (or, at the workplace)?
- (2) **Self-transcendation:** How do employees transcend themselves through their work (or, at the workplace)?
- (3) **Belonging:** How do employees feel connected and as part of something bigger in their work (or, at the workplace)?

A prominent synthesis of spirituality and work features is the discussion around *spiritual care*, which can be encountered in the healthcare system – more specifically in nursing and medicine (In Miller, 1999; Puchalski, 2001). For this reason, one review paper took the title *Workplace spirituality in health care* (Pirkola, Rantakokko, & Suhonen, 2016).

McCormick (1994) described some challenges that managers face when integrating their spirituality with their work, which manifested along five themes: compassion, right livelihood, selfless service, work as a form of meditation, and problems of pluralism. However, *managerial spirituality* is not the most prominent form of spirituality pertaining to companies found in the literature (see also Naidoo, 2014). A more prominent topic is *organizational spirituality* (Brown, 2003), an idea indicating that organizations ought to implement spiritual values in order to accommodate spiritual humans and hence to maximize their output (Rocha & Pinheiro, 2021). In the literature, the most diligently discussed theme in this respect is *workplace spirituality*, or one of the many synonyms that accompany it (In Altman *et al.*, 2022; Marques, 2019; Pirkola *et al.*, 2016).

Its main focus does not lie in the analysis of how traditional religious and faith traditions are accommodated at the workplace (Fernando & Jackson, 2006), nor how institutionalized spirituality is expressed at work (Tombaugh, Mayfield, & Durand, 2011). Moreover, it makes sense of the fact that people are seeking purpose, the possibility for transcending oneself, as well as the longing for a community in the work environment (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2008). This is not to say that there is full unanimity in its conceptualization. As with the term spirituality itself, also the notion of workplace spirituality is contested when it comes to a definition (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Nevertheless, existing controversy does not imply that a discussion of the topic is futile since the concept can be approached

pragmatically through working definitions. In this fashion, researchers have analyzed the job outcomes of workplace spirituality (Garg, 2017; Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003; Pandey, 2017), how such mental states can be facilitated by the organization (Pawar, 2008, 2009b) and they have also constructed workplace spirituality models (Pawar, 2009c; Rathee & Rajain, 2020). Eventually, the suggested goal would be to strive towards a *spiritual organization* (Alas & Mousa, 2016; Indradevi, 2020) that in an ethical manner nurtures the whole person (Ayoum, Rowe, & Yassine, 2015; Sheep, 2006). Such a construct is relevant on three levels: the individual, the organization, and the work unit (Harrington, Preziosi, & Gooden, 2001), which means that there can be educational programs on all these levels (Dhiman & Marques, 2011). One author discerned workplace spirituality (meaning in work, community at work and organizational purpose) from individual spirituality (job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment), which were largely positively affected if employees felt more spiritual in their work (Pawar, 2009a).

Already twenty years ago, it was found that spirituality has become more relevant for managers and business executives, which sparked a considerable research interest in the topic (Cavanagh, 1999). Over time, the interest increased and thus let Schutte (2016) ask whether workplace spirituality was rather a tool or a trend. Although there may be some negative elements in workplace spirituality that could manifest in seduction, evangelization, manipulation and subjugation (Lips-Wiersma, Lund Dean, & Fornaciari, 2009), the vast majority of researchers appear to be convinced that there are mostly positive impacts stemming from spirituality in the organization (see Table A2 in the supplementary materials).

### 2.3 Digital spirituality

Before we can discuss *digital workplace spirituality*, one must address the question whether there is something like a *digital spirituality*. This is a term that in fact barely exists in the academic literature. One research article holds that while there is an app for spirituality, there is not a lot of research around the topic (Buie & Blythe, 2013). *Digital religion*, a discipline that might intersect with digital spirituality, studies how religious thought and behavior integrates with modern technology use and different aspects of an emerging digital culture (Campbell & Evolvi, 2020). Due to digitalization and the strong impact Artificial Intelligence (AI) has on all aspects of life, Jackelén (2021) claimed that theology and spirituality would eventually merge with technology. An earlier study showed that social media already had an altering effect on children's spirituality since social networks were outsourced into the online community (Yust, 2014). The philosophical position known as *transhumanism* holds that technology becomes an integral and enhancing part of human nature (for a detailed discussion, see More, 2013) and one consequence thereof would be that there is a "digital spirituality for digital humans" (Galvagni, 2022, p. 144).

Religiosity and spirituality are taking place more and more online, and they occur with the use of digital tools (e.g. online services, worship playlists on Spotify, or meditation apps). This means that there is a paradigm shift from classic to modern spirituality (Shoji & Matsue, 2020). In a popular discussion, Indick (2015) described that technology influences our cognitive and emotional mechanisms and thus inevitably changes our relationship to spirituality. A recent study involving 420 participants involved people who implemented a digital spiritual practice known as *Maitri ShaktiPravaah*, which could be conducted despite the social isolation experienced under the Covid-19 lock-downs. The results showed that the participants' wellbeing was significantly improved as was their sense of kinship. Especially for females, augmented self-esteem was observed (Gupta, Mehta, Nanda, Fernandes, & Maitreya, 2022). However, there are also "digital challenges of digital culture" (Yust, 2017, p. 110) because of the drama, intimacy and vulnerability young people face in the online world.

In short, digital spirituality is a new concept that presently refers to the practice of using digital technologies to facilitate spiritual growth and connection with a higher power, or a sense of meaning and purpose. This can include activities such as meditation, mindfulness apps, virtual prayer, worship groups, online courses, or resources for spiritual development. Digital spirituality recognizes the potential of technology to enhance spiritual practices and to make them more accessible as well as convenient for people in the modern world. It also raises questions about the effects of technology on our inner lives, including the ways in which it can support or challenge our spiritual values and beliefs (Bingaman, 2020; Butler, 2022; Santana, Husemann, & Eckhardt, 2022; Yin & Mahrous, 2022).

### 3. Digitalization and psychology at the workplace

#### 3.1 *The dimensions of workplace psychology*

This chapter discusses the notion of workplace psychology and leads to the question of how digitalization influences work and the workplace, eventually culminating in what is commonly referred to as the future of work, which is conceived to be strongly digital.

*Workplace psychology* is sometimes treated synonymously with the *psychology of work* or *psychology at work* (Warr, 2002), which refers to the study of the psychological factors that affect the behavior, cognition, and emotion of individuals and groups in the workplace or, for that matter, of work in general (Chmiel, 2008; Conte & Landy, 2019). The field draws on theories and methods from psychology, sociology and organizational behavior to understand the psychological dynamics of the workplace and to improve the well-being, performance and effectiveness of employees and organizations (Chmiel, 2008; Doyle, 2004). Workplace psychology is concerned with issues such as job satisfaction, motivation, leadership, team dynamics, communication and work-life balance, and it applies psychological principles to the design and management of work environments, policies and practices. By examining the psychological factors that influence workplace behavior, workplace psychologists aim to help organizations create supportive, healthy and productive work environments for their employees (De Wolff, Drenth & Henk, 2018; Doyle, 2004).

There are various theoretical models surrounding the psychology of work (for an in-depth introduction, see (Arnold, Silvester, Cooper, Robertson, & Patterson, 2005; Schultz & Schultz, 2020), and many of them deal with how employees behave at the workplace as well as with the factors that influence such behavior (Furnham, 2006). A key interest thus lies in the possibility to increase motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2014), and empowerment (Linley, Harrington, & Garcea, 2010). As such, researchers in the domain are looking for ways that employers can create work environments that promote health (Brough, O'Driscoll, Kalliath, Cooper, & Poelmans, 2009), reduce stress (Beehr, 2014), enhance diversity (Fassinger, 2008), work-family balance (Madsen, John, & Miller, 2005) and employee wellbeing (Hannah, Perez, Lester, & Quick, 2020).

The core topics in workplace psychology given an increasingly digital world deal with social interactions, health and wellbeing, knowledge handling, IT and tool interaction, beliefs (values and meaning), as well as personality and creativity (Chadee, Ren, & Tang, 2021; Richter, 2020). In principle, the psychology of work studies the three psychological dimensions of emotion, cognition and behavior in the work context (cf. Oude Mulders, Henkens, & van Dalen, 2021). This means that for an interaction model with work variables, the three psychological dimensions are valuable:

- (1) **Emotion:** How do people feel at and about their work?
- (2) **Cognition:** What do people think about and at their work?
- (3) **Behavior:** How do people behave during and concerning their work?

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Interestingly, [Gorsuch and Miller \(1999\)](#) have a similar approach by studying spirituality along the three psychological dimensions of cognition, behavior and experience, whereas experience in this case appears to have an inherently emotional connotation.

### 3.2 *The digital workplace and the future of work*

Psychological dynamics and the quest for purpose, transcendation of the self and community as features of spirituality nowadays take place in a workspace that is more and more digitized. This implies that one has to have a look at the literature to appreciate how digital work and the digital workplace lead to what is often referred to as the future of work. Hence, this subchapter first sheds light on what we mean by the digital workplace and second, what this means for digital work. Third, implications for the future of work are highlighted.

**The digital workplace** is a term used to describe a work environment that is primarily operating with digital technologies to facilitate communication, collaboration and information sharing among coworkers ([Haddud & McAllen, 2018](#); [Williams & Schubert, 2018](#)). In a digital workplace, employees may use a variety of tools and technologies, such as email, instant messaging, video conferencing and project management software, to communicate and collaborate with each other as well as with clients or customers ([Attaran, Attaran, & Kirkland, 2019](#)). This type of workplace can offer many benefits, including increased productivity, better collaboration and communication and greater flexibility in terms of where and when work is done ([Meske & Junglas, 2021](#); [Micić, Khamooshi, Raković, & Matković, 2022](#)). Although researchers hold that it has become a necessity to provide a digital workplace, there are also challenges because the new environments require new adaptive ways of thinking and learning ([Benson, Johnson, & Kuchinke, 2002](#); [Vallo Hult & Byström, 2022](#)). One example would be the fact that many people now have their workplace at home, constantly reminding them of their work tasks, even in their time off ([Kokshagina & Schneider, 2022](#); [Lee & Joseph Sirgy, 2019](#)). It was shown that it may provoke technostress, anxiety and addiction (for an integrative review on “the dark side” of the digital workplace, see [Marsh, Vallejos, & Spence, 2022](#)). A digital workplace requires increasing communication skills of organizations ([Engelhardt, 2020](#); [Hicks, 2019](#)) but is key to digital innovation ([Meyer von Wolff, Hobert, & Schumann, 2019](#)). There are ongoing discussions of how it may positively affect sustainability ([Yalina & Rozas, 2020](#)).

**Digital work** is an extension of the former since the workplace itself becomes more immobilized and hence implies that work itself is done more and more without a fixed physical space ([Hofmann, 2017](#)). In today’s world, the vast majority of work is done digitally, with employees using computers, smartphones, and other devices to communicate, collaborate, and create (cf. [Chadee et al., 2021](#)). In principle, a major focus lies in the interplay between humans and computers and their potential psychological as well as economic effects ([Richter, Heinrich, Stocker, & Schwabe, 2018](#)), which necessitate the prioritization of strategic work designs ([Parker & Grote, 2022](#)). Digital work was promoted by the possibility to work remotely and this in turn has fostered the more largescale adoption of a digital workspace. It was a key driver of the so-called *gig economy*, allowing people to freelance anywhere and anytime ([Gandini, 2016](#)). A modern emergence of this phenomenon has become known as *the digital nomads* ([Nash, Jarrahi, Sutherland, & Phillips, 2018](#); [Reichenberger, 2018](#)). As such, digital work and the digital workplace are two highly interdependent ideas. However, digital work also poses challenges, such as the need to stay up-to-date with rapidly evolving technologies, the potential for information overload, or what is sometimes referred to as *digital exhaustion* ([Perzanowski & Schultz, 2010](#)).

Overall, digital work is transforming the way we work and is set to continue to do so in the future. This is often treated under the headings of **the future of work** ([Malone, 2005](#)). Naturally, it is difficult to predict exactly what the future of work will look like, but it is likely

that technology will continue to play a major role in shaping it. As digitalization progresses, work is inevitably shifting to digital labor platforms, making jobs more agile and location independent (Berg, Furrer, Harmon, Rani, & Silberman, 2018). It is likely that human-AI symbiosis will be more common in organizational decision making (Jarrahi, 2018). There are two opposing hypotheses: One possible future is that as automation and AI become more advanced, many jobs that are currently done by humans will be taken over by machines. This could lead to widespread unemployment, as people struggle to find work that machines cannot do (Frey & Osborne, 2017). However, it is also possible that new jobs will be created in fields such as machine learning and data science, as there will be a growing need for people who can design and maintain the advanced technology that powers the economy (Fleming, 2019; Frey & Osborne, 2017). Overall, the future of work is likely to be marked by rapid change and uncertainty. While some people and organizations may struggle to adapt to these changes, others may find new opportunities and ways of working that allow them to thrive in the changing economy (Cook, 2017; Susskind & Susskind, 2015). As work may change in the future, so may its impact on how workplace spirituality might be experienced, exerted and expressed.

#### 4. Modelling digital transformation in workplace spirituality

The discussion in the previous chapters can now be used to model and illustrate how the different aspects of digitalization, psychology, spirituality and the workplace relate to one another. Digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technology into all areas of society and economy, including the way that work is done, where it occurs and the tools and systems that are used (Yalina & Rozas, 2020). In the context of workplace spirituality, digital transformation could potentially have several impacts. One of these impacts is that digital tools and systems could make it easier for employees to connect with their spiritual beliefs and practices. For example, employees may be able to use virtual reality or other technologies to create immersive spiritual experiences, or they may be able to use online communities and forums to connect with others who share their beliefs. Another potential impact is that digital transformation could make it easier for organizations to support and promote spirituality in the workplace. For example, companies may be able to use data and analytics to understand the spiritual needs of their employees and design initiatives and programs that meet those needs. However, digital transformation could also potentially have negative impacts on workplace spirituality. This could occur if the increasing use of technology would lead to a disconnection from the natural world and from each other, which would make it harder for employees to connect with their spiritual beliefs. In addition, the rapid pace of change and the constant influx of new technology could create stress and uncertainty, which could make it harder for employees to maintain a sense of spiritual well-being. In any case, the impact of digital transformation on workplace spirituality depends on how it is implemented and how individuals and organizations choose to use the technology. As the above discussion showed, there are four domains and associated dimensions that must be acknowledged. These are:

- (1) **The workplace:** as a part of the organization and of work in general. Consisting of the dimensions of work tasks, location, community and social interactions, as well as culture and values.
- (2) **Spirituality:** which has overlaps with religiosity. Consisting of the dimensions of meaning, self-transcendation and belonging.
- (3) **Psychology:** as a theme of anthropology. Consisting of the dimensions of emotion, cognition and behavior.

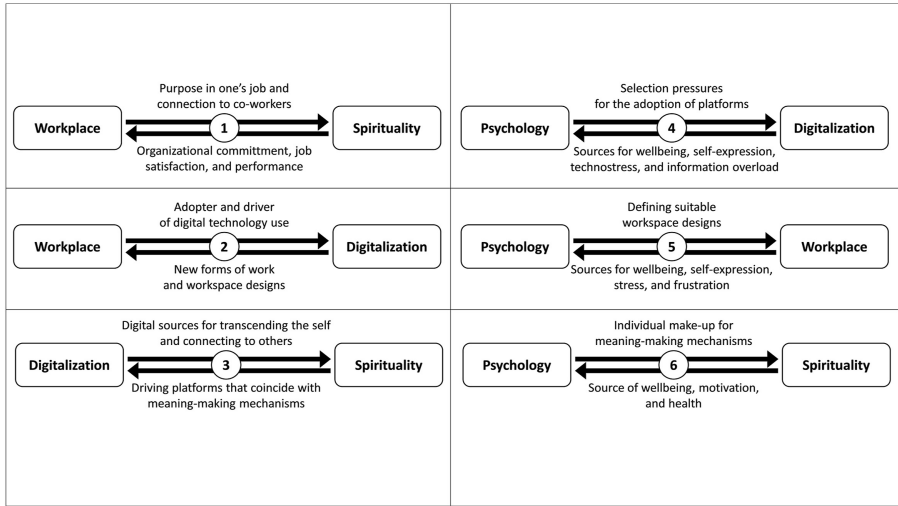
- (4) **and Digitalization:** often cited as a modality in transformation. Consisting of the dimensions of platforms, algorithms and data.

These domains are highly interdependent. The organization and the workplace can foster or hinder an employee's spiritual connection to work, implying that they affect the sense of purpose and connection to others (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2019; Hwang & Yi, 2022; Yin & Mahrous, 2022). There is also a retrograde effect of spirituality on work and the workplace, namely by increasing a person's commitment to the organization, job satisfaction and performance (Ghadi, 2017; Luis Daniel, 2010; Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2008). Depending on how the organization is set up, it can act as a driver of particular technology use (Benson *et al.*, 2002; Mičić *et al.*, 2022), whereas the available digital tools can promote new forms of work and workplace designs (Schmidt, Praeg, & Günther, 2018). Digital transformation opens up new tools and sources for seeking purpose outside of oneself and to connect to others in the digital space (Indick, 2015; Santana *et al.*, 2022). At the same time, spirituality itself acts as a driver for platforms that correspond to the subjective-meaning making mechanisms, which means that technologies that offer a sense of belonging and purpose are often promoted (Galvagni, 2022; Latzer, 2022). A similar phenomenon can be observed with human psychology in general because whether a digital platform is abandoned or adopted is heavily dependent upon whether people feel at ease with it and believe that it is to their benefit (Godoe & Johansen, 2012; Riva, 2002). Once a technology is adopted, it is bound to modulate a person's psychological disposition since there are practical, social and economic reasons to keep it in use. In the positive scenarios, technology can be a source of wellbeing and self-expression (Peters, Calvo, & Ryan, 2018), but in the more unfortunate cases, it can evoke technostress due to its constant availability and increased complexity. It is often associated with a lot of information that may be difficult to handle and may reduce one's attention span (Reinecke *et al.*, 2017). This applies to how the workplace impacts psychology on the levels of a person's cognition, emotion and behavior. It may have positive effects, such as increasing wellbeing and organizational identification, but – as may be no surprise – a person's job can also be a trigger for stress and frustration (Kaushal, 2020; White, 2012). However, both employee and executives decide upon the workplace designs depending on their psychological and physical needs (Vischer & Wifi, 2017). Although a person's spirituality may be considered part of his or her personality, it is sometimes modelled as a separate category to highlight that individual preferences lie at the basis of subjective meaning-making mechanisms (Culliford, 2011; Paloutzian & Park, 2013), and that a person's spiritual life can be a tremendous source for wellbeing, motivation and health (Emmons, 2000). In summary, Figure 1 illustrates that the workplace, spirituality, digitalization and a person's psychology are strongly interdependent domains. More holistically, Figure 2 shows that in fact these domains form a whole network of interrelated elements whereas no item should be perceived to be isolated from the other.

## 5. Implications for business management

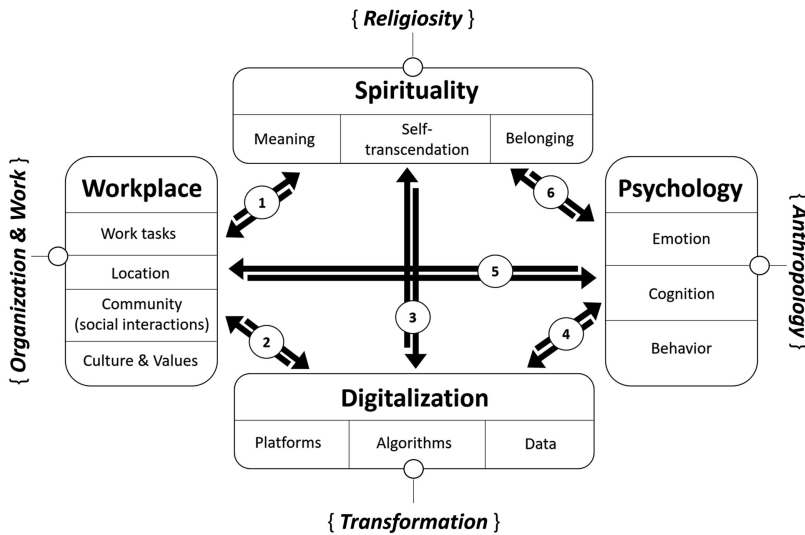
The interdependence model can be practically applied and viewed from four angles. One angle would be to appropriate the vantage point of psychology. This would accommodate the notion that human emotions, cognitions, and behaviors are all affected by digitalization processes, conditions at the workplace as well as one's spiritual inclinations. The same could be said about digitalization: Its rate and nature is defined by psychological adoption mechanisms, drivers at the workplace and how it corresponds to the longing for spirituality. A third angle is the viewpoint of spirituality, which consists of the search for meaning, self-transcendation, and belonging. It is naturally affected by various psychological predispositions and can also be contextualized at the workplace. More and more, it is

**Figure 1.** Illustration of the relationships between the workplace, individual spirituality, digitalization and human psychology



Source(s): Author's work

**Figure 2.** Interdependence model of the digital transformation in the psychology of workplace spirituality



Source(s): Author's work

influenced by digital tools and emerging technologies since they algorithmically manipulate our decisions and provide new possibilities for connection to others. The perhaps most interesting perspective for business and economy is found in the workplace. It is clear that work and the space it is conducted in are naturally heavily interacting with psychological processes. However, the model in Figure 2 shows that both digitalization and the need for spirituality play a significant role in how the workplace should be designed. Work that neglects the spiritual dimension thus dampens employee contentment and therefore also their

commitment and performance. As a consequence, employees are motivated to leave the company, do not identify with their work and the firm eventually underperforms. As previously seen, there is a lot of literature showing that digitalization impacts the modern workplace and that this has measurable consequences (see Table A2 in the supplementary materials). Nevertheless, only few authors describe that digital change also modifies how people seek and express their spirituality, which in turn also implies that digital work paints a different picture of workplace spirituality.

Deduced from the model visible in Figure 2, there are several suggestions for executives that try to construct workplace designs that increase employee commitment, identification and performance:

- (1) ***Make sure to account for psychological variables:*** Work should be subjectively associated with positive connotations. This requires setting an emphasis on employee wellbeing grounded in resources for positive thoughts and feelings and the necessary space to express them as productive behavior at the workplace.
- (2) ***Make sure to keep “the digital” a good thing:*** Although work is becoming more and more digital, its transformation should be leveraged in a way as to help people in what they do and not causing more stress and information overload.
- (3) ***Make sure to prioritize spirituality.*** For a long time, the importance of spirituality at the workplace was overlooked. The reason why this is detrimental for both the individual and the organization is that the three spiritual features of meaning, self-transcendation and belonging are vitally important for a human sense of fulfillment and the feeling to be in the right place. Emphasizing spirituality at the workplace has many benefits for the organization, which eventually manifests in lower job turnovers, a better work climate and higher productivity.
- (4) ***Make sure to account for digital spirituality and a spiritual digital transformation:*** Digital tools are transforming business models and organizational structures as well as operational processes. At the same time, they have a human and spiritual dimension, meaning that on the one hand, they provide new forms to seek for and express spirituality. This becomes immanent through the fact that many people seek out information about what carries value from the internet and through online-community, they can get connected with others. Modern examples of spiritual and even religious transformation would be found in online-prayer groups or digital church services. On the other hand, if digitalization appears to be pushed by executives to improve key performance indicators (KPIs), employees will not be motivated to stay on-track for very long. There would not be much that would seem highly meaningful to them. However, if the technology is constructed in a way as to promote purpose in the firm, exceeding one’s personal limitations and to foster intimate connections with others at work, then the barriers for a successful adoption are lowered.

One interesting application of the model would be through the implementation of what are known as *employee resource groups (ERGs)*. ERGs are groups of employees within an organization who come together based on shared characteristics or experiences, such as race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation. They are often created to support diversity and inclusion within the workplace, and they can serve as a way for employees to connect with others who have similar backgrounds or experiences. The goal of these groups is to create spaces where people can actively deal and interact with topics that are intimately important to them (Welbourne, Rolf, & Schlachter, 2017). In terms of digital spirituality at the workplace,

ERGs could be useful in a number of ways. For example, an ERG focused on spiritual or religious diversity could provide a space for employees to discuss and share their beliefs and practices with others who may have similar values. This can help to create a sense of community and belonging within the organization and can also foster a greater understanding and appreciation of diversity within the workplace. ERGs may serve as a resource for employees who are seeking support or guidance in their spiritual or religious practices. For example, an ERG focused on spiritual wellness might offer resources such as meditation sessions or faith-based retreats, which can help employees to find meaning and purpose in their work and personal lives. Overall, ERGs could be a valuable tool for promoting digital spirituality at the workplace by providing a sense of community and support for employees who may be seeking to integrate their spiritual or religious beliefs into their professional lives.

## **6. Applied case study: the digital transformation of workplace spirituality at Kalaidos University of Applied Sciences (KUAS)**

### *6.1 Case background*

This case study examines the influence of digitalization on workplace spirituality at a small University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland (in short: KUAS) in the faculty of business economics in the branch of continued education. The main product that is sold there is higher education of people already established in the workforce in different industries. In recent years, not least due to the corona pandemic, there has emerged a fast-paced, highly digitized environment that is challenging the educational industry. In the wake of new technologies and market pressures, the University has started to implement new digital tools and platforms for administration, work models and teaching modalities. The rise of AI models like ChatGPT has increased the need to deal with new challenges, like students writing their theses with the help of machine learning algorithms. This new digital environment and the respective implementations in the organization have an impact on workplace spirituality, most notably on the level of connectedness to others, employee wellbeing, as well as fulfillment due to self-transcendation and meaningful work. These effects were analyzed through informal discussions with employees and pedagogical staff, observations of internal announcements, documents and e-mails. This was the most effective way to shed light on the culture changes since many of the dynamics, attitudes and opinions were not formalizable and many stakeholders would only agree to informal considerations.

### *6.2 Key stakeholders*

There are four crucial stakeholders to be considered in the transformation process:

- (1) *Administrative employees*: Comprised of study directors, program managers and study coordinators responsible for running the educational programs.
- (2) *Professors, supervisors and teachers*: The personnel carrying out the core work for the business model of any university, namely teaching, researching and supervising students in their research projects.
- (3) *Management*: Responsible for driving the digital transformation, balancing employee well-being with organizational goals and fostering a positive work culture.
- (4) *HR Department*: In theory has the organizational potential to create employee support programs, to foster a healthy work-life balance and to address the psychological well-being of employees during the digital transformation and thereafter.

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### 6.3 Case objectives:

- (1) To examine the impact of digitalization on workplace spirituality at Kalaidos University of Applied Sciences amongst the administrative and pedagogical employees at the facilities of continued education.
- (2) To identify the challenges and opportunities associated with the digital transformation regarding employee well-being and spiritual experiences.
- (3) To evaluate whether the recommendations for business management (see chapter 5) are implemented or if there is still room for practical improvement to foster workplace spirituality in light of the present digital transformation dynamics.

### 6.4 Case analysis and discussion

As seen in the interdependence model of [Figure 2](#), spirituality, psychology, workplace and digitalization form an interdependent network where the digital dynamics have an influence on all the other aspects of workplace spirituality and *vice versa*. [Figure 1](#) illustrates that these relationships can be considered one-by-one. This was applied to the case of the current transformation at KUAS (cf. [Table 1](#)).

The overarching effects of digital transformation on the work culture and work spirituality at KUAS is tangible, for better and for worse:

- (1) *Psychological Impact:* Digitalization influences employee's psychological wellbeing, including their levels of engagement and motivation. On the positive front, digital tools enable a greater flexibility and agility at work. It is possible to work from home and still be connected to one's co-workers. Employees at KUAS make frequent use of these possibilities as the teams organize themselves and the individuals have great autonomy over when to work from home and when to work at the office. This helps them to integrate a work-life-balance that can be more effective, like operating the washing machine while at the same time responding to customers. Especially during the pandemic, some customers appreciated the opportunity to tune into the lectures from home and at times this was valued by the teaching personnel as well. Not having to show up physically to every meeting but to be able to condense more of them into the working hours via Zoom calls lets people experience an increase in effectivity and productivity. At KUAS, employees clearly stated that they believe to be more productive with the possibility to work from home, which leaves a positive feeling about one's own performance. However, there are also downsides to the digital sphere permeating the workspace. Although employees report to value the flexibility to work from home and anywhere else (at times, some also work from abroad), this makes it more difficult to segregate "private life" from "work life". Overall, people appear to work more when doing so remotely and sometimes they feel like they give too little priority to their evenings and their private life. This raises the danger to have difficulty in "switching off" from work. One factor exacerbating this problem is that by working primarily digitally, one is constantly connected to work and there arises the sense of responsibility that one constantly has to be available. There are always messages coming in and stakeholders calling with their requests. This increases what is generally referred to as *technostress*, which is reported to be psychologically demanding. This kind of stress amounts to frustration when the technology is not aiding ones workflow but hinders it by not working properly, which at KUAS was the case with online-streaming and teaching using WebEx (and sometimes also Zoom) and with the implementation of the student administration platform CampusNet that at the beginning did not work as expected. At times, the software was so slow that it

No.	Interaction	Context at KUAS
1	Workplace - Spirituality	Working in the educational sphere provides a tremendous sense of meaning to both the administrative employees as well as the associated teachers and professors (who usually also function as student's supervisors). The same is true for the customers who feel that they can make personal progress in self-development. It is professed to be a satisfactory outcome to see how one's students improve their skills and are better off after the educational experience than before. This defines the sense of belonging to the project of bringing others to excellence and defines the connection of employees to others, be this to the customers (the students) or other employees. The more meaningful this process is perceived to be, the stronger the organizational commitment, job satisfaction and the better the performance (to the degree as this can be gauged and influenced)
2	Workplace - Digitalization	In recent years, there have been several digitalization innovations that have tremendously changed the work atmosphere at KUAS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching online (via apps, WebEx and Zoom)</li> <li>• Online-meetings (via WebEx, Zoom and MS Teams)</li> <li>• Collaboration Tools (via Miro Boards)</li> <li>• Remote work (via Citrix)</li> <li>• New platforms (i.e. CampusNet, a new student administration application)</li> </ul> Some of these features were only temporary during the pandemic, but many of them spilled over to everyday life even in post-pandemic times. The tools that proved useful remained in use
3	Digitalization - Spirituality	Being constantly plugged in to the digital world means that one is non-stop potentially connected to others and to information. This can foster digital identity creation (i.e. Instagram or Tik Tok avatars) and meaning-making (i.e. "you are the content you produce"), and it can also increase access to spiritual features (e.g. sermons or pep-talks on YouTube). As for KUAS, it was found that there might be a dual impact: (i) on the one hand, it enabled employees to both work from home as well as from abroad while still being connected to others from the workplace, (ii) but at the same time, it also meant that one carried work and the associated relations wherever one goes
4	Psychology - Digitalization	Some of the IT infrastructure at KUAS was very old and employees were frustrated with them, so there were strong incentives to modernize the systems and at the same time to implement new work modalities to become much more adaptive and agile. This led to the implementation of novel platforms and technologies (cf. no. 2), but also led to even greater frustration since the implementation came along with significant challenges. Many of the online teaching platforms like WebEx often did not work or the personnel had difficulties with them, which provoked negative evaluations from the students, further exacerbating a frustrating circle. Depending on the connection, Citrix for remote work only responded very slowly, which increased work times for the same number of tasks. Perhaps most detrimental for employee morale was the integration of the new student administration platform called CampusNet. Many things in the system did not work, which led to a tremendous increase of work for all employees and technical tasks that would usually not be in their job descriptions. This led to a step-by-step onboarding of this system, which had the negative side-effect that many tasks had to be stalled and could not be processed right away. The main mode of online communication, apart from e-mails, occurred via Skype for Business. One could also install the app voluntarily on one's personal phone (with positive and negative consequences). However, the main challenge was this solution was that there were a lot of technical difficulties with Skype and thus, at the time of this writing, the KUAS technical team decided to switch the business communication from Skype to MS Teams. This means that employees are now eager to find out whether this will increase or decrease their daily technical problems

**Table 1.**  
Interactions in the digitalization of workplace spirituality at KUAS

*(continued)*

No.	Interaction	Context at KUAS
5	Psychology - Workplace	<p>Psychological outcomes at the workplace are, amongst others, tightly tied to features of the workplace design and work modalities. In the digitalization efforts of the past years, there have been strides to become more flexible with remote work but also with having flexible work spaces, which entailed that employees did not have a specific desk they could call their own, which came along with more mental flexibility but at the same time with more logistical and IT-infrastructural problems (i.e. desktops and docking stations that did not work with certain laptops). The digitalization pressures in work and workplace designs came from different digital demands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students wanted more online access</li> <li>• Students wanted agility and online education</li> <li>• Employees wanted flexible work hours</li> <li>• Employees wanted to work from home (remote work)</li> <li>• Professors and teachers wanted to try new classroom concepts (i.e. flipped classroom)</li> <li>• Supervisors and students wanted more informal meetings via Zoom for shorter sessions</li> </ul>
6	Psychology - Spirituality	<p>Spirituality is a personal construct and thus there are various individual factors leading to people having a stronger or weaker access to spirituality. In order to instantiate a solid level of wellbeing, motivation and health both in private life as well as at work, some levels of spirituality in the form of purpose in the job, connection to others, and self-transcendation is ubiquitously necessary. Although there is a natural inter-individual variation, the digitalization pressures at KUAS had a paradoxical effect, namely an increase in formal connectivity (i.e. more meetings, more e-mails, more calls, more online-events) but less personal closeness, which led to feeling more ostracized towards oneself, other employees, and the company, hence impacting wellbeing and motivation</p>

Source(s): Author's Work

Table 1.

became difficult for the users to keep their calm since it prolonged their regular work by several factors. The latter increased the amount of work that was perceived to be unnecessary and decreased morale. Working more digitally also had the effect of an increase in digital communication, with the problem of regularly being flooded with e-mails by respondents that demanded a rapid answer to their inquiries. In the wish to use one's time effectively, online meetings have sometimes turned into sessions where people also process their e-mails, which entailed the employees not to be fully present. Overall, there is a tremendous positive potential in the digital means, but correspondents deem it to be difficult to leverage the benefits against the manifest downsides that potentially elevate levels of stress.

- (2) *Spiritual Experiences*: Digitalization often comes along with a faster pace in task processing. One can, in principle, work on things 'on the fly', which results in the feeling that one is using one's time more effectively. But as a consequence, usually the tasks that need to be done in a given time multiply, which then leads to more stress and some frustration with the company. This fast-paced scenario can also lead to lowered earnestness in the students' behavior, which according to some professors has the potential to foster negative emotions towards them, since they become lazier and flakier. For example, many have reported that their students do not work through the prepared assignments diligently anymore and did not read through the texts they should have read in advance. Sometimes the response was that they wanted to comply with the task and, between work and travelling by train, wanted to do it on the

way, but eventually did not find the time, were hindered by circumstances, or simply were exhausted to do it. This more fast-paced and less reliable attitude can lead to a disconnect and lower empathy from professors towards their students. Hence, there might be more challenges to a well-versed work-life-balance in a highly digitized world that may also affect the relationships at work and in the classroom. Nevertheless, digital or not, by virtue of its nature, helping students to excel in their education and supervising them (also in their digital business and research projects) is still perceived to be tremendously meaningful and provides a sense of satisfaction about one's work. It leaves the feeling of doing something meaningful and longer-lasting, even in a world where many parameters change so quickly. Some executives have realized that spirituality at the workplace even in today's digital environment is of tremendous importance and that one needs some form of self-transcendation in life, including the workplace. As such the education leadership team at KUAS have initiated an interactive seminar directed towards professors and lecturers called "Forum for Purpose-Driven Management". With this, they effectively acknowledge the need for purpose and spirituality in business and the workplace.

- (3) *Work Culture*: There is a strong interplay between digital transformation and organizational culture at KUAS, which becomes most immanent in the agility and flexibility of work, as well as the modes of communication and connectedness. One underlying factor is the faster pace of the associated environment and the digital possibilities to deal with modern work challenges. The upside is that employees feel more satisfaction with being more autonomous and the ability to decide when and where to work from, as long as the work is done. The downside is that one is more likely to be constantly online and available. At the same time, team management becomes more challenging due to the fact that the whole team is not always physically present during a certain time period. This means that one needs to define if there should be some physical presence time and how the meetings are organized. Both administrative employees and professors have started to become more accustomed to the new modalities. However, for the top management as well as the HR team, there is still room to improve. Digital tools could enable managers to effectively communicate and promote the organization's spiritual values and initiatives. This is something that is barely on the agenda at KUAS. At the same time, the HR department could play a crucial role in implementing and overseeing digital initiatives related to workplace spirituality. They could collaborate with the IT department to develop and maintain online platforms, applications, or tools that support employees' spiritual well-being. This too is something that is barely on the horizon of the HR team.
- (4) *Employee Perceptions*: It is important that the KUAS leadership captures employees' perspectives on the changes brought about by digitalization. On the university's business front, it is primarily seen as an opportunity, but for the affected employees, it is primarily perceived as a stressor that is fraught with challenges. This way, a lot of potential is lost and what remains is the possibility that digital change might diminish people's work motivation. The upper-level management should focus on understanding employee's attitudes, concerns and suggestions for managing digital transformation while maintaining a spiritually enriching work environment. On the one hand, via regular e-mails and general co-worker meetings (called *AMA Meetings*), people are replenished with many of the most important information, but on the other hand, the congratulations and praises for handling the digital challenges are in danger of being interpreted as being mere lip-services from the top-

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management with no real consequences. There is hence a lot of room for improvement at KUAS on the front of taking employee perceptions about digitalization into account.

### 6.5 Findings and implications

The analysis of the case study reveals a nuanced relationship between digitalization and workplace spirituality at KUAS. While digital tools and virtual collaboration platforms enhance communication efficiency and remote work capabilities, they can also contribute to information overload, blurred work-life boundaries, potential feelings of isolation and being frustrated with the challenges of digital tools and work modes. The findings underscore the importance of considering employee well-being and spiritual needs during and after the digital transformation process and that management should take them more seriously. They also highlight that the HR department could assume a role of creating fostering programs to improve work-life-balance, attachment of purpose and work culture in an increasingly digitized world.

Implications for managing the digital transformation and preserving workplace spirituality include fostering open communication channels, promoting digital wellness practices, providing resources for maintaining work-life balance and nurturing a sense of community and shared purpose through both virtual and in-person interactions. It is important to note that being *more* digital does not mean that *everything* should be digital. Physical connections are still of vital relevance for human flourishing. At the same time, management should actively listen to employee feedback, address concerns and adapt the organizational culture to create a harmonious blend of digitalization and spirituality in the workplace. With this, one can now adapt the recommendations for business management (cf. chapter 5) for the specific use-case of KUAS:

- (1) **Make sure to account for psychological variables:** Digital change has enabled the students, professors and administrative employees to become more flexible and agile. In general, this is perceived as a net-positive gain. However, the implementation of new systems like CampusNet (a student administration software) was fraught with technical problems and delays, which was a sign of mistakes in project management planning and had detrimental impacts on work morale. The increase in pace and digital difficulties also coincided with more technostress. The infringement of technology on a person's personal space leads to the challenge to keep a healthy work-life-balance, which may counteract the usually perceived purpose of working in the education industry, potentially resulting in general frustration with one's employment. Even though KUAS is trying to keep up with the digital trends to keep up with the market, it is at least as important to set the focus on the person and not on technology, making sure that the people at the university do not feel overwhelmed with the new modalities and tools.
- (2) **Make sure to keep "the digital" a good thing:** Digital technology can greatly enhance productivity and opportunity to be content with work and one's environment. At the same time, it can also produce the exact opposite result by increasing the speed, stress and a sense of disconnect. The KUAS leadership has frequently verbalized how appreciative they are about the commitment of their crew to keep up with the digital tool implementations and the new market dynamics. As a result, they introduced a more agile workspace with new rooms, looking prettier and providing the employees with the opportunity to have flexible work locations, even when at the facilities of the university. Nevertheless, they need to make sure that the many appreciative signs that mostly occur in the form of digital verbalized pep-talks

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manifest in concrete improvements of one's work situation, since otherwise they are considered mere lip-services and niceties.

- (3) ***Make sure to prioritize spirituality:*** There are certain places where KUAS does a good job in enhancing spiritual outcomes, but there are also places where there should be a stronger focus. On the positive front, they are working towards a friendly work and communication culture where there is a warm atmosphere so that everybody feels welcome. This is also fostered with new workspaces that provide more room for informal meetings, which is key for enhancing a positive informal culture. KUAS also invited all their employees to consider whether they wanted to participate in their sustainability commission, which is an ideal opportunity to transcend oneself at work in helping the environment. There are also small gestures by the CEO that are announced here and there, like the gift of an ice cream for all who are present during a hot summer day to signal appreciation to the whole crew. On the negative front, the disconnect through digital challenges as well as the frustration due to technical difficulties (the strongest example is the troublesome introduction of the student administration software CampusNet) is an unsolved problem that dampens morale. The leadership at KUAS can and should think about how they could foster stronger relationships at work, provide a visionary outlook on how their work is contributing to a better world, and how each individual is a necessary part in this.
- (4) ***Make sure to account for digital spirituality and a spiritual digital transformation:*** Digital tools can be used to deeply connect people, especially if they are joined together with a shared vision that transcends the individual and makes people get together for the greater good. At KUAS, there are no enterprise resource groups (ERGs) that connect employees according to their personal goals and visions. At this particular university, there is a surprising high job turnover, meaning that people frequently switch positions, which has a destabilizing effect on the teams. ERGs that might exist either physically or dislocally on platforms could help to find common threads and ideals to strive towards. At the same time, (digital) spirituality could be fostered by acknowledging that the personal wellbeing of the of the workforce is important and therefore KUAS could provide physical and digital spaces to find time to relax and become meditative. This can be through prayer groups but also through corporate yoga and meditation spaces. On the digital front, this can also occur through providing meditation and yoga apps that help people to be in a content and peaceful mindset. A lighter and more common version of this would be to offer sports programs and sports teams (i.e. a corporate soccer team) that ties people together, provides a sense of community and belonging, strengthens relationships, creates time for physical exercise, and may improve morale as well as work-life balance. Spirituality also occurs at the workplace, but not exclusively so.

## 7. Conclusion and future directions

The present paper highlighted that there is a ubiquitous digital transformation occurring in society, business and economy. Employees are affected by this change, although there are still some core dynamics that remain stable since they are fundamental human constituents, such as the need to feel connected to others. There are effects from spirituality on work outcomes, which is often conceptualized under the headings of workplace spirituality. However, this does not remain unaffected by the digitalization processes taking place at the moment. A conceptual analysis yielded four domains that should be considered, which are the workplace, digitalization, spirituality and psychology.

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There are several reasons why there should be more research in the field of digital spirituality at the workplace, which might be referred to as *Workplace Spirituality 4.0*. Some of the potential benefits of such research include:

- (1) *Improved understanding of the role of spirituality in the modern workplace:* By conducting research in this area, we can gain a deeper understanding of how spirituality affects employees' well-being, productivity and overall satisfaction with their work. This knowledge can help organizations to create more supportive and fulfilling work environments for their employees.
- (2) *Greater awareness of the needs and concerns of diverse employee groups:* Research on digital spirituality at the workplace can help to shed light on the unique needs and concerns of different employee groups, such as those who are spiritual or religious, or those who are seeking to integrate their spiritual or personal values into their work. This can help organizations to better support and accommodate the needs of all of their employees.
- (3) *Enhanced ability to address challenges and opportunities related to digital spirituality:* As technology continues to play a larger role in our lives, it is important to understand how it intersects with spirituality and work. Research in this area can help organizations to identify and address challenges and opportunities related to digital workplace spirituality, such as how to support employees who are seeking to incorporate spiritual practices into their work lives and how to mitigate the impacts of technology on employees' well-being.

Conducting more research in the field of digital spirituality at the workplace can help to improve our understanding of this important and complex issue and can ultimately lead to more supportive and fulfilling work environments for all employees. The interdependence model constructed in chapter 4 may help scholars by providing a holistic analytical framework. It illustrates that there are intersections between work and the workplace with spirituality, and with digitalization, as well as with individual psychological factors. These can be tackled through their inherent dimensions (such as emotion, cognition and behavior for psychology, or meaning, self-transcendation and belonging for spirituality). Previous studies have only looked at a limited set of domains and have not looked at digitalization in connection to spirituality at the workplace. The present model may aid future research in closing this gap.

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### Supplementary material

The supplementary material for this article can be found online.

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