



Integrating Quantum psychology and Spirituality: techniques to transcend dark side of work-life

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Abstract. The study sheds light on the psycho-social challenges employees are experiencing as a result of digital technologies. As a means of overcoming these challenges, we looked further into conceptual commonalities between the domains of quantum psychology and spirituality. They bring forth the idea that humans are empowered to alter their thought and behavior patterns to shape their internal and external reality. Spirituality is the state of meaningfulness and higher awareness. In this paper, we discuss spiritual practices like breathwork, meditation, chanting, and prayer as means to achieve this state of meaningfulness. We did 12 case studies on respondents who engage in one or more spiritual practices daily to understand how they cope with the challenges posed by their work-life. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Findings corroborate the claims of quantum psychology and indicate that engaging in spiritual practices helped people break through negative thought patterns, become an active agency, and maintain equanimity in difficult situations. These practices gave them clarity of life goals and spiritual practice was a perfect fallback option in times of distress. Findings from the study suggest spiritual practices can serve as tools to transcend the psycho-social challenges of work life.

Keywords: quantum psychology, workplace spirituality, technology

1 Introduction

The dynamic environment in which businesses operate has a profound impact on the ideas, feelings, and emotions of employees [1]. Due to this, employee-related problems such as stress, anxiety, exhaustion, burnout, and absenteeism have increased in the workplace [2][3]. The problems and difficulties have essentially remained the same over the past few years, but contexts and circumstances have altered as a result of the increased use of technology. Covid -19 dramatically altered the way people used to work. These changes are predicted to continue [4]. The virtual office has already become the new normal. Employees in a virtual office are given portable tools to complete their tasks and are frequently given the freedom to work from anywhere and everywhere to achieve company objectives [5]. Due to technology, people can now instantly access information at work and communicate with friends, family, and co-workers at any time. However, the downside is the increased risk of addiction to these

technologies, and the 24*7-hour digital world is adversely impacting the well-being of employees [4]. Interruption overload, work-family conflict, work alienation, loneliness, and social isolation are among the major challenges of employees' work-life. According to the Microsoft work trend index report 2022, 52 percent of adult workers were using their devices more now than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 40% of them are found to be more depressed and anxious. The report further states major reasons for burnout were feeling disconnected from one's co-workers, work-life balance, and social isolation.

In the fast-paced, globally connected world of today, people frequently struggle to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives. Using pertinent research and scholarly contributions, the study is the first attempt to investigate possible synergies and transformative possibilities that arise from integrating the cutting-edge disciplines: quantum psychology and spirituality, with special emphasis on spiritual practices to overcome the dark side of work-life. In quantum psychology, the concept of consciousness plays a crucial part in shaping reality and the subjective experiences of individuals have the power to affect psychological states. Applying this concept to the workplace could encourage a mindset that embraces innovation, adaptation, and change. Spirituality provides a pathway into transcendence, personal development, and interconnectedness. Incorporating spirituality in work-life involves recognizing the human need for purpose, values, and connection. Studies have recommended that spirituality needs to be empirically studied to understand its impact on human behavior at work [6]. An improved understanding of the relationship between quantum psychology and spirituality, subsequently its impact on psycho-social challenges of work-life will assist organizations to develop organizational initiatives different from those currently available and help to create a more motivating environment for the employees. Also, it would enable individuals to take the initiative at a personal level to cope with the dark side of work-life through these techniques. In our study, we did 12 case studies on respondents who engage in one or more spiritual practices daily to understand how they cope with the challenges posed by their work conditions. Findings from the study suggest spiritual practices can serve as tools to overcome psychological challenges posed by the work-life and reach a state of sustained positive experience.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Psycho-social challenges at work

The increased technological dependency has brought a large number of physical and psychological health risks like obesity, anxiety, depression, attention, and behavioral problems. Crucial to this quest is how to prevent these psychosocial risks the modern-day workforce is confronting with rapid transformation. These risks outweigh the physical health risks [7]. Psycho-social factors are elements that affect a person's psychological well-being and social interactions at work. These are further discussed in detail:

Interruption overload

Attending several tasks at the same time using multiple technologies causes the risk of interruption overload [8]. Interruptions include blinking and buzzing off of smartphones and tablets, instant messages, reminders, and emails [9]. There is a constant temptation to check these notifications that distract the focus from the task at hand. Human beings are constrained by cognitive systems, which can only take a small amount of information at any time. The ill effects of this interruption overload are less productivity and job satisfaction [10].

Work-family Conflict

WFC is a type of inter-role conflict in which the demands of one's roles in the work and family spheres are, in some ways, mutually incompatible. To put it another way, playing both the family and the job roles at the same time makes it harder to do both. The conflict between jobs and family is amplified by technology. Since it allows workers to work even on breaks or even on vacation, work-life pressures are brought home and interfere with family life [9][11]. It has a detrimental impact on the mental health of the workers, which has an impact on both work performance and family life.

Precarious work & increasing anxiety

People who rely on task-based projects for their livelihood have been labeled with a variety of labels by academics, including contingent employees, contractors, nonstandard workers, and freelancers. They are now referred to as "gig workers" [12][13][14]. While some recent studies have used 'gig' to refer exclusively to those who complete microtasks via digital platforms such as ridesharing, food delivery services, or microwork [15][16][17], which is becoming popular among workers who earn outside traditional structures of the organizations. Gig workers enjoy autonomy over the task they want to work on and when they want to work [18]. However, research indicates that gig workers experience relatively more stress than employees working in traditional employment [19] because of high uncertainty in this competitive economy. Gig workers grab gigs as and when they come, whether it's midnight, early morning, or family time. They face various challenges apart from unpredictable incomes; these include identity crises, staying organized, and uncertain career paths leading to emotional and relational turbulence [18]. The frequent highs and lows lead to emotional swings and demand significant emotional labor [20]. They lack clear anchors to navigate their career paths. This is found to be detrimental to a gig worker's overall mental health, especially those living with comorbidities [21][22]

Social and Professional Isolation

Digitalization widens the gap between people in terms of distance [23]. The shift towards digitalization requires people to be working through their gadgets even during non-work hours. As a result, they get little time to be with their friends physically and build social connections. Loneliness is the psychological manifestation of social isolation and reflects a person's discontent with the quantity and quality of their social interactions or the discrepancy between their existing and ideal relationships [24].

Remote work leads to an increase in the feeling of professional isolation [25], where absence from previous organizational ties and routines cause perceptions of being excluded from important communication channels and developmental opportunities. This feeling was further accentuated during the pandemic as most companies resorted to working from home. Among other things, professional isolation is also linked to decreased employee well-being. As a result, employees who experience professional isolation may feel as though their opportunities for professional development are being lost, and they may also feel less satisfied with their need to belong [26].

Work Alienation

Marx was the first to introduce the concept of work alienation [27]. He made distinctions between many types of alienation, including alienation from the process, the product, others, and oneself. According to [28], feelings of meaninglessness,



normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement are all components of work alienation. In the more recent debates on alienation, the socio-psychological dimension is gaining increasing importance [29]. The widely adopted definition of work alienation is "estrangement from the work, or context or self" [30]. This alienation is common among all types of low, middle, or highly skilled in the digital world [31]. Advancements in Information and communication technologies allow workers to work from home or anywhere. Due to spatial and temporal fragmentation, the workers are not able to assign meaning to work., Especially in the context of hybrid work or people working on a part of the job and not the complete job, with few or no interactions with co-workers. As a result, they are not able to visualize the significance of their work for the organization [32]. In the absence of understanding how one's work contributes to the larger organization, one feels alienated. Figure 1 below summarizes the dark side of technology-mediated work literature.

Fig. 1: Dark side of work-life

2.2 Coping with dark-side of work-life

Quantum Psychology

Quantum psychology brings together the study of psychology and human behavior with ideas and principles from quantum physics [33]. It looks at how the fundamental ideas of quantum physics, which mainly concern themselves with the behavior of subatomic particles, can be used to comprehend human cognition, consciousness, perception, and the relationship between the mind and body. The foundation of quantum psychology is based on the concept of observer effect. Electrons can act as either waves or particles depending on whether they are being observed, as demonstrated by the wave-particle duality. They exist as possibilities or in a "probability field" rather than having a specific location as waves when they are not observed. The probability field collapses and assumes the shape of a particle with a solid existence in space and time when they are observed. In other words, according to adherents of quantum mysticism, the mind has the ability to influence nature; it is more than just a passive receiver of signals from the outer world. Quantum mystics make repeated attempts to transform the way we perceive the world [34]. According to proponents of quantum psychology, the observer—possibly the soul or spirit—is essential to choosing the current reality from the probability field and cannot be disregarded. The idea of free will and, consequently, individual accountability, are given a new dimension by quantum mysticism. Free will theories in the past assumed a duality between the physical world and those who interact with it. Although humans have the ability to make decisions, the outer world remains distinct and impartial. Quantum mysticism holds that there is no objective, physical world separate from people, the observers. This simply means that people create their daily realities by selecting one among the myriad options available to them on a moment-by-moment basis. Because people don't realize they can construct better realities for themselves, they keep generating the same ones. People can rearrange their neural networks in ways that enable them to create new realities for themselves. It further suggests humans can choose to step back from their automatic reflexes and take a different course of action. In one of the studies, researchers encouraged some volunteers to gaze at various objects as they had PET scans to look at the regions of the brain that were activated. The next step was to ask these same people to imagine these things. The same regions of the brain "light up," according to research, whether someone is looking at something or just imagining it [35]. This establishes the link between mind and body stating that thoughts, beliefs, and emotions influence how individuals perceive the external world or situations [36]. Quantum mysticism holds that each person's consciousness creates reality. Only around two thousand of the 400 billion bits of information received through our senses each second, make it to our consciousness [35]. The emotional significance that people attach to their life events and how they shape their perception of reality are the main determinants of its content. When people become conscious of their ties to particular emotions and behavioral patterns, they will begin to overcome their addictions. They can rebuild their brain networks to become healthy, self-sustaining ones. Putting this idea into practice at work can entail cultivating a greater awareness of one's thoughts, beliefs, and goals. People can enhance their interpersonal skills, develop positive relationships, and align their goals with organizational objectives [37].

Overview of Spirituality and Spiritual Practices

As spirituality contributes significantly to a person's personality, there is growing interest in it in the workplace [38]. In this technologically advanced era, when employees can fulfill their basic needs. They are stepping ahead to satisfy their spiritual needs. They can include, exploring the ultimate purpose of their work, belongingness, the need to be accepted, and the need to connect with one's ideal self. Individuals identify themselves with their jobs, and since they spend a lot of time there, they strive to satisfy their spiritual needs through their work [39]. According to [40], it is "a state of higher awareness," and connectedness with oneself and others; [41]; and a "broadened perspective of life" [42]. Thus, the overarching theme of all definitions of spirituality suggests that it gives meaning to life and work.

As discussed in literature Spirituality "is a state of higher awareness". The significant question is how to reach this state. There are many spiritual practices in Confucian, Buddhism, and Indian traditions, that provide meaning, connection with the higher self, support, and affiliation e.g., meditation, guided imagery, prayer, and yoga [43]. Although there could be more spiritual practices, the present study looked at the spiritual practitioners practicing one or more of these four practices: meditation, chanting, prayer, and breathwork. In literature chanting, meditation, and breathwork are also termed sensorimotor spiritual practices as they involve senses and a certain amount of physical activity [44].

Meditation: Meditation is a specific technique involving muscle relaxation and self-focus skills [45]. It is a technique to draw focus on a particular object or thoughts that occur during the process [46]. According to previous studies, meditation raises levels of dispositional optimism. Dispositional optimism, according to some researchers, is positively associated with work engagement and tenacity under trying circumstances, while it is negatively associated with unfavorable workplace concerns like burnout and stress [47][48][49][50].

Prayer: Spiritual prayer helps in developing a sense of self [51]. It provides an opportunity to reflect which helps in building self-efficacy and coping with pain. Business decision-making benefited from prayer's calming effects and an improvement in reflective ability [52]. Studies discovered the connection between prayer and post-traumatic growth and suggested that acceptance might be fostered through prayer, which can help, as a soothing thought, a way to avoid suffering [11].

Breathwork: also known as Pranayama in Indian tradition is considered a "sensorimotor spiritual practice because it involves senses and body movements to control and change breathing rate and depth" [53]. According to [54], "Breathwork is the use of breath awareness and conscious breathing for healing and growth, personal awakening, and transformation in spirit, mind, and body" [54]. Additionally, the study suggests breathing can be a therapeutic tool for healing because becoming aware of the breath enabled one to learn how to control it. Breathwork, however, can also be any activity that makes use of mindful, controlled breathing to improve well-being. It

alludes to conscious breathing techniques that benefit a person's body, mind, and general well-being. Bringing awareness to one's breathing, or the discipline of controlling and prolonging breathing, helps one change their breathing patterns and habit [55]. Studies have suggested it to be one of the effective ways to manage anxiety, stress, and depression [56].

Chanting: It involves repeating a phrase or mantra. It can be carried out silently or aloud. The vocal repetition prevents mental swerving. When using the focused attention meditation technique of chanting, the mantra is the object of attention. It is frequently repeated vocally or as auditory images. It frequently reflects shared spiritual and philosophical beliefs, but it is also applied in secular contexts and incorporates musical elements like rhythm, repetition, and group vocalization [57]. Vocal chanting may alleviate symptoms of stress, mood, anxiety, depression, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder [57]. Chanting has also been associated with positive social outcomes like an increase in social closeness and altruism [58].

2.3 Integration of quantum psychology and Spirituality

Individuals can attain higher states of consciousness and connect with their spiritual nature by engaging in spiritual practices like meditation, contemplation, or mindfulness. Spiritual practices can be considered tools to develop and delve deeper into this consciousness. There are some conceptual similarities and areas of agreement between these two fields: spirituality and quantum psychology when it comes to how they approach the nature of reality, consciousness, and human experience. These ideas recognize the role of internal experiences, subjective states, and consciousness and their influence on the perception of reality. They acknowledge that individuals have the ability to transcend their present constraints and realities [59]. “Their purpose here is to develop our gifts of intentionality and learn how to be effective creators” [34]. However, there is some dependence on reductionist scientific frameworks in quantum psychology. They have attempted to explain spiritual phenomena or experiences using cognitive, psychological, or neurological mechanisms, possibly ignoring transcendence connected to spirituality [60][61]. These psychological frameworks frequently rely on scientific investigation and empirical study techniques. However, because spirituality covers experiences and events that may be difficult to measure or examine using conventional scientific methods, it may be challenging to completely appreciate the breadth and relevance of spirituality.

3 METHOD

3.1 Research Design

Given the paucity of academic research on coping with psycho-social challenges of work-life through spirituality, a qualitative approach was adopted. We employed

qualitative analyses of data gathered through semi-structured interviews. Although we had specific areas of inquiry in mind, the interview questions were largely open-ended. This helped us in engaging respondents in conversations to generate insights for our exploratory study.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

A total of 12 participants were selected from India using purposive sampling. We ensured maximum diversity among the interviewees (see Table 1). The table also indicates the location, the type of spiritual practice they do, and how often they did their spiritual practice. Participants from diverse work backgrounds were purposefully selected to get more insights. The work profile of the participants included entrepreneurs, professors, data scientists, bank managers, senior research and development architects, digital marketing heads, and freelancers - who in addition to their work devote time to one or more spiritual practices, e.g., meditation, chanting breathing exercises, and others. We also used snowballing to get more participants for our study wherein respondents themselves connected us to more potential respondents for our study.

To approach participants, we used social media platforms. We posted a brief write-up on the social media page to elicit responses. The study's objectives were outlined in the write-up, and an interview protocol was shared with each participant. It gave them a preliminary understanding of the interview format. We requested their convenient time and encouraged them to ask questions about our study. Informed consent was also obtained before each interview. The interviews were conducted in 2 phases over three months in English. The interviews lasted for 60-90 mins and were carried out using Zoom video conferencing. At the end of each interview, the floor was left open for the participants to share any information they felt was relevant to the study. Due consent was taken to record before every interview. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim.

In the first phase of the interview process, ten interviews were conducted. In the first 10-15 minutes of the interview, we attempted to familiarize the interviewees with the topic studied using general questions, such as "Tell us about your spiritual journey", and "Why and how did you start the practice?". In the later part, we encouraged them to share their work-life experiences in association with their spiritual practices. We worded all questions in an open-ended, unobtrusive, and non-directive way [62]. We made sure to let the participants drive the conversation. Follow-up questions were only asked to enhance the flow of conversation. Thus, our interview protocol broadly navigated the conversations. By revisiting the transcripts and engaging with the literature, the authors were able to gain a deep understanding of emerging themes and found these themes to be pertinent to the psycho-social challenges of work life. In the next phase of interviews, questions were specifically focused on the challenges of technology intervention in the context of work.

3.3 Data analysis and interpretation

Participants were given special identification codes (see Table 1) and made anonymous to maintain confidentiality. The systematic procedure of making open, axial, and selective coding was followed [63]. Similar conceptual ideas were grouped as themes [64]. Themes emerging from open, axial, and selective coding were directly supported by verbatim quotes from the interview transcripts (see Table 2). Given the study's exploratory nature, an inductive method of thematic analysis was deemed appropriate. The themes that emerged from the responses were analyzed and participants lived experiences were used to inform the analysis [65]. While authors coded data independently, in the case of disagreements, we revisited the data, engaged in discussion, and arrived at a consensus [63]. Several themes were dropped off in the process. Finally, we arrived at 5 themes as our findings through selective coding.

Table 1. Participants profile

P. Code	Age	Gender	Work Profile	Spiritual Practice	Frequency
P1	44	Male	Freelancer, Educator	Chanting	Once a day
P2	40	Female	Entrepreneur	Breath yoga	Twice a day
P3	59	Male	Vice President at Tech Co.	Meditation	Once a day
P4	42	Male	Data Scientist	Japa (chanting), Prayer	Regular twice a day
P5	40	Male	Design and Application Engineer	Meditation, breathwork, prayer	Morning, Evening
P6	45	Female	Senior R&D Architect	Meditation	Morning, Evening
P7	41	Female	Assistant Professor	Meditation	Morning
P8	42	Male	Entrepreneur	Breathwork	Twice a day
P9	61	Male	Bank Manager, Financial Advisor	Meditation, Prayer	Once a day
P10	45	Male	Head, Digital Marketing	Meditation	Twice a day
P11	29	Female	Lawyer, Spiritual Coach	Chanting	Twice a day
P12	28	Female	Data analyst	Chanting	Twice a day

Table 2: Thematic Coding

Open coding	Axial coding	Selective coding
<p>Those resistances start breaking</p> <p>The more you work on that and it breaks down your weaknesses and they no longer exist.</p> <p>Breaking judgments about people and about your own self</p> <p>I had certain tendencies of procrastination, of giving up or not believing in my own potential</p> <p>Before these practices, there was a certain disconnection or awkwardness I used to feel</p> <p>Connect with different kinds of people and be comfortable with how they are and how I am</p> <p>you get to understand your strengths and your weaknesses</p>	<p>Mental training</p> <p>Mental warm-up</p> <p>Recognizing patterns</p> <p>Taking conscious calls</p>	<p>Breaking negative habitual thought patterns</p>
<p>Instead of being impulsive If I have become more thinking</p> <p>Unshaken in difficult times</p> <p>More centered instead of being feverish and instead of being anxious all the time about results</p> <p>You are less obsessed about the results somewhere you are less compared to the others.</p>	<p>Reaction time has decreased</p> <p>Not brooding over results</p> <p>Regulating emotions</p>	<p>Equanimity in the face of adversity</p>
<p>This has given me that kind of independence and also a sense of responsibility that I need to correct my own behavior</p> <p>I could be interactive with the students.</p> <p>When you have doubts when you feel depressed when you feel low, then definitely your prana is low. So now I need to increase my prana so what can I do I can sit and meditate</p>	<p>Not looking for blame outside</p> <p>Taking accountability</p>	<p>Assuming active agency rather than being recipients of external circumstances</p>

<p>Change in the other person will only happen when I change something in my own life And spiritualism has given me the courage, that no matter what I will attain my goal I win, and sometimes I lose, but the practice helps me to like, like course correct my behaviors.</p>	Correcting behaviors		
<p>One of the most important things that spirituality teaches you is, I think being 100 percent and what you're doing, right being in the present moment I could come to the education sector only because of the practice that I'm doing. They can transform their lives from that moment onward. then that is my victory Helped me gather my thoughts be focused in one direction and made me realize what I really want in my life</p>	<p>Prioritizing tasks Setting goals</p>	life	Clarity of life goals
<p>Practice comes the most when there are dips in life Whenever I'm getting defeated, that is not bringing misery in my life Appreciate the things even more in my life help me understand where I am lacking.</p>	<p>Negative events amplifying the practice Practice comes in handy when there are dips in life,</p>		Perfect fall-back option
<p>When you have doubts when you feel depressed when you feel low, then definitely your prana is low</p>	Finding peace and solace in difficulties		

4 FINDINGS

Breaking negative habitual thought patterns. It refers to recognizing negative thought patterns and replacing them with positive self-dialogue. Our respondents expressed that the process of focusing attention during spiritual practice aided them to become self-aware and observe their thoughts. One of the participants, who is a freelancer noted that by engaging in regular spiritual practice he was able to identify his self-critical and self-defeating thoughts. He was able to work on some of these negative tendencies once he became aware of them. He referred to this transformation as an ‘inner change’ and ‘human revolution.’ He said:

"I had certain tendencies of procrastination, of giving up, of not believing in my potential, of not believing in my life. Giving up was the easiest choice that I always had, but because of spiritual practice, I could give the strength to myself to do that human revolution. It is just like you are giving yourself a complete package of going to the gym and eating the right kind of diet.

And everything is one thing, complementing the other."

Another respondent, who is an entrepreneur shared her experience of doing spiritual practice and volunteering. She highlighted that regular practice helped her to break through her resistance, become aware of her strengths and weaknesses and take steps to enhance her life.

"It [Spiritual Practice] is kind of helping you in your life, in the process of organizing and taking bigger responsibilities such that you get to understand your strengths and your weaknesses. Now, when you take up a project even as small as feeding 10 people, then you understand the key - what are your strengths and what are your weaknesses? So, those weaknesses will discomfort you. Sometimes you just want to get rid of the project and be in your comfort zone. But in the process, your comfort zone expands, and you come out of your resistance. Those resistances no longer exist in your life. Initially, if you are hesitant to talk in front of 20-25 people, now those resistances start to break... It enhances your strengths, the more you work on them, and it breaks down your weaknesses and they no longer exist."

Similar comparisons were made by other participants who described their spiritual practices as ‘morning warm-up’ and ‘mental training’ to face the physical world, which may at times be unkind. Spiritual practices assisted the participants in noticing their negative thought patterns that became growth barriers and shift their attention to growth possibilities by improving their capabilities. As one of our respondents described, “Spirituality helps us expand our capabilities and reduces the boundaries which we have set for ourselves.” Another participant said, “It [Spiritual practice] has helped me grow and stand apart from others with diverse skill sets in the organization. I could improve my skills and the changes were visible in my actions.” The participants also stated that these practices gave them the strength they need to overcome barriers imposed by challenging situations in life.

Equanimity in the face of adversity. As a result of their consistent spiritual discipline, participants experienced significant emotional balance. Participants expressed that they

were not reactive to negative situations as they were before. While explaining the immediate and long-term effects of the practices, one of the participants said:

“After a few days of doing the practice, I could see how much energetic I was feeling. My energy levels were high, and I was very enthusiastic. So, this was the immediate effect that I could see after doing the practice. Now I've been doing it for six years. I can see how emotionally balanced I have become over the years. Earlier the things that made me more anxious used to disturb me immediately. Now instead of being impulsive, I have become more thoughtful, and my reaction time has increased. This is one of the most important changes that I see in my behavior.”

One of the respondents, who is a data scientist, noted his holding on to his prayer and spiritual routine helped him control his emotions, especially in situations that provoke extreme reactions like anger.

“When I stayed in touch with my spiritual learning and did the practice, and the prayer - the force of emotion is slowing down a little bit, and it has given me the time [before reacting]. Maybe it still hits to be hurt, but before it finds verbal expression there is time, so another person is spared of my anger.”

One of the biggest gradual changes that some of the respondents mentioned was that “they had stopped comparing themselves with others.” Additionally, the participants noted that they maintained their composure even in the face of unfavorable results or negative feedback. They became more accepting of the people and situations they encountered. Sharing their personal experiences and benefits of doing spiritual practices, one of the participants stated:

"Accepting people and situations as they are and remembering opposite values are complementary to each other. So, this knowledge has helped me be more centered in a difficult situation instead of going haywire and all over the place."

One of the participants stated, "Now, I am in charge of my emotions and reactions". Through spiritual practice, participants felt the freedom to choose their response to a situation. To deal with life's ups and downs, they relied on their diligent practice. A participant who practiced a breathwork routine shared "When you have doubts when you feel depressed when you feel low, then definitely your prana (breath energy) is low. So now I need to increase my prana so I can sit and meditate, maybe I can do some Bhastrika (a form of breathwork) something that will elevate my energy."

Assuming active agency rather than being recipients of external circumstances.

Spiritual practices led people to believe in themselves and take charge of their lives. From an external locus of control, most of the participants of our study shifted to an internal locus of control where they became decision-makers for their selves. They assumed responsibility for their decisions. This helped them assume agency in their own lives. They understood that life situations whether good or bad were their own making. And if life situations were bad, they had the capability to turn them around. As one of the respondents expressed:

"Spirituality has given me a sense of accountability and ownership. If I'm not able to do certain things, then I think about where I need to improve

myself. When I am in deep contemplation, I'm able to understand that if my situations are wrong then there is something that I need to improve in myself. Earlier the thought process was looking for the blame outside or looking for blessings from someone else."

Another understanding that people who did spiritual practices displayed was that they focused less on circumstances beyond their control. They rather chose to work on issues that were well within their powers. For instance, they focused less on changing the other person and rather preferred to change something in their own behavior to make the situation more agreeable. One of the participants even said, "The change that I want to see in another person will happen only when I change something in my own life."

Clarity of life goals. Spiritual practices helped the participants to be in the present moment rather than indulging in 'chattering of the mind'. This helped them bring clarity to their thoughts, and bring more focus to the task at hand, thereby resulting in seeing their life goals more clearly. One of the participants explained how spiritual practices helped her achieve this clarity in her life:

"One of the most important things that spirituality teaches you is to be 100 percent in what you're doing. This is something that has helped me being in the present moment. Otherwise, there used to be a bombardment of thoughts that doesn't really help and let you give 100% to any task, and the mind is all over. It [spiritual practice] has helped me gather my thoughts and be focused in one direction, which has made me realize what I really want in my life. It has given more definition and more purpose to my life. So, these are the many changes that I see because of these practices."

Participants described how by keeping track of their thoughts helped them understand their subconscious states of mind. They were able to unearth their deepest aspirations regarding what "they want to do in their lives, how they want to add value to their work, and how they want others to relate to them." They expressed that their increased focus on what they were doing as a result of having clearer life goals allowed them to find time for all the things they wanted to do.

One of the participants, who is a production design head, said, "People leave organizations due to a lack of recognition and opportunities." These people did not have an understanding or vision of what they wanted to achieve or where they wanted to go. He mentioned that "spirituality gives you clarity of your own life goals." He further added how spirituality helped him in his role as a manager.

"When we are working in a managerial role, we need to have a clear thought process. Many of the managers in many organizations are unable to manage themselves and eventually leave the organization. This is where spirituality comes in handy."

Internal Fall-back Option. The most fascinating aspect that we noted about spiritual practices is that they come alive for the participants in the sense that they become people's companions. Participants found solace in doing their spiritual practices, especially when they were facing tough times in their lives. In other words, during the downturns, spiritual practices became the perfect fallback option for people. Instead of feeling anxious or worried about the difficulty and getting drained by it, people used

their spiritual practice to outgrow the challenges they faced. One of our respondents mentioned:

"I believe that the practice comes the most when there are dips in life; when there are highs who think about the practice. So, it actually comes into play when we are going down."

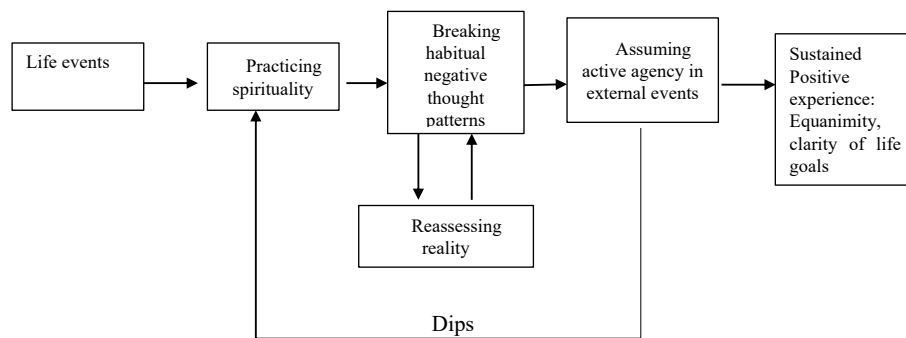
There were immediate physiological benefits such as an increase in life energy that people experienced by doing the spiritual practice. This resulted in relieving their stress and anxiety. As one of the participants related:

"When I feel low, I know definitely there is something wrong with my energy, it is this simple equation. When you have doubts when you feel depressed when you feel low, then definitely your prana (life energy) is low. So now to increase my prana I sit and meditate."

This short-term respite, by doing the spiritual practice, eventually translated into people being more confident and being in more control of the situation. Instead of having a negative view of life, they began to appreciate life even more. They searched for the missing piece within and tried to make things better for themselves. This feeling is illustrated by what one of our respondents told us:

"Spirituality has given me that courage, that no matter what I will attain my goal. And whenever I'm getting defeated, that is not going to bring misery in my life. That is actually helping me to be more in control, or to just bring myself back to life even more, to appreciate the things even more in my life. And also, to understand where I'm lacking and do better the next time."

Fig. 2. Conceptual framework



5 DISCUSSION

We aimed to understand how spiritual practices have impacted the work-life of the people. Our findings, based on interviews with 12 participants, indicated that spiritual practices were found to be effective tools for coping with work-life stressors. While findings are more general not specific to any context, it is worthwhile for human resource practitioners to engage with these ideas, in the context of negative externalities caused by technology-mediated work. The future of work is going to be extremely challenging, especially for Gen Z, millennials who are going to be working in precarious work conditions. Professional and social isolation, interruption overload, the feeling of loneliness, and work -alienation are some threats employees cannot get away with. Spiritual practices can be instrumental in dealing with these threats. In the below discussion, we attempt to show ways in which our findings hold importance to the psychosocial challenges of work life.

First, our findings indicated that spiritual practices helped in breaking habitual patterns of thoughts by providing effective mechanisms such as positive affirmations used in meditation and in chanting (participants spoke of praying for achieving specific goals). It can increase the utilization of 'thought self-leadership which means individuals can self-influence or self-regulate their beliefs and assumptions and habitual ways of thinking through positive self-dialogue [66][67]. [66] described a thought pattern as "certain ways of thinking about our experiences", and as "habitual ways of thinking". Dysfunctional or self-critical thinking can cause psychological distress [68][69]. According to quantum psychology, most people are unable to reconstruct their life because they are biologically and emotionally addicted to it. This that if I frequently become angry with my father, there will be a neurological connection between "anger" and "father " making me addicted to the same response. It follows that every time we interrupt a thought process that causes a chemical response in the body, those nerve cells that are connected to each other start breaking the long-term relationship [34]. This is because emotions are designed to chemically reinforce something into long-term memory. The Quantum principle holds that when people become aware of their attachments, they will begin to overcome their addictions. Spiritual practices such as prayer, meditation, reading spiritual texts and breathwork break these negative patterns and replace obstacle thinking patterns with opportunity thinking patterns. "Opportunity thinking involves a pattern of thoughts that focuses on opportunities, worthwhile challenges, and constructive ways of dealing with challenging situations" [70]. By contrast, "obstacle thinking, involves a focus on the negative aspects (the obstacles) involved in challenging situations" [70]. These thought patterns have a significant impact on employees' attitudes and behaviors.

Second, the participants experienced clarity and more focus on the task at hand. It is a very significant finding to overcome distractions caused by interruption overload. This

finding supports previous studies on spiritual practices and helps in elevating the ability to attend to what is relevant in a given situation. This helps people to completely immerse themselves in the task at hand. They do not get engaged in downward spiral thoughts like feeling alienated from work.

Third, through consistent spiritual practices, participants experienced equanimity. Equanimity helps in promoting cognitive flexibility. Other studies have shown, mindfulness training increases mental balance and cognitive flexibility [71]. Cognitive flexibility is an indicator of good mental health [72], as it gives the freedom to choose the optimal response in stressful situations. Equanimity helps to recognize the transient nature of mental events this awareness helps to disengage from such thoughts [73]. This finding is very significant to deal with issues like loneliness, work-alienation. It decreases reactivity to stressful situations.

Fourth, the increased awareness in the present subsequently helps to develop the ability to detach from the identified stressors. It could be imagining poor outcomes of performance and uncertainty in work or career. As mentioned earlier, increased cognitive flexibility subsequently helps to choose and identify what is relevant in the present moment [75] This finding is very significant in the context of gig work where there is constant anxiety till the worker grabs the next gig. In other situations, obsessively directing focus on the outcomes lead to difficulty in paying attention to the efforts to reach the desired outcome.

Finally, criticism and rejections are a part of work-life. As the nature of work is evolving, performance evaluation methods are also changing. Now, employee performance is not only rated by one party. The innovative apps and social media platforms provide instant feedback on performance as we see in food delivery and cab services. There is continuous pressure of working effectively. This causes employees to feel emotional labor which has serious mental health issues. Being under constant supervision may lead to anxiety. Spiritual practices provide solace in these times of distress. They have been found helpful in people suffering from depressive thoughts by providing emotional support [75].

5.1 Managerial Implications

Academic literature outlines various psycho-social challenges in work-life specifically in the context of technology disruption in work. These are interruption overload, work-family conflict, work alienation, precarious work, increasing anxiety, and social and professional isolation. In the fast-paced, globally connected world of today, people frequently struggle to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives. The findings from the qualitative data suggest that spiritual practices lead to better work-related outcomes. Our respondents have mentioned that spiritual practices like chanting, breathwork, meditation, and prayer helped them to get into a positive mindset which ultimately has led to better coping with the negative implications of work. For example: breaking negative habitual thought patterns helps to overcome overthinking, and self-critical thoughts. Similarly, equanimity in the face of adversity and clarity of goals will help in prioritizing tasks and not being bothered by other spheres of life that

are interfering with the work. Through these outcomes, one can avoid work-related stress and anxiety. The following theme, "from being a recipient to an active agency," shows that the respondents are achieving a positive mindset and also acting positively, producing a positive feedback loop that improves their mental health and also creates positive change in the world. The other theme "perfect fallback option" implies that, despite difficulties, spiritual practices bring comfort and tranquility.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite its novel prospect, our study comes with certain limitations. First, it only includes people only from India, therefore the results may or may not be generalizable to other cultural settings. Taking into consideration different cultural backgrounds, geographic locations, and other spiritual practices, future researchers can increase the generalizability of this study. Second, we used in-depth interviews to inductively know about the phenomenon. Future researchers might take inspiration from our study and use our findings to construct experimental and longitudinal research designs to understand causality and how findings may vary with time. Finally, we have not compared the short-term and long-term effects of doing spiritual practices in the current study. These could be paid attention to in future studies to gain more insights and strengthen the findings.

6 Conclusion

The integration of quantum psychology and spirituality opens up a promising new path for improving work-life experiences. The results of the empirical study support the claims of quantum psychology regarding the ability of consciousness to transcend physical reality. Spirituality, while often transcending reductionist scientific explanations, spirituality adds a deeper dimension to add meaning to work-life. Spirituality helps to develop a sense of connection with the greater self. In this paper, we discuss how spiritual practices can serve as tools to achieve a state of higher awareness. Our findings indicate that engaging in spiritual practices helped people break through negative thought patterns, become an active agency, and maintain equanimity in difficult situations. These practices gave them clarity of life goals and spiritual practice was a perfect internal fallback option in times of distress.

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