

# Thesis Title Page



***Title***

Examining the impact of workplace spirituality on the work stress and retention of Generation Z in the professional services sector in Ireland.

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***Award:*** MA in Human Resource Management (CIPD)

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Submitted to the National College of Ireland, (May) (2021).

## **Abstract**

Workplace spirituality (WPS) represents an expanding field of research with a particular focus on improving employee wellbeing through finding higher meaning and interconnection in the workplace. The purpose of the present research is to address a gap in literature surrounding the impact of WPS on Generation Z, the youngest generational cohort entering the workforce. The research draws on existing literature to further investigate the associations between WPS, work stress and employee retention for Generation Z in the professional services sector in Ireland, as well as intergenerational findings on WPS.

In particular, the researcher aimed to examine whether Generations Z, Y and X portray differing WPS outcomes, and whether there was an association between WPS and work stress, and WPS and retention for Generation Z in Professional Services Firms (PSFs). Literature demonstrates that WPS improves employment aspects related to wellbeing, thus reducing occupational stress and lowering turnover intentions which naturally increases organizational tenure. This is of interest to PSFs which are faced with the challenge of retaining young knowledge workers who have lower organisational loyalty than their generational predecessors.

Using an online survey research design, data were obtained from 101 individuals of working age who are currently working or have recently worked in a PSF. The research instrument consisted of three pre-existing scales on WPS, work stress and turnover intentions.

Findings indicated that generational membership did not produce differing WPS outcomes. For Generation Z, overall WPS was seen to increase work stress. Within the WPS sub-dimensions, higher levels of inner life values reduced work stress, while higher levels of meaningful work increased work stress for Generation Z. Lastly, this study found a negative correlation between WPS and turnover intentions of Generation Z. In particular, community-oriented WPS dimensions were observed to improve Generation Z retention prospects.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor April Hargreaves for her guidance throughout the process of writing this thesis, and Jonathan Lambert for his help with the quantitative research process. I would like to thank my family for supporting me throughout my entire education journey and my friends for encouraging my work. Lastly, a big thank you to everyone who participated in my research.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility

B2B - Business-to-Business

Gen X - Generation X

Gen Y - Generation Y

Gen Z - Generation Z

HRM - Human Resource Management

IL - Inner Life

KPI - Key Performance Indicator

MW - Meaning at Work

P-E fit - Person-Environment fit

P-O fit - Person-Organization fit

PSF - Professional Services Firm

SAW - Spirituality At Work scale

SC - Sense of Community

SIG - Stress In General scale

WHO - World Health Organization

WPS - Workplace Spirituality



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In the context of the modern, capitalistic world, the immense power and influence of organisations can be seen in the business, political, economic and social spheres. Simply considering the fact that we view organisations as *legal entities* only adds to their supreme importance in the world today. Through legal fiction and the creation of the limited corporation, people have given organisations human characteristics which allow them to be viewed and prosecuted as separate from their owners (Harari, 2015). Therefore, this impels us to question how could organisations be spirit-free zones if we have already infused them with spiritual, personal characteristics?

Narrowing down the focus from the global importance of organisations and considering their HR impact on an individual-level, it must be noted that work has become a central aspect of people's lives. Today's generation is spending most of their weekday waking hours in the workplace (Jena and Pradhan, 2018) and even up to a third of their adult working lives at work (Jena, 2021). The expected length of service on the labour market continues to rise, and Irish people are currently forecasted to spend 37.4 years of their lives on average in the workforce, which is above the EU average of 35.9 years (Eurostat, 2019). This accentuates the fact that, for the youngest employees, the workplace is becoming one of the biggest and most impacting communities in their lives.

As work plays an integral role in people's lives, it is essential for organisations to create humane work environments where they treat employees fairly, acknowledge their spiritual needs, and respect their dreams and souls (Jena and Pradhan, 2018). This impetus has been driving towards a new form of 'conscious capitalism' (Aburdene, 2005). Spirituality is seen as one of the largest megatrends in this generation as people are more prevalently guided by spiritual values and this philosophy has been adopted in Western societies (Aburdene, 2005). In line with this, WPS has become a major area of research in academics.

Multiple benefits associated with WPS can be drawn from existing literature. As people are becoming more spiritual in their hearts, minds and souls, they wish to bring this authentic feeling into the workplace and further cultivate it. Just as employees refuse to hide or diminish their race, sexual orientation or gender, they are similarly no longer willing to park their spiritual values, dreams and identity at the door when they go into work (Miller and

Ewest, 2013). This facilitates employee wellbeing in the workplace under several dimensions. WPS is indirectly linked to leadership theory (Fry and Slocum, 2007) and motivation theory (Maslow, 1970; Petchsawanga & McLean, 2017). In academic literature, WPS is reported to improve employee organisational commitment (Rego & Cunha, 2007; Nasina & Doris, 2011), career satisfaction (Bhaskar and Mishra, 2019), work engagement (van der Walt, 2018; Petchsawanga & McLean, 2017), organisational performance (Jena, 2021) and employee health (Kumar & Kumar, 2014). It is also observed to reduce work stress (Daniel, 2014; Chand & Koul, 2012) and lower turnover intentions (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2019).

Such wellness-promoting dimensions are crucial in the workplace as today's competitive and chaotic business environment exerts immense pressure on employees. Line employees are pressurised to deliver high standard quality- and quantity-oriented results in order to meet KPIs and adhere to the expectations of their managers; in turn, the latter act under strict guidelines of executives and shareholders who want objective, financial performance results (Kumar and Kumar, 2014). These extensive lines of authority create a build-up of occupational stress, created and trickled down from each level. In the long-run, such stress levels may lead to *burn-out*, an occupational phenomenon classified under the 11<sup>th</sup> Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (WHO, 2019). The youngest generation of employees who are currently entering the workforce, Generation Z (Gen Z), must face this highly competitive and demanding work environment.

As pressures continue to rise concerning young employees' personal lives as well global and environmental issues, Gen Z are now the generation most prone to anxiety and depression (Schroth, 2019). They are also the generation most devoted to searching for authenticity, deeper meaning and truth (Francis & Hoefel, 2018) and have been found to be more achievement-oriented than preceding generations (Schroth, 2019). This suggests that Gen Z are searching for work values that extend beyond tangible rewards as means of retention. It is therefore possible that a sane and engaging work environment may be important for Gen Z to live a balanced and peaceful life amidst the challenges posed by the world today, to reduce their stress levels and to increase their retention in organizations. Although a vast amount of valuable literature exists on WPS, a gap has been identified as the spiritual philosophy has not been researched in terms of the youngest generational cohort Gen Z. Hence, the present research addresses this research gap.

This research paper will be centred around examining the impact of WPS on work stress and retention of Generation Z in the professional services sector in Ireland, as well as differences

in perceptions of WPS by Generations Z, Y and X. Quantitative analysis conducted with a detailed questionnaire will allow us to investigate whether Generations Z, Y and X have different associations with WPS, and whether there is a statistically significant association between WPS and work stress, and WPS and retention of Gen Z in professional services firms (PSFs). Stemming from existing literature, one would hypothesize that WPS would facilitate in the reduction of work stress and lowering of turnover intentions. Within the professional services sector, retention of Gen Z employees is of high importance as they are the future of the workforce, yet young employees are prone to a phenomenon known as “job hopping” or changing working positions several times throughout their careers (Basford & Schaninger, 2016). This suggests they will quickly exit an organisation which does not align with their values. Gaining experience from a variety of organisations in the business world serves as a significant career development attribute. Hence, this research may be of interest to employers seeking to find ways of retaining Gen Z talent.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### *2.1 Introduction*

The aim of this literature review will be to familiarise the reader with the major concepts that this research will examine, their underpinnings in seminal scholarly writings, as well as their developments and importance in recent literature and in the workplace. Although WPS is still said to be in its adolescence as a research field (Jena, 2021; Jena & Pradhan, 2018; Fourie, 2014; Miller & Ewest, 2013; Petchsawanga & McLean, 2017; Crossman, 2015), there are nonetheless numerous theoretical articles and empirical research on this subject. Most of these contribute immensely to one's understanding of the breadth of this branch of knowledge.

Although many scholars have claimed that the issue with existing literature on WPS is too much conceptual breadth and not enough depth (Saas, 2000, cited in Jena, 2021), we will see that vast research has also given insights into the depth of this subject.

In the present literature review, we will firstly look at the growing importance of spirituality and its role in the workplace. We will examine how various theories and academic literature findings contribute towards moulding a definition of this multidimensional concept (Miller & Ewest, 2013). Next, we will look at practical applications of WPS and how WPS relates to work stress and employee turnover. The literature review will be intertwined with emerging benefits and criticisms of WPS. The reader will then be introduced to the characteristics and needs of Generation Z (Gen Z), and how they relate to WPS and work-stress, as well as some intergenerational differences. We will close the literature review with some insights into the role of WPS in enhancing employee retention and its relevance for Gen Z. Having understood the underlying concepts of the research, the reader will subsequently be transitioned into exploring the purpose and method of conducting the present research study.

## *2.2 Growing importance of spirituality*

The importance of spirituality in all domains of life has been growing at a globally unprecedented rate in the twenty first century, especially with Western societies welcoming the spiritual philosophy into their lives (Aburdene, 2005). Aburdene (2005) recognizes how spirituality has been a fundamental impetus driving towards conscious capitalism, and is therefore regarded as one of the most explosive megatrends of the twenty first century. Starting at an individual level, people have been becoming more self-aware, questioning the capitalistic nature of our society and seeking conscious alternatives to standard processes. At a societal level, this has led to the growth of conscious capitalism, most profoundly impacting the sphere of consumption. Values-driven consumers have been demanding that organizations adopt a stakeholder approach to business, paying attention to the triple bottom line (Aburdene, 2005; Fry & Slocum Jr, 2008). Scandals surrounding fraudulent practices of many organizational giants have been immense triggers to counteract the capitalistic nature of our society (Meiners, 2020; Wheeler, 2018; Verhoogen, 2016). This has been supported by the pursuit of justice, sustainability, personal accountability, consciousness and a search for purpose and meaning in our lives and in the workplace. The latter will be at the heart of this literature review.

Historically, organisational development was shaped by the industrial era rooted in Taylorism (Miller & Ewest, 2013). Taylorism, or scientific management, expected line employees to focus solely on maximizing output and operational efficiency, while the processes of strategic thinking, planning and value creation were reserved for management (Miller and Ewest, 2013). This meant that employees were alienated at work (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000) and stripped of all their inner values when entering the workplace; they were expected to work in a robotic manner and were not encouraged to seek vocational meaning. This phenomenon has not been entirely eradicated from organisations today where dehumanising environments still operate (van der Walt, 2018), especially considering many manufacturing firms in developing countries. It can nonetheless be said that this phenomenon is disappearing from the majority of tertiary services organisations in developed countries.

Considering the complexity of today's business environment, the scientific approach no longer applies (Petchsawanga & McLean, 2017). Today, people "are no longer satisfied to park their faith tradition or identity at the door when they go into work, any more than they are willing to deny or sublimate their ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation" (Miller and

Ewest, 2013, p. 30; Marques, 2020). Similarly, Schutte (2016) resonates with this idea, emphasizing how employees must be treated as holistic individuals composed of their bodies, hearts, minds and souls which they bring to work every day. He proposes that “the need to create meaning is inherent for our very existence as human beings (Schutte, 2016, p. 2). This statement is supported by the fact that as a species, we, homo sapiens, are the only ones who have the cognitive capacity to be aware of our mortality, to ponder concepts not grounded in hard facts and, therefore, to feel the need to seek a higher purpose (Harari, 2015). WPS has emerged as a field of research and practice which helps employers to understand their employees in a holistic way, and to facilitate a work environment where employees can find higher meaning, oneness with the organization and a sense of belonging (Schutte, 2016; van der Walt, 2018).

### *2.3 Defining the ‘Workplace’*

Before introducing a possible definition of WPS, it is worthwhile looking at the ‘workplace’ itself, and then the role spirituality plays in the context of the workplace. Work is an integral part of an adult’s life (Jena and Pradhan, 2018; Fourie, 2014). Factors which create an adult’s identity, such as intellectual, emotional and psychological factors, have an impact on how one carries out their work (Fourie, 2014). Work itself is “a source of status and identity, self-esteem, social recognition, expression of personal interests and capabilities” (Brown & Lent, 2013, cited in Fourie, 2014, p. 2). Each working day is a window of opportunity for an employee’s personal growth and contribution to society and their personal direction in life. Jena (2021) refers to the ‘ideal workplace’ which allows employees to feel passionate and driven by their work, to find transcendence in the workplace, and to express themselves freely.

However, the opposite is sometimes true when the workplace does not provide any meaning beyond satisfying the pecuniary needs of employees. In such environments, the pay-check becomes the end goal and work is performed routinely, mindlessly and without an inner drive or motivation (van der Walt, 2018). The workplace becomes a vacuum stripped of meaning and significance (Jena, 2021). Spirituality seeks to combat this demotivating mindset and instil deeper and more purposeful values into the work environment, creating a meaningful workplace where employees feel guided by a clear vision.



## *2.4 Theoretical grounding for WPS*

WPS can be indirectly linked to leadership theory through the theorisation of spiritual leadership. Fry and Slocum (2007) explain that spiritual leadership within an organisation focuses on diffusing a clear and compelling vision which allows the leader and their followers to find meaning in their work and believe their actions can make a difference. This vision creates an organizational culture based on altruistic love and diffuses hope for their future within the organisation; it cultivates a sense of membership, care and concern within their work community. This is expected to lead to improved outcomes such as organizational performance, employee wellbeing and Corporate Social Responsibility (refer to Figure 4 in the Appendix).

Nonetheless, Tourish & Tourish (2010) criticise giving organizational leaders too much power for implementing WPS. They suggest that the power gap between leaders and employees could be widened as leaders are able to “exercise a dominating influence over the most private values and belief systems of the [employees]” (p. 212-213). Leaders could become engineers who manipulate the souls of employees and exercise more control over them, trying to re-engineer their inner values to suit the purposes of the organisation. Marques (2020) further suggests that some organizations may promote WPS as a tool for strengthening the power, control and influence of organisational leaders to induce submissive and obedient employee behaviour. However, such criticisms have not been documented as observed in organizations and only serve as precautions.

Furthermore, WPS can be linked to workplace motivation theory. When employers seek to develop the spiritual needs within their employees and make sure they align with organizational values, they also help them fulfil their highest, self-actualisation needs in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1970; Petchsawanga & McLean, 2017). As employees ascend the hierarchy of needs, their work becomes meaningful; they are not satisfied solely by transactional rewards, but rather by the higher purpose they can serve through their work and the interconnections they can create in the workplace (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2019). WPS can therefore be a source of intrinsic motivation. This is important for the expectations of new Gen Z entrants in the workforce. Research suggests they look for organisations which focus on HR aspects beyond rewarding mechanisms; ones which place a higher emphasis on nurturing employee-friendly policies, work-life balance and healthy organisational cultures (Jena, 2021; Andrea et al., 2016). It must be noted that for the purposes of this research WPS

is not related to religion in any way, and we will now look at several academic explanations to support this stance.

#### *2.4.1 Spirituality and religion*

As we proceed to discuss the meaning of spirituality in the workplace, it is necessary to explain differing views of WPS as inclusive or exclusive of religion, and why this paper adopts a non-religious stance. Many of the emergent themes of WPS such as benevolence, integrity, humanism and respect (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004) as well as ethics, truth, openness and interconnectedness (Marques, 2020) are also reflected in the teachings of major world religions. Conversely, many of the altruistic principles underlying most of the world's major religions such as moral principles of love, compassion, respect, honesty and fairness, are also necessary to create a spiritual workplace (Fry & Slocum Jr, 2008). This is why some scholars view WPS as overlapping with religion (Jena, 2021; Miller & Ewest, 2013; Liu & Robertson, 2011; Lynn et al., 2008).

However, many scholars define a clear distinction between spirituality and religion (Kumar & Kumar, 2014; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Fry & Slocum Jr., 2008; Marques, 2007). Fry and Slocum Jr. (2008) explain that “spirituality is necessary for religion, but religion is not necessary for spirituality” (p. 90). As spirituality relates to finding higher purpose and acting to promote greater societal good and interconnection with others, spirituality can be seen to create part of the foundations of religion. However, religion extends beyond these values by incorporating formalized practices, rituals, ceremonies and teachings (Fry and Slocum Jr., 2008). Religion can be a divisive force in organisations, risking to offend others. It constitutes one of the nine grounds of the Unfair Dismissals Act 1977 in Ireland, and is regarded as a highly inappropriate topic of discussion in the workplace by many managers (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Irish Statute Book, n.d.). Conversely, spirituality creates interconnection between employees and can be practiced by each employee regardless of their religious background and faith, or lack thereof (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Schutte, 2016).

One of the first empirical studies in the field of WPS carried out by Mitroff and Denton (1999) revealed that the majority of managers who participated in the qualitative research considered religion as a highly inappropriate subject of discussion in the work environment. It

was regarded as dogmatic and formally institutionalised. On the other hand, spirituality was perceived as a highly appropriate discussion area, a personal phenomenon that is crucial for sustaining an ethical and caring organisational culture. This study is longitudinal in nature and a decade later Mitroff et al. (2008) released an interim report revealing that the findings of the 1999 study were still relevant: respondents still described religion with negative wording like “dogmatic and intolerant”, while spirituality with positive wording like “open and tolerant” (p. 3).

However, cultural limitations must be acknowledged. The sample for Mitroff and Denton (1999) was American-based, and in line with Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s cultural study dimensions (cited in Dowling et al., 2017), America has a specific culture. This means that there is a clear separation of private and working life spheres. A diffuse culture, on the other hand, would be associated with the likes of Japanese culture where private and working spaces are intertwined. Therefore, the longitudinal study (Mitroff et al., 2008) is in the process of gathering an international sample which will have the potential of validating WPS findings on an international scale. Moreover, geographical limitations can also be noted in many other studies investigating WPS. The samples of recent studies by Bhaskar and Mishra (2019), Jena (2021) and Kumar and Kumar (2014) all came from employees in India. This may influence the perceived support for WPS as India is recognized as a highly spiritual country. Other studies examined WPS solely among samples from Asia, such as several thousand employees from a Thai company in Petchsawanga & Duchon (2009).

Nonetheless, each of the above-mentioned studies from different cultures took a non-religious view of spirituality and distinguished clearly between *religion* and *spirituality*, emphasizing that, for their particular studies, these concepts are not interchangeable. As a result, the view adopted by the present research study does not associate spirituality with religion. This makes it inclusive and accessible for a diversity of employees.

### 2.4.2 Defining the dimensions of Workplace Spirituality

Scholarly research in the field of WPS has been growing significantly in recent decades. Some of the field's seminal conceptualisations, measures and research are summarized in Table 1 below:

**Table 1:** Key seminal contributions in the field of WPS

<b>RESEARCHERS/YEAR</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTION</b>
MITROFF AND DENTON (1999)	Conceptualisation of the Organizational Models of Spirituality and Religion, and the original definition of spirituality as separate from religion (p. 89).
ASHMOS AND DUCHON (2000)	Three core dimensions of WPS: inner life, meaningful work and sense of community. Development of the Spirituality At Work (SAW) scale.
KRISHNAKUMAR AND NECK (2002)	Three perspectives of spirituality: the intrinsic-origin view, the religious view, the existentialist perspective.
MILLIMAN, CZAPLEWSKI AND FERGUSON (2003)	First empirical research examining the relationships between WPS and five work attitudes: organization commitment, intention to quit, intrinsic work satisfaction, job involvement and organization-based self-esteem.
JURKIEWICZ AND GIACALONE (2004)	Conceptualisation of the values framework of WPS including: benevolence, generativity, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, receptivity, respect, responsibility, trust.
KINJERSKI AND SKRYPNEK (2006)	Development of the Spirit At Work Scale, building upon the findings of Kinjerski & Skrypnek (2004), under four dimensions: engaging work, mystical experience, spiritual connection, sense of community.
REGO AND CUNHA (2007)	Finding positive correlation between WPS and three types of organisational commitment: affective, normative and continuance commitment.

For the purpose of our research, we will delve into the intrinsic-origin view of WPS, which is not associated with any religious beliefs, originates from the inner consciousness of an individual and their quest to connect with co-workers and the organisation, and can be a part

of any employee's work life irrespective of their religious backgrounds (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002).

Numerous previous studies have developed multiple definitions of WPS. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) present one of the seminal and most important studies conceptualising and measuring WPS, which has been cited and implemented in multiple subsequent studies up-to-date, including, but by no means limited to, Bhaskar and Mishra (2019), Petchsawanga & McLean (2017), Jena (2021), Rego & Cunha (2007), and Daniel (2014). Ashmos and Duchon (2000) put forward three dimensions of WPS: inner life (IL), meaning at work (MW) and sense of community (SC). IL explains that individuals have both an outer life developed through the mind, and an IL developed through the soul, and that both carry equal importance for the organisation and the employee. MW requires employers to understand that employees strive to do work which serves a higher purpose, to find a work-soul connection. Employers must recognise that work can either damage or nurture employees' souls. The third dimension, SC, relates to the fact that humans are social beings; as such, employees wish to feel a sense of unity, belonging and common vision with their work unit and organisation (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000, p. 135-137).

The definition of WPS which will be most relevant for the present research is provided by Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2004) and defines WPS as:

*“the experience of employees who are passionate about and energized by their work, find meaning and purpose in their work, feel that they can express their complete selves at work, and feel connected to those with whom they work”* (p. 27).

This definition is selected due to its effectiveness and simplicity in defining a complex concept, thus allowing it to be understood by all age groups.

WPS has been shown to positively correlate with employee organisational commitment by both Rego and Cunha (2007) and Nasina and Doris (2011). Rego and Cunha (2007) contribute significantly to the research field by establishing that, when WPS is higher in an organisation, employees' affective commitment (due to emotional attachment) and normative commitment (due to a sense of obligation) are both higher, while their continuance commitment (due to perceived high costs associated with leaving the organisation) is lower. As a natural corollary of positive organisational commitment, employee retention and wellbeing are improved. Nasina and Doris (2011) seek further investigation of WPS and affective organizational commitment in Malaysia, and demonstrate consistent findings with Rego and Cunha's (2007)

Portuguese study. Nasina and Doris (2011) conclude that affective organizational commitment increases when employees feel a SC, contribution to society and thoroughly enjoy their work, thus contributing to long-term organizational success. More recently, Jena and Pradhan (2018) also uphold this statement by showing a positive relationship between WPS and employee commitment among employees in India.

Recent literature further examines the relationships between WPS and numerous employment aspects which are crucial for HRM. Bhaskar and Mishra (2019) find that two dimensions of WPS, namely MW and SC, mediate the relationship between perceived organisational support and career satisfaction. Furthermore, MW was found to significantly contribute to lowering turnover intentions. Other studies have examined the relationship between WPS and work engagement. For instance, studies conducted by van der Walt (2018) in South Africa and Petchsawanga and McLean (2017) in Thailand both demonstrate a positive relationship between WPS and work engagement. These studies recommend incorporating respect and nurturing of employees' spiritual needs in an employee-friendly work environment to ameliorate organizational performance.

However, problematic implications may arise when too much academic literature on WPS becomes underpinned by the organisational advantages linked to increased employee performance. There is a possible risk of WPS becoming yet another tool for increasing employee performance to further generate value for the organization and sustain prolonged high performance (Jena, 2021; van der Walt, 2018), all the while masking it as an employee-friendly initiative. This could lead to standardization of inner employee values and beliefs in the workplace, an excessive pressure for conformity, and would potentially marginalize employee dissent (Tourish & Tourish, 2010). However, these are only possibilities which have not yet been documented in organizations.

WPS can be seen as an area of organisational learning which has become an influential domain with many organisations including continuous learning at the core of their employee value proposition (CIPD, 2020). Organisations like Google and General Mills have implemented mindfulness training courses as a means of improving employee effectiveness and wellbeing (Hyland et al., 2015). Mindfulness is the quality of having inner consciousness about living and acting in the present moment (Petchsawanga & McLean, 2017). It has been established as one of the main dimensions contributing towards spirituality in the workplace put forward by Petchsawanga and Duchon (2009). Mindfulness may be of relevance to Gen Z, who do not focus on the bigger picture but rather live in the present moment, react to events

as they happen, and concentrate on finding happiness and pleasure while blurring the boundaries between work and play (Andrea et al., 2016). Therefore, mindfulness training in organisations can be viewed as an effective stepping stone towards creating a spiritual and humane work environment for all generations.

Hence, in light of all the attributes and values of WPS discussed in this section, one can see how a spiritual workplace contributes to employee wellbeing, engagement and sense of contribution to their work, their team and their organisation. This indirectly insinuates that, as a result of these positive workplace implications, WPS could also facilitate the reduction of occupational stress.

### *2.5 Impact of work-related stress*

As global forces have swept over the market place, the organizational fight for survival with constant pressures for better quality- and quantity-oriented outcomes has intensified. Occupational stress levels have increased correspondingly (Kumar & Kumar, 2014). The World Health Organization (WHO) present the following definition:

*“Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope”* (WHO, 2020, s. 2).

In line with this definition, person-environment (P-E) fit theory provides one of the most pertinent explanations for occupational stress. From a HRM perspective, P-E fitness relates to compatibility between the employee and the organisation, or person-organisation fit (P-O fit). P-E fit also relates to matching the employee’s abilities and experience with the demands of the job (person-job fitness) in terms of workload and scope of control (Kumar & Kumar, 2014; Uppal, 2020). Clark-Murphy (2010) shows that managers who are more compatible with the complexity of their work environments are able to perform better, especially in terms of decision-making. If there is a lack of P-O fit, this will impair their performance and will lead to work stress (Chand & Koul, 2012).

Stressors in the workplace, which often result from a lack of P-O fit include role ambiguity, work overload and role conflict (Cooper & Marshall, 1976, cited in Chand & Koul, 2012), as well as interpersonal conflict, job insecurity, organizational politics and administrative hassles

(Hargrove et al., 2016). On the contrary, employee engagement in fulfilment-induced tasks which provide positive relationships with co-workers is linked to healthy psychological wellbeing and reduced stress (Robertson & Cooper, 2011, cited in Daniel, 2014). Possible HR initiatives for reducing work stress and improving employee psychological wellbeing include flexible working patterns, job sharing, remote working, stress management programmes and physical activities for employees (Rakshit & Sharma, 2016).

Nonetheless, it must be noted that not all types of stress are negative. For instance, the HR Eustress Model illustrates this (Figure 2 in the Appendix) (Hargrove et al., 2015, cited in Hargrove et al., 2016). This model recognizes negative hindrance stressors in the workplace, which usually lead to distress and unfavourable outcomes such as burnout, absenteeism and turnover; it also recognizes positive challenge stressors which can lead to eustress and, to a certain degree, favourable outcomes such as commitment, performance and engagement (Hargrove et al., 2016; Rakshit & Sharma, 2016). Reasonable amounts of stress are healthy for us and “keep us active and alert” (Kumar & Kumar, 2014, p. 345), while absence of eustress in our lives would lead to dullness, lack of motivation and lack of drive (Rakshit & Sharma, 2016). However, persistently high stress levels deteriorate physical and mental wellbeing causing headaches, anxiety, depression, insomnia, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease and hypersensitivity, among many others (Rakshit & Sharma, 2016, p. 98; Kumar & Kumar, 2014).

### *2.5.1 Work stress and workplace spirituality*

Several scholars have researched whether WPS contributes to reducing work-related stress, which could be of significance to improving HR policies. The WHO contends that “a healthy working environment is one in which there is not only an absence of harmful conditions but an abundance of health promoting ones” (WHO, 2020, s. 1). WPS could be one of such health promoting conditions.

Several studies have investigated the relationship between WPS and work stress. For instance, a study by Chand & Koul (2012) reveals that WPS is in fact negatively correlated with work stress. This study researched the relationship between work stress and three major variables: WPS, organizational emotional ownership and job satisfaction. It found negative correlations at 0.01 level of significance for each variable, representing -0.847, -0.845 and -0.693 respectively. Hence, WPS was the most statistically significant predictor in coping with work



stress in this study. Kumar & Kumar (2014) further contribute to this strand of research and find that, in stressful work environments, increased WPS has a positive impact on employee health. It moderates the impact of stress on health, such that when WPS is high, the unfavourable effects of stress that contribute to poor employee health are mitigated.

While the contribution of these two studies is notable in showing that WPS has a stress-reducing and health-improving influence on employees, they do not differentiate the findings between various age groups nor draw any age-related implications. Both of the studies draw their findings from samples of employees based in India: IT professionals in India for Chand & Koul's sample (2012) and middle managers in India for Kumar & Kumar's study (2014). The former study provides only the age range of the participants, while the latter does not comment on age categories at all. Therefore, this is one of the areas where the present study may bring originality to the field.

Furthermore, we can see that both of the aforementioned studies use population samples from India. Daniel (2014) notably contributes to the field by carrying out cross-cultural research about the relationship between WPS and work stress in Mexico and the U.S. Three dimensions of WPS (IL, MW and SC) by Ashmos and Duchon (2000) are examined. The findings indicate that a significant and negative relationship exists between MW and work stress. In terms of the remaining two dimensions, IL and SC, findings were negative but statistically insignificant for both Mexico and the US. This somewhat contradicts some earlier studies in the field of WPS such as Bhaskar and Mishra's study (2019) where SC was shown to mediate the relationship between perceived organisational support and career satisfaction, or Nasina and Doris (2011) who indicate that affective organizational commitment increases when employees feel a SC. This might suggest that only MW effectively reduces work-related stress, whereas the other dimensions of WPS, IL and SC, act as promoters of employee wellbeing but not inhibitors of work stress. Daniel (2014) notes that this may have resulted from the incidental participation of organisations with highly individualistic cultures in the study (lack of support for SC hypothesis), or the organisational cultures might have been rigid and bureaucratic (lack of support for IL hypothesis).

Noteworthy, with higher levels of spirituality in the workplace, the diffusion of boundaries between work and private life will become even more prominent (Marques, 2020). It should be considered whether this might result in higher work-related stress and work-life balance ambiguity in the long run. This consideration is especially pertinent in the wake of Covid-19 where many people have been working from home for several months and are encountering

difficulties in creating and maintaining a boundary between their work and private life (O’Connell, 2021). It should also be noted that, especially in highly individualistic and highly specific cultures where employees are self-focused, value the private sphere, and keep their personal and professional lives strictly separate (Trompenaar & Hampden Turner, n.d., cited in Dowling et al., 2017), the introduction of spirituality into the workplace could hypothetically be seen as an invasion of personal boundaries. It is also expected that the Covid-19 pandemic will have shifted the perceptions of employees about what they value most in the workplace, as well as shaped the general perceptions of Gen Z who are only entering the workforce, which will be one of the areas investigated as part of this research.

## *2.6 Generation Z in the workforce*

With the youngest generation starting to enter the workforce in recent years, it is of interest to employers to understand the needs and expectations of this generation. Yet before proceeding with the characteristics of Gen Z, Andrea et al. (2016) mention the difficulties with establishing clearly defined age ranges for generations. Many articles and academic papers provide varying categories. Some cited age ranges for Gen Z include: 1995-2010 (Andrea et al., 2016; Francis & Hoefel, 2018), 1997-2012 (O’Neill, 2018; Schroth, 2019), 1993-1999 (Vasudeva & Barea, 2017) or 1995-2003 (Deloitte, 2020b). However, for the purposes of this study, we will define Gen Z as people born between 1995-2003 because these individuals will be aged roughly 18-26, meaning they have either only recently entered, or are about to enter the workforce. Their opinions will therefore be valid in defining the perceptions and expectations of the youngest generational cohort.

As Gen Z enter the labour force, their needs and expectations are starting to be noticed by employers. They are the generation most devoted to searching for authenticity, deeper meaning and truth (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). They are found to be more achievement-oriented than preceding generations, and are “more highly-educated, and are more ethnically and racially diverse than any other generation” (Schroth, 2019, p. 5). They have been raised in a complex environment with significant influences of technology, the internet and social media, and with a constant need to balance real-life and online experiences and sources of information (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). For this reason, they are predominantly focused on a quest for truth: finding out what is true to them, understanding other people’s truths and connecting with those truths. In comparison to Generation Y (Gen Y or Millennials) who have

been defined as the “me generation”, Gen Z are defined as the “True Gen” (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

Many PSFs have released reports about the needs of Gen Z. They find that economic gains might no longer be the determining factor for staying in a dull or stressful work environment. Almost two-thirds of young graduates in a survey by Accenture indicated they “would choose a fun, positive social atmosphere at work over salary” (Vasudeva & Barea, 2017, p. 5). Similarly, KPMG insists that “to forge a strong, durable connection with Gen Z, organizations need to convince them they are being treated as an individual, not a revenue stream” (KPMG, 2021). Hence, the professional services sector seems to be aware of the need to contribute more resources such as time, learning and finances, in order to create work environments which enhance Gen Z retention.

Moreover, stress has become a paramount area of concern for many young people. Gen Z have already witnessed the severe economic recession of 2008, and now they will either be continuing or launching their early careers amidst an unprecedented global and economic downturn caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Gen Z are now the generation most prone to anxiety and depression (Schroth, 2019). According to a survey carried out by Deloitte (2020a), almost half of Gen Y (44%) and Gen Z (48%) feel “stressed all or most of the time”. The Covid-19 pandemic has only added fuel to the fire. The crisis has been more stress-inducing and has had a larger impact on the lives of the youngest generations compared to their older counterparts (McCrindle & Fell, 2020; Deckman et al., 2020). Many Gen Z natives have grown up in safe environments, nurtured by the care of often overprotective parents who have allowed them to grow up slowly (Andrea et al., 2016; Vasudeva & Barea, 2017). Therefore, they find it more difficult to cope with stressful situations and are inherently more anxious; they have not known the concept of struggling to the same extent as their closest generational group the Millennials (Andrea et al., 2016). The Covid-19 pandemic, as their generation-defining event, will undoubtedly change this.

A notable difference appears between Gen Z and Gen Y in relation to remote working. While Gen Y indicate they are most pleased with remote working, Gen Z are the generation who indicate most often that they do not want remote working to continue and that they are less productive working from home (McCrindle & Fell, 2020). One can therefore expect that Gen Z will seek a SC in the workplace to counteract these volatile and unstable circumstances, and a work environment which fits their minds, hearts and souls most appropriately to provide a sense of security at work. Due to high turnover and most of the employees in PSFs being

required to work remotely during the pandemic, PSFs will have to implement the knowledge about Gen Z in a creative to promote their wellbeing in the workplace. Promoting WPS could be a possible route to retain young employees for longer organizational tenure.

*2.7 Employee retention in Professional Services Firms*

PSFs demonstrate high collective turnover tendencies among their employees. These employees are knowledge workers, set apart from many other sectors by their high educational levels, cognitive abilities, and industry-specific training (Mitchell & Zatzick, 2014). It is indeed a challenge for PSFs to retain such a professionalized and knowledge-based workforce who seek to excel in their careers and gain a broad range of experience as an asset for their CVs. PSFs provide B2B services, and within the scope of this research, we will especially consider professional accounting, financial and IT companies. Examining the public global reports of Deloitte, one of the largest PSFs worldwide, high employee turnover rates are noticed. The employee turnover rates in the years 2013-2015 and 2017-2019 for the organisation’s Europe/Middle East/Africa region are summarised in Table 2 as follows:

**Table 2:** Annual employee turnover rates in Deloitte's Europe/Middle East/Africa region

<i>Year</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>
<b><i>Employee Turnover Rate</i></b>	18%	21%	21%	20%	23%	24%

(Table compiled by the author from the following sources: Deloitte (2020) Global Report [online] Available at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/2019-global-impact-report-performance-metrics.pdf> ; Deloitte (2015) Global Report [online] Available at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-gr15-performance-table-sept.pdf> )

This demonstrates how employee turnover rates in this PSF have been growing almost year-on-year. Yet a limitation is encountered when conducting research because employee turnover data has not been published by most other PSFs, which makes it difficult to further support generalized claims about PSFs. Nonetheless, the provided data signifies the importance of increasing employee retention. This is especially relevant for young employees who are prone to ‘job hopping’ and who have a low sense of organisational loyalty (Basford & Schaninger,

2012). For instance, Gen Z are expected to hold about eighteen different jobs throughout their careers (McCrindle, 2019). Basford and Schaninger (2012) suggest that the modern-day employer will have to learn “how to win hearts and minds in the modern era” (p. 2) in order to retain young employees. Gen Z employees will stay in their first work environment for five years or more if their skills are not underutilized and “only if an employer shows an interest in giving them meaningful work and a chance to advance and grow” (Vasudeva & Barea, 2017, p. 2). Retention of Gen Z employees is forecasted to extend beyond tangible rewards because their predominant career goals relate to work-life balance and job stability (Andrea et al., 2016; Vasudeva & Barea, 2017). Indeed, WPS may be an effective means of achieving this in PSFs where “knowledge workers (service sector professionals) realize the importance of searching for ways to ‘leave behind a legacy’” (Jena, 2021, para. 2). This is further echoed in Gen Z’s high ambitions, the need for continuous personal development and their quest for truth and authenticity (Andrea et al., 2016; Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

Many intergenerational differences can be noticed between Gen Z and Gens Y and X. For example, Gen Z are driven by a search for truth, inclusion and openness, in comparison to Millennials who are driven by egotistical values and ideologies, or Gen X who are driven by status and materialism (Andrea et al., 2016; Francis & Hoefel, 2018). It is therefore expected that IL and MW dimensions of WPS will carry heightened value for Gen Z. Moreover, Gen Z natives believe that what creates real-life and virtual communities are common causes and interests, not economic status or educational levels which has been the case for Millennials and Gen X (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). It is therefore expected that SC, as the third core dimension of WPS, will also be highly important to Gen Z.

Furthermore, attitudes to work differ among the three generations which presents different challenges to HR professionals (Čič & Žižek, 2017). Gen X seem to be the most materialistically-focused, yet they were also the first generation to insist on work-life balance (Fraone et al., 2007). Millennials have been noted to carry a “work my way” attitude to employment and have been said to “desire meaningful work” (Fraone et al., 2007, p. 1). This suggests that WPS could also be an important factor in the employment of Generations Y and X, yet Gen Z seem to portray more attitudes which lead one to believe that WPS could be effective in creating fitting workplaces for them. However, it has also been noted that our perceptions of generational differences in the workplace are exaggerated in comparison to the marginal implications they have in reality (King et al., 2019). Quite often, we think generational differences and stereotypes are a hinderance in the workplace, yet a study of tens

of thousands of employees revealed that generational differences in job attitudes are marginal (King et al., 2019). This is something to discover in the current research.

In summary, as the retention of knowledge workers in PSFs is challenging, and Gen Z have high career ambitions, high psychological contract expectations and low organisational loyalty, it will be relevant for modern employers to understand the needs of the youngest generation and how to increase their retention. Jena (2021) suggests that the retention of skilled employees will be of prevalence especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Considering that over half of Generation Z are acquiring higher level education (Parker & Igielnik, 2020), employers may be interested in retention methods for Gen Z talent. WPS may indeed be an effective means of creating a meaningful, cooperative and stress-free work environment to facilitate employee retention, which we will examine next.

### *2.7.1 Workplace spirituality and employee retention*

In the present research we are interested in retention of Gen Z, and in order to achieve this it is important for employers to reduce their turnover intentions. Bhaskar and Mishra (2019) add a significant contribution to the research field by examining the role of WPS in reducing turnover intentions and therefore increasing labour tenure within an organisation. Naturally, when turnover intentions are lower, employee retention is stronger in an organisation. More precisely, this study examines the role of two dimensions of WPS, MW and SC (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000), as a moderator between perceived organisational support (POS), and career satisfaction and turnover intentions (Figure 3 in Appendix).

Bhaskar and Mishra (2019) explain that when POS is high, this means employees are relatively satisfied with various aspects of employment such as organisational culture, leadership and HR practices. This naturally leads to increased career satisfaction. As we have seen, these factors also contribute to WPS. The quantitative results of this study exhibit that MW and SC are significantly and positively correlated with career satisfaction. The findings indicate a negative correlation of -0.27 between MW and turnover intentions, and a negative correlation of -0.29 between SC and turnover intentions, both at a 0.01 level of significance. When employees bring to light a soul-work connection, they find meaning in every part of their work, even the mundane tasks, which all contribute towards the higher purpose of their work mission. They unify closely with their colleagues in their work unit which creates a sense of social belonging and common purpose. These feelings contribute to career

satisfaction and “as a natural corollary of improved [career satisfaction] experienced by employees, their turnover rates are lower, making their organizational tenure longer and more meaningful” (Bhaskar and Mishra, 2019, p. 1849-1850).

These findings support the concept of WPS increasing retention of young entrants in the workforce today who are prone to job hopping, or swiftly changing work organisations throughout their careers (Basford & Schaninger, 2016). Bhaskar and Mishra (2019) did not draw any generational conclusions or implications. Hence, this is an area worth investigating in the present research study.

## *2.8 Conclusion*

In summary, the present literature review has explored, defined and critically analysed the field of WPS. We have explored many aspects covered under the broad and multidimensional concept of WPS, as well as the relationships between increased WPS and numerous employment aspects. This has provided the reader with both positive and possible negative implications of WPS. The literature review extended the WPS-related findings to work-stress and employee retention in PSFs, and the reader has seen why these are relevant to Generation Z employees entering the workforce. Therefore, in the present research paper we will explore the association between WPS, work stress and retention of Generation Z in PSFs in Ireland. The data collected includes significant numbers of employees from Generations Z, Y and X, which will allow us to make intergenerational comparisons. The data analysis and findings of this research should be of interest to employers in Ireland as they are faced with the challenges of employee retention and increased workplace stress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Chapter 3: Research Question and Objectives**

A thorough investigation of the current state of the literature on WPS allows us to understand how WPS has positive implications for employee wellbeing, interconnection and higher-order need satisfaction related to finding meaning and vocational calling. Consequently, this has repercussions on reducing work stress and improving employee retention in the workplace. Building on existing literature on WPS and findings on intergenerational differences, the main objective at the heart of this research study is captured in the title:

*Examining the impact of workplace spirituality on the work stress and retention of Generation Z employees in the professional services sector in Ireland.*

Research objective 1: To investigate whether the perceptions of Generations Z, Y and X on WPS differ in this study.

Stemming from the literature review, it can be seen that the mindsets, perceptions and expectations of each generation are often quite different. Čič & Žižek (2017) summarise as follows: “Generation X ‘live to work’, Generation Y ‘work to enjoy’, and Generation Z ‘work to develop’” (p. 50). Yet other research has shown that generational differences in the workplace are marginal in practice (King et al., 2019). Therefore, it will be of interest to investigate whether the respondents representing each of the three generations in this study reveal different associations with WPS. The following hypothesis is proposed:

*H1: Null hypothesis: There will not be a different association between workplace spirituality and Generations Z, Y and X in the professional services sector in Ireland.*

*H1: Alternative hypothesis: There will be a different association between workplace spirituality and Generations Z, Y and X in the professional services sector in Ireland*

Research objective 2: To investigate the relationship between WPS and work-related stress for Generation Z in professional services firms in Ireland.

Generation Z are aware of the negative long-term implications of chronic work stress which leads to burn-out, an occupational phenomenon classified under the 11<sup>th</sup> Revision of the



International Classification of Diseases (WHO, 2019). This awareness is supported by the fact that physical and mental health are Gen Z's highest priorities in life (Codd, 2020). They spend most of their weekday waking hours in the workplace (Jena and Pradhan, 2018), and therefore seek friendly and humane work environments where they are entirely free and encouraged to be themselves, where they can thrive on meaningful work, and where they can create real connections with their work communities. This kind of work environment infused with spirituality has been shown to reduce work-related stress by several researchers (Kumar & Kumar 2014; Chand & Koul, 2012; Daniel, 2014). The following hypothesis is derived:

*H2: Null hypothesis: There will not be an association between workplace spirituality and work stress for Generation Z employees in the professional services sector in Ireland.*

*H2: Alternative hypothesis: There will be an association between workplace spirituality and work stress for Generation Z employees in the professional services sector in Ireland.*

Research objective 3: To investigate the relationship between WPS and retention of Generation Z in professional services firms in Ireland.

Gen Z do not only seek pay from their jobs, but also purpose. It has been reported that they want their organization's values to align with their own, thus allowing work and personal values to coexist (Wilson, 2020). The growth of spirituality in recent years, coupled with the growth of social movements where Gen Z play important roles, suggest that the youngest entrants in today's workforce may wish to bring their whole selves to work and have their inner, spiritual values acknowledged and respected as much as their race, gender or sexual orientation. A work environment infused with spirituality would seem to naturally increase Gen Z retention. It has been shown that when employee turnover intentions decrease, employee retentions increases (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2019). The following hypothesis is derived:

*H3: Null hypothesis: There will not be an association between workplace spirituality and turnover of Generation Z employees in the professional services sector in Ireland.*

*H3: Alternative hypothesis: There will be an association between workplace spirituality and turnover of Generation Z employees in the professional services sector in Ireland.*

Having proposed the hypotheses, we will now proceed to discuss the methodology implemented to undertake the present research.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

### *4.1 Research philosophy*

When conducting research, the researcher embarks upon a journey of knowledge creation (Saunders et al., 2019). Throughout the whole research process, there are numerous underlying assumptions made in relation to the nature of reality, the nature of human knowledge and the researcher's personal values which influence their judgements about the research (Saunders et al., 2019). This set of assumptions is known as the research philosophy. The research paradigm that the present study falls under is positivist, with its roots grounded in objectivism and the natural sciences (Saunders et al., 2019). Positivism is based on objective facts and data which are measurable, based on causal relationship findings, and are not influenced by human bias (Saunders et al., 2019). This research is deductive and explanatory in nature. It proposes a research concept and, on the basis of a literature review, deduces hypotheses for testing. Subsequently, the hypotheses are either rejected or supported through data analysis, and the findings are explained in detail (Saunders et al., 2019). The research design is a monomethod quantitative study (Saunders et al., 2019). This research design was chosen to facilitate examining the relationships between variables. All of the data gathered come from a questionnaire and the researcher is independent from the individuals being researched (Saunders et al., 2019).

### *4.2 Research sample*

The target population of this research was employees of all ages in PSFs in Ireland. The research yielded 101 valid responses from individuals who are currently or have been recently employed in the professional services sector. The demographics of the research participants were 32.7% Generation Z, 43.6% Generation Y, 21.8% Generation X and 2% aged 57+ (or Baby Boomers) (King et al., 2019); the last group were excluded from the research analysis due to an unrepresentative sample. 76% of respondents were female, 23% were male and 1% did not disclose their gender. 86.9% of respondents were employed, 5.1% were unemployed and 8.1% were students. Participants for the research were selected through a convenience sampling technique (Saunders et al., 2019). The Covid-19 pandemic posed a limitation to this research as participants could only be contacted online. However, considering the quantitative research procedure, this limitation did not pose significant issues. Potential PSFs were

contacted via email and social media platforms. Quite often it was the HR department or a convenient team leader who was contacted in the PSF, as well as relevant family, friends, prior colleagues and classmates of the researcher. They were kindly asked to fill out and distribute the questionnaire among relevant individuals whom they could identify in the professional services sector who could participate in the study, which also constituted a snowball sampling technique (Saunders et al., 2019).

The inclusion criteria in this research were individuals from Generations Z, Y and X, aged roughly between 18-57, who currently work or have recently worked in a PSF. Including only individuals over the age of 18 assured that children, as a vulnerable group, did not participate in the research. The exclusion criteria for the sample were respondents over the age of 57. Although they were originally included, they were withdrawn from the analysis due to an unrepresentative sample gathered.

Several difficulties were encountered when gathering the sample. Some PSFs were not permitted to circulate surveys by external parties which have not been directed by the company. Time was another significant constraint, which necessitated the implementation of convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Several limitations are acknowledged in terms of convenience and snowball sampling in this research. These techniques are prone to bias because respondents are selected based on availability and access. Consequently, the generalizability of such findings is impaired due to lack of population representation (Saunders et al., 2019). These limitations were acknowledged by the researcher and tried to be reduced by distributing the questionnaire to a broad range of PSFs and all the age groups. Nonetheless, convenience sampling is a widely used technique to “meet purposive sample selection criteria that are relevant to the research aim” (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 304). As a result, convenience sampling, and later snowball sampling, allowed this research to access subjects from relevant generations in PSFs in Ireland.

#### *4.3 Research design*

The research was cross-sectional in nature, meaning that data were collected from a range of participants at one point in time (Saunders et al., 2019). Research was monomethod quantitative and consisted of a self-administered online questionnaire distributed to participants.

#### 4.4 *Research instrument*

The survey was created using Google Forms. The survey consisted of 4 sections with closed questions. Before commencing the survey, the participant was introduced to an extensive Participant Information Sheet which explained the research title, purpose, aim, definition of WPS, and the confidential and voluntary nature of the research (for further information refer to Figure 15 in the Appendix).

The first section of the survey contained general questions developed by the researcher to capture the demographics and brief opinions of the participants. This was followed by three sections containing pre-existing scales on WPS, Stress in the Workplace and Retention. The overall purpose of this research is to examine the impact of WPS on work-related stress and retention of Generation Z employees in PSFs in Ireland. All of the questions and scales in the research instrument were used to serve this purpose and gain comparison between other generations. The full survey can be found in Figure 15 in the Appendix. We will now explain each section of the survey and its rationale.

##### 4.4.1 *Section 1: Demographic Characteristics*

The first section contains a general survey developed by the researcher to capture the demographic characteristics of the participants such as age, gender, and information relating to their employment such as ‘Monthly salary range’ or ‘Duration of active participation in the workforce’. The objective of demographics and employment questions is to control for confounding variables which may have an impact on the variable associations. For example, employee perceptions on WPS may differ across age groups (Marescaux et al., 2012); it is suggested that employees in the early stages of their careers may strive to satisfy their pecuniary needs rather than focusing on higher-order aspects of work (Jena, 2021). Towards the end of this section, there are two questions about the opinions of participants. The first is a multi-response question and asks to ‘Select 3 most effective retention factors for you’ (please refer to Figure 15 in the Appendix p.92). The pre-existing scale of retention factors by Döckel (2003) was the guide behind the factors in the list, but Döckel’s are much more vague: “compensation, job characteristics, training and development, supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life policies” (p. 23). Hence, the researcher used these as a starting point and expanded from them.

The last opinion-based question asks ‘Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed your view of what you find most important in the workplace?’. The objective of this question is to see which

generation's opinions about the workplace seem to have been most impacted. The researcher is aware that, in light of circumstances posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, participants' responses may be different due to the global health crisis.

#### 4.4.2 Section 2: Workplace Spirituality scale

A pre-existing Spirituality at Work (SAW) scale is employed (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This scale measures six dimensions of WPS. Each item is presented in the format of a statement such as 'My spirit is energized by my work', answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree, to (5) strongly agree. This scale has been widely implemented by many researchers (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2019; Rego & Cunha, 2007; Duchon & Plowman, 2005). The scoring method used for this scale was simple addition to generate total scores. Cronbach's alpha coefficients reported in this research as compared to the original alpha values in Ashmos & Duchon (2000) are presented in Table 3 below. The six subscales are explained:

- 1) Inner life: a 4-item scale on IL is implemented. It measures the inner spirituality values of participants. One item from the original scale has been omitted, 'Prayer is an important part of my life', because this research adopts a non-religious approach. Table 3 shows the alpha coefficient in Ashmos & Duchon (2000) ( $\alpha = .804$ ) including the omitted item, while the alpha in this research ( $\alpha = .779$ ) excludes this item.
- 2) Personal responsibility: a 2-item scale is implemented. It measures inner sentiments about personal responsibility for growth and behaviour.
- 3) Meaning at work: a 7-item scale is employed. It measures the extent to which participants find their work meaningful.
- 4) Conditions of Community: a 9-item scale is adopted. It measures the extent to which participants feel a sense of security, belonging and encouragement in their work community.
- 5) Positive Work Unit Values: a 6-item scale is adopted. It measures the connection of respondents with their immediate work unit.
- 6) Organizational values: a 7-item scale is employed. This measures the extent of connection, positive outlook and alignment of participants with their organizations.

**Table 3:** Cronbach's alpha coefficient comparison between present research and original scale by Ashmos & Duchon (2000)

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha in present research</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha in Ashmos &amp; Duchon (2000)</b>
<b>Inner Life</b>	.779	.804
<b>Personal Responsibility</b>	.531*	.772
<b>Meaning at Work</b>	.847	.858
<b>Conditions for community</b>	.895	.859
<b>Positive work unit values</b>	.912	.914
<b>Organizational values</b>	.922	.929

\*A possible explanation for low alpha coefficient: this is a 2-item scale, and it has been noted that scales with less than 10 items tend to have lower alpha values (Pallant, 2013).

#### 4.4.3 Section 3: Stress in the Workplace

A pre-existing, two-factor Stress in General (SIG) scale consisting of 15-items is employed (Stanton et al., 2001). The objective of this scale is to capture participants' opinions about their work environment. The scale contains 15 words such as 'Demanding', 'Overwhelming' or 'Comfortable', and captures responses as 'Yes', 'No' or 'Unsure'. Items such as 'Comfortable' or 'Smooth running' were reverse coded for analysis. Total scores were generated by simple addition. In Stanton et al. (2001), coefficient alpha for the first 7 items in the SIG scale (SIG-I: Pressure) is .88, while coefficient alpha for the remaining 8 items (SIG-II: Threat) is .82. In the present research, Cronbach's alpha coefficients are  $\alpha = .701$  and  $\alpha = .652$  respectively.

#### 4.4.4 Section 4: Retention

A pre-existing, 4-item scale for turnover intentions is adopted (Kelloway et al., 1999). Sample items include 'I am thinking about leaving this organization'. Items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree, to (5) strongly agree. Total scores were calculated using simple addition. This scale was also implemented in the study by Bhaskar and Mishra (2019). In the present research, this scale measures how the participant feels in their current workplace or how they felt before leaving their most recent workplace. If turnover intentions are lower, this suggests higher employee retention because they are less willing to leave the organisation. The study by Kelloway et al. (1999) was longitudinal,

carried out at Time 1 ( $\alpha = .92$ ) and 6 months later at Time 2 ( $\alpha = .93$ ). In the present cross-sectional research, the reported coefficient alpha is .927.

#### *4.5 Research Procedure*

The responses of participants were captured through an online survey on Google Forms. Google Forms allowed the research to remain anonymous as there were no means of identifying participants and no personal data were recorded. Prior to sending out the survey to participants, a pilot study was conducted. The survey was distributed to a handful of family members and the supervisor of the research. One question was posed regarding 'Section 4: Retention'. The question was posed by an unemployed individual who was not sure how to respond to the last four items in the survey. The researcher considered whether responses on turnover intentions provided by individuals who are not currently employed might be too subjective based on the probable negative emotions associated with thinking about how they felt before leaving their previous employment. However, in order to maintain consistency with preceding sections of the survey, the Section 4 description clarified as follows: 'If you are currently unemployed, please base your answers on your feelings before leaving your most recent job' (please refer to Figure 15 in the Appendix p.99).

Ethical considerations were respected and adhered to in this research. The Participant Information Sheet gave potential participants all the necessary information about anonymity, voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality and the right of withdrawal at any point, in line with the Ethics Proposal submitted to NCI for this research. A Declaration of Consent was also signed by participants before participating (please refer to Figure 15 in Appendix for further details).



#### *4.6 Research Analysis*

The results of the survey were captured on Google Forms and imported into IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 where data analysis was conducted. The descriptive statistics of the research sample looked at percentage descriptions of the respondents' demographic variables and cross-tabulations of employment-related questions. The scale descriptive statistics presented the means, counts and standard deviations of each scale (and their respective subscales) for the total responses and per age category. The inferential statistics of the research analysis tested the three posited hypotheses. H1 was analysed using a one-way analysis of variance ANOVA test. H2 was analysed using a simple linear regression. H3 was analysed using Spearman's correlation test.

We will now proceed to Chapter 5, where the research analysis and findings are presented.

# Chapter 5: Research Analysis and Findings

## 5.1 Descriptive statistics

In this section, we will firstly look at the descriptive statistics of the research sample, and then we will move into descriptive statistics of the scales employed in this research.

### 5.1.1 Descriptive statistics of research sample

This section will provide descriptive statistics of the participants’ demographic characteristics. Table 4 below presents the age, gender and employment status of the research participants.

**Table 4:** Participant profile: age, gender and employment status

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Count N</i>	<i>Count N %</i>
<i>Age</i>	18-26 (Z)	33	33.3%
	27-40 (Y)	44	44.4%
	41-56 (X)	22	22.2%
<i>Gender</i>	Female	74	75.5%
	Male	23	23.5%
	Prefer not to say	1	1%
<i>Employment Status</i>	Employed	86	86.9%
	Unemployed	5	5.1%
	Student	8	8.1%

Table 5 below presents the participant profile in terms of level of qualification, monthly salary range, duration of active participation in the workforce and commencement of employment.

**Table 5:** Participant profile: level of qualification and monthly salary range

<i>Demographic</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Count N</i>	<i>Count N %</i>
<i>Level of Qualification</i>	Bachelor degree	49	49.5%
	Master degree	26	26.3%
	PhD	3	3%
	Higher level Certificate/Diploma	13	13.1%
	Secondary education	6	6.1%
	Prefer not to say	2	2%
	<i>Monthly Salary Range</i>	Under €1500	17
€1500-2000		18	18.2%
€2000-3000		27	27.3%
Over €3000		28	28.3%
Prefer not to say/Not applicable		9	9.1%
<i>Duration of active participation in the workforce</i>		Less than 3 months	5
	3-6 months	8	8.1%
	6-12 months	9	9.1%
	1-3 years	19	19.2%
	3-7 years	20	20.2%
	7+ years	37	37.4%
	Not applicable	1	1%
	<i>When did you commence employment?</i>	Before Covid-19 pandemic	68
During Covid-19 pandemic		21	21.2%
Lost work due to Covid-19 pandemic		5	5.1%
Not applicable		5	5.1%

A multiple-response item created by the researcher which stated ‘Select 3 most effective retention factors for you’ appeared in this section. Table 6 below presents a cross-tabulation of the responses per age category. The highest percentage scores for each age category are highlighted for clarity purposes. The most important retention factors for Gen Z respondents are positive relationships with co-workers in first place (54.5%), salary increase and work-life balance in tied second place (both representing 51.5%), and personal development opportunities in third place (33.3%). For Gen Y, the most important retention factors are salary increase (55.8%), positive relationships with co-workers (51.2%) and work-life balance (48.8%). For Gen X, the most important retention factors are positive relationships with co-workers (63.6%), work-life balance (50%) and stress-free work environment (45.5%).

**Table 6:** Cross-tabulation of selected retention factors by age category

		Age			Total	
		18-26 (Z)	27-40 (Y)	41-56 (X)		
Retention Factors <sup>a</sup>	Salary Increase	Count	17	24	6	47
		% within Age	51,5%	55,8%	27,3%	
	Positive Relationships With Co-workers	Count	18	22	14	54
		% within Age	54,5%	51,2%	63,6%	
	Work Life Balance	Count	17	21	11	49
		% within Age	51,5%	48,8%	50,0%	
	Job Security	Count	5	8	9	22
		% within Age	15,2%	18,6%	40,9%	
	Healthy Organisational Culture	Count	8	6	4	18
		% within Age	24,2%	14,0%	18,2%	
	Industry-specific Learning Opportunities	Count	3	2	1	6
		% within Age	9,1%	4,7%	4,5%	
	Personal Development Opportunities	Count	11	16	4	31
		% within Age	33,3%	37,2%	18,2%	
	Stress-free Work Environment	Count	6	7	10	23
		% within Age	18,2%	16,3%	45,5%	
	Career Promotion Opportunities	Count	7	10	1	18
		% within Age	21,2%	23,3%	4,5%	
	Freedom To Be Yourself At Work	Count	4	6	3	13
		% within Age	12,1%	14,0%	13,6%	
	Management Support	Count	2	5	3	10
		% within Age	6,1%	11,6%	13,6%	
<b>Total</b>		Count	33	43	22	98

Percentages and totals are based on respondents. a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Table 7 below displays the responses of Generations Z, Y and X to the question ‘Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed your view of what you find most important in the workplace?’.

**Table 7:** Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed your view of what you find most important in the workplace?

		Age							
		18-26 (Z)		27-40 (Y)		41-56 (X)		Subtotal	
		N	Column N %	N	Column N %	N	Column N %	N	Column N %
Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed your view of what you find most important in the workplace?	Yes	14	42,4%	25	58,1%	14	63,6%	53	54,1%
	No	8	24,2%	15	34,9%	5	22,7%	28	28,6%
	Unsure	11	33,3%	3	7,0%	3	13,6%	17	17,3%

## 5.2 Scale descriptive statistics

### 5.2.1 Spirit at Work Scale

Table 8 below presents descriptive statistics showing the Mean (M) and the Standard Deviation (SD) for each subscale of the SAW scale per age category. At the bottom of the table, the total M and SD of each subscale for all the respondents are presented.

**Table 8:** SAW scale and subscales descriptive statistics

<i>Age (N)</i>	<i>Inner Life M (SD)</i>	<i>Personal Responsibility M (SD)</i>	<i>Meaning at Work M (SD)</i>	<i>Conditions for Community M (SD)</i>	<i>Positive Work Unit Values M (SD)</i>	<i>Organizational Values M (SD)</i>
<i>Gen Z 18-26 (33)</i>	14.3(3.25)	9.39(.79)	24.53(6.3)	32.64(7.45)	20.81(5.82)	24.97(7.38)
<i>Gen Y 27-40 (43)</i>	14.6(3.69)	9.35(.92)	24.74(5.06)	35.63(5.49)	22.38(4.75)	25.26(6.41)
<i>Gen X 41-56 (22)</i>	14.36(3.75)	9.64(.58)	25.05(4.59)	29.73(9.01)	20.09(6.14)	22.32(7.09)
<i>Total (98)</i>	14.45(3.53)	9.43(.81)	24.74(5.36)	33.3(7.37)	21.33(5.48)	24.5(6.93)

### 5.2.2 Stress in General Scale

The M and SD for the two-factor SIG scale in total and per age category can be seen in Table 9 below.

**Table 9:** SIG two-factor and total descriptive scale statistics

<i>Age (N)</i>	<i>SIG-I Pressure M (SD)</i>	<i>SIG-II Threat M (SD)</i>	<i>Total SIG Scale M (SD)</i>
18-26 (33)	5.03(2.16)	8.09(2.94)	13.12(4.75)
27-40 (43)	4.28(2.2)	7.81(2.48)	12.02(4)
41-56 (22)	5.27(3.04)	8.14(3.03)	13.41(5.7)
<i>Total (98)</i>	4.76(2.41)	7.98(2.75)	12.71(4.67)

### 5.2.3 Turnover Intentions scale

The Mean and Standard Deviation for the Turnover Intentions scale is presented in Table 10 below per age category and in total.

**Table 10:** Turnover Intentions descriptive scale statistics

<i>Age (N)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<i>Gen Z 18-26 (33)</i>	12.24	5
<i>Gen Y 27-40 (42)</i>	9.9	5.6
<i>Gen X (41-56) (22)</i>	9.32	5
<i>Total (97)</i>	10.57	5.34

### 5.3 Inferential statistics: hypothesis testing

**H1: There will be a different association between workplace spirituality and Generations Z, Y and X in the professional services sector in Ireland.**

To test H1, we will undertake a One-way analysis of variance ANOVA test and we are considering the following variables:

- The total score for all the respondents on the SAWS: a continuous total score, dependent variable (DV).
- The three age groups: categorical, independent variables (IV).

The assumptions for undertaking a One-way ANOVA for H1 were met (please see Figures 5-8 in the Appendix and refer to Laerd (2018b) for further reference).

#### One-way ANOVA test

A One-way ANOVA test was undertaken to ascertain whether there was a different association between the three generations (age groups) and WPS. The main effect of age was not statistically significant,  $F(2, 92) = 1.545$ ,  $p = n.s.$  Participants from Generations Z, Y and X did not differ on the reported levels of workplace spirituality (see Table 11 below). We fail to reject the null hypothesis.

**Table 11:** One-way analysis of variance ANOVA for H1

ANOVA					
Total SAWS	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1685,265	2	842,633	1,545	,219
Within Groups	50191,893	92	545,564		
Total	51877,158	94			

***H2: There will be an association between workplace spirituality and work stress for Generation Z in the professional services sector in Ireland.***

To test H1, we will undertake a simple linear regression and we are considering the following variables:

- The total score for Generation Z respondents on the SAW scale: a variable with a continuous total score.
- The total score for Generation Z respondents on the SIG scale: a variable answered on an ordinal scale of 0: no (or disagree), 1: unsure (or neither agree nor disagree) and 2: yes (or agree).

The assumptions for undertaking a simple linear regression for H2 were met (please see Figures 9-13 in the Appendix and refer to Laerd (2018a) for further reference).

**Simple linear regression for Gen Z respondents**

A simple linear regression was undertaken to ascertain whether workplace spirituality significantly influenced work-stress for Generation Z employees. The results of the linear regression indicated that there was a statistically significant association between WPS and work stress ( $R = .504$ ). The amount of variation accounted for was  $R^2 = .254$  (see Table 12 below). The model was significant at the 5% significance level ( $F(1,29) = 9.897, p < 0.05$ ) (see Table 13 below). It was found that meaning at work significantly predicted work stress for Generation Z ( $\beta = .606, p < .05$ ) as well as inner life ( $\beta = -.414, p < .05$ ) (see Table 14 below). We reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

**Table 12:** Summary of simple linear regression model for H2

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.504 <sup>a</sup>	.254	.229	4,293

a. Predictors: (Constant), Total SAWS

b. Dependent Variable: Total SIG



**Table 13:** ANOVA summary table of linear regression model for H2

		ANOVA <sup>a</sup>				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	182,359	1	182,359	9,897	,004 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	534,351	29	18,426		
	Total	716,710	30			

a. Dependent Variable: Total SIG

b. Predictors: (Constant), Total SAWS

**Table 14:** Coefficients of simple linear regression for H2

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	10,027	9,620		1,042	,308
	Inner Life	-,649	,303	-,414	-2,141	,043
	Personal Responsibility	-,444	1,089	-,069	-,407	,687
	Meaning At Work	,463	,202	,606	2,291	,031
	Conditions For Community	,150	,215	,232	,697	,493
	Positive Work Unit Values	-,226	,301	-,274	-,751	,460
	Organisational Values	,204	,233	,317	,873	,391

a. Dependent Variable: Total SIG

***H3: There will be an association between workplace spirituality and turnover of Generation Z in professional services firms in Ireland.***

To test H3, we will undertake Spearman’s correlation test and we are considering the following variables:

- The total score for Generation Z respondents on the SAW Scale: a variable answered on an ordinal scale.
- The total score for Generation Z respondents on the Turnover Intentions scale: a variable answered on an ordinal scale.

The assumptions for undertaking Spearman’s correlation test for H3 were met (please see Figure 14 in the Appendix and refer to Laerd (2018c) for further reference).

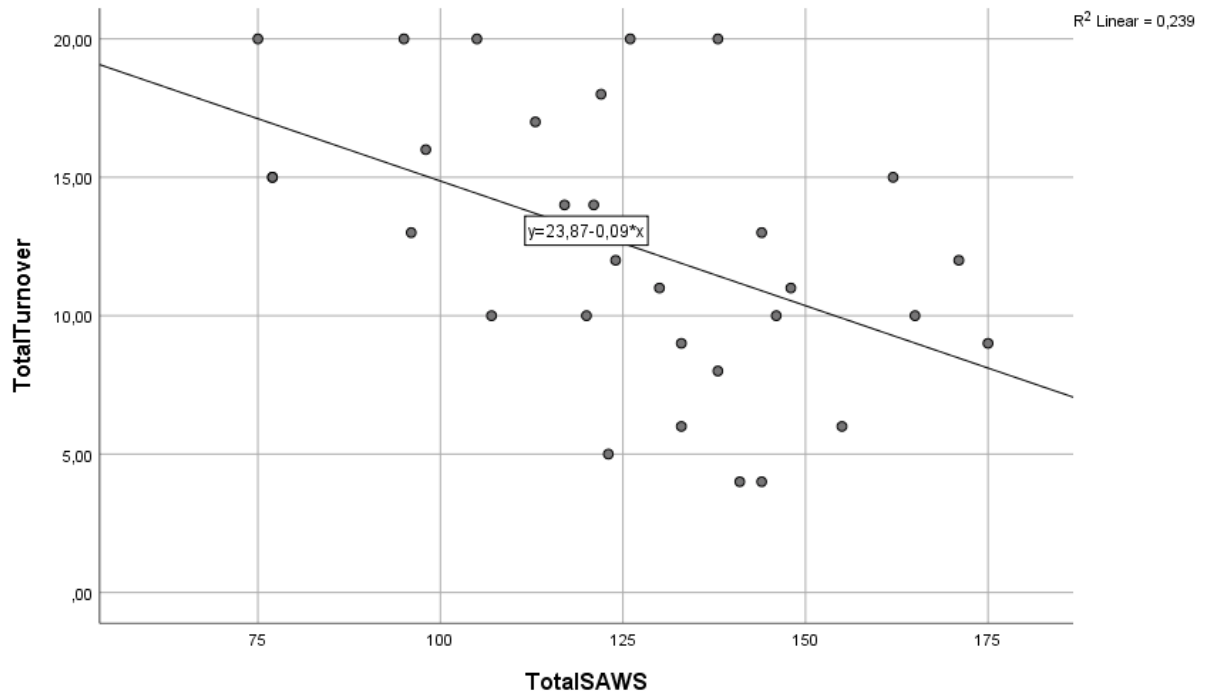
**Spearman’s correlation**

Spearman’s Rank-Order (rho) correlation was undertaken to ascertain whether there was a significant association between WPS and turnover intentions of Generation Z respondents. There was a statistically significant correlation between workplace spirituality and turnover intentions of Generation Z, rho = -.533 (p<.05). Table 15 below summarizes the results of Spearman’s correlation test. We reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. The scatter plot in Figure 1 below depicts the correlation between WPS and turnover intentions of Generation Z respondents. Table 16 below shows that statistically significant correlations existed between turnover intentions and Conditions for Community (rho = -.471, p<.05), Positive Work Unit Values (rho = -.637, p<.005) and Organizational Values (rho = -.499, p<.005).

**Table 15:** Spearman's correlation for H3

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		SAWS	Turnover Intentions
Spearman's rho	SAWS	Correlation Coefficient	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.
		N	31
	Turnover Intentions	Correlation Coefficient	-,533**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,002
		N	31
		SAWS	Turnover Intentions
		N	33

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



**Figure 1:** Scatter plot of correlation between turnover intentions and SAWS for Gen Z

**Table 16:** Spearman's rho between SAW subscales and turnover intentions for Gen Z

<i>Spearman's rho</i> <i>SAW Subscale</i>	<i>Turnover Intentions</i>	
<i>Inner Life</i>	Correlation coefficient	-.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.685
<i>Personal Responsibility</i>	Correlation coefficient	.113
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.531
<i>Meaning at Work</i>	Correlation coefficient	-.303
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.092
<i>Conditions for Community</i>	Correlation coefficient	-.471**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.006
<i>Positive Work Unit Values</i>	Correlation coefficient	-.637**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
<i>Organizational Values</i>	Correlation coefficient	-.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
<i>Turnover Intentions</i>	Correlation coefficient	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

## **Chapter 6: Discussion and Recommendations**

### *6.1 Introduction*

In this chapter, we will discuss the meaning of the afore-mentioned findings and will attempt to provide plausible explanations for same. Drawing on the data analysis in this research, we will attempt to discuss each hypothesis findings, its limitations and areas for future research.

### *6.2 Discussion of hypothesis testing*

#### *6.2.1 Research objective 1*

The first research objective aimed to investigate whether the perceptions of Generations Z, Y and X on WPS differ in this study. From the one-way ANOVA test, we saw that there was no statistically significant difference in association between WPS and the three generations. This supports the research findings of Constanza et al. (2012) that there were no substantive differences in generational membership on work-related factors. The researchers conclude that treating generations differently in the workplace may be an ineffective strategy. They recommend carrying out needs assessments in organizations instead, where observed differences can be potentially identified and addressed within the workforce “rather than relying on unsubstantiated generalizations about entire groups of employees based on generational membership” (p. 391). The present study supports these findings and implies that generalized claims about WPS and Generations Z, Y and X cannot be drawn. If anything, these findings may suggest that generational differences in the workplace are actually marginal, yet we tend to inflate their existence based on our own subjective beliefs, stereotypes and meta-stereotypes (King et al., 2019).

Other possible explanations for the findings of this research objective may be the geographic scope of this study. If generational membership in this study did not influence different WPS outcomes, it may suggest that WPS outcomes may be attributable to other factors such as the environment where an individual is raised. It is possible that, if the geographical limitation was overcome by extending the research sample from Ireland across international borders, different findings could potentially be observed. Furthermore, the research sample size and sampling techniques were limitations in this study. It is worth noting that the age group 57+, or Baby Boomers were excluded. There is a possibility that inclusion of same could have influenced variance outcomes. Yet other studies which examined the differences between Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y on other work-related factors like job satisfaction

also produced no statistically significant differences (Westerman & Yamamura, 2006). However, this cannot be generalized to WPS as this area has not been researched in terms of generational membership.

### *6.2.2 Research objective 2*

The second research objective aimed to investigate whether there was an association between WPS and work stress for Generation Z in PSFs in Ireland, and if there turned out to be an association - whether it would be positive or negative. The linear regression found that there was a statistically significant association between the two variables which was positive. There are two important parts to discussing the linear regression findings: firstly, for the overall association between WPS and work stress for Gen Z, and secondly for the significant associations of the WPS subscales with work stress for Gen Z.

The linear regression revealed that WPS accounted for approximately 25% of the variation in work stress for Gen Z respondents. By looking at the scatter plot in Figure 9 in the Appendix, we can see that the association is positive. This may support the suggestion of Marques (2020) from the literature review stating that higher levels of WPS could diffuse boundaries between work and private life, which could potentially have negative implications such as higher stress levels. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the Covid-19 pandemic poses a limitation to this research objective as stress levels are higher for many people due to the pandemic. In this research, the largest portion of Gen Z respondents (33.3%) indicated that they are unsure whether the Covid-19 pandemic has changed their views of what they find most important in the workplace. This is much higher than the percentage of unsure responses for Gen Y (7%) or Gen X (13.6%). Moreover, quite a low amount (18.2%) of Gen Z respondents indicated that a stress-free work environment is an important retention factor for them, compared to 45.5% of Generation X respondents. This may suggest that stress-free workplaces gain importance for employees as they progress through their careers. Surveys have confirmed that the Covid-19 pandemic has been more stress-inducing for younger employees than their older counterparts (McCrindle & Fell, 2020; Deckman et al., 2020). It could be possible that Gen Z value WPS, but this factor is not powerful enough to offset the heightened stress levels caused by the pandemic which could have infused their work attitudes with uncertainty. Gen Z might be focusing on managing stress levels associated with other challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic rather than managing stress at work.

Secondly, when looking at the subscale associations between WPS dimensions and work stress for Gen Z, we have seen that IL and MW had statistically significant associations with work stress. Work stress was reported to decrease as IL levels increased among Gen Z ( $\beta = -.414, p < .05$ ). This suggests that spirituality values which stem from within young individuals have a more powerful stress-reducing effect. This could imply that employers could implement self-development programmes based on spirituality to help young employees manage their stress levels. Work stress was reported to increase as MW levels increased among Gen Z ( $\beta = .606, p < .05$ ). Having a higher spiritual connection with one's work could possibly lead Gen Z to feel more pressure in performing well and caring about their work impact, thus feeling higher stress levels due to blurred boundaries between private and professional lives (Marques, 2020; O'Connell, 2021). Moreover, young employees are still inexperienced and may feel pressure and stress when high meaning is attached to their work. They may require guidance and training before transitioning to more meaningful tasks.

### *6.2.3 Research objective 3*

The third research objective aimed to investigate whether there was a relationship between WPS and retention of Generation Z in PSFs in Ireland, and if there turned out to be a relationship - whether it would be positive or negative. From the Spearman's correlation test, we saw that there was a negative correlation between WPS and turnover intentions of Gen Z respondents ( $\rho = -.533$ ; please also refer to Figure 1 chapter 5 for visualisation). This confirms the findings of Bhaskar and Mishra (2019) for Gen Z. As feelings of WPS increased among Gen Z respondents, they were less likely to think about leaving the organisation or to look for a new job. The findings in Table 16 (chapter 5) showed that there was a significant negative correlation between turnover intentions and Conditions for Community, Positive Work Unit Values and Organizational Values. This suggests that the SC dimension of WPS is important to Gen Z. They look for work environments with a culture of community, belonging, teamwork and a sense of alignment with organizational values. It suggests that they would be more likely to stay in an environment which gives them interconnection with their work unit and where they feel aligned with their team's and organisation's mission. The majority of Gen Z respondents (54.5%) indicated that positive relationships with co-workers are the most important retention factor for them (Table 6 in chapter 5). More Gen Z

respondents (24.2%) find a healthy organisational culture more important than Generations Y (14%) and X (18.2%) (Table 6 in chapter 5).

One possible explanation of this community-orientation among Gen Z respondents could be related to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is possible that due to ongoing lockdowns and reduced social interactions, Gen Z have come to value work environments rooted in social belonging and connection. Another possible explanation might not be related to the Covid-19 pandemic. It could be that alignment with the work community, immediate work unit and organizational values might be an inherent retention factor for Gen Z in the workforce. This would support the concept of Gen Z being '*Communaholic*' (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). This term refers to Gen Z being highly community-oriented, where members form communities based on common goals and interests, where connections made in the physical and virtual worlds are indistinguishable, and where moving into new groups is fluid (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). This research finding may suggest that this SC may extend into the workplace where work colleagues form part of Gen Z's inner, social circles. It may be of interest for future research to be undertaken in a post-pandemic world in order to investigate whether this finding still holds true.

### 6.3 *Study strengths and limitations*

Some limitations associated with the design of this study include research sampling techniques, geographic scope and cross-sectional design. Convenience and snowball sampling techniques have several, previously acknowledged limitations. Other sampling techniques could have gathered more reliable samples, such as non-probability sampling techniques like quota or purposive sampling (based on age category for this research question), or a probability sampling technique such as stratified random sampling or random cluster sampling (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 297). The geographic and sectoral scope of this study was limited to the professional services sector in Ireland; this poses a limitation to the generalizability of these findings to wider sectors and across international borders. Lastly, a cross-sectional study design poses a limitation when conducting intergenerational research, especially due to the "inability to separate variance attributable to generational, age, and period effects" (Constanza et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, this study has several strengths. This research contributes to the current state of the research field on WPS by examining the perspectives of Generations Z, Y and X on higher-order needs which extend beyond financial retention methods in the workplace. The findings showed certain areas of interest when welcoming Gen Z into the workforce. These findings may be of interest to employers and further academic research as this generation will make up a growing percentage of the workforce in coming years.

#### *6.4 Recommendations*

Based on the research findings, the two recommended areas for improvement and enhancement to current practice are centred around abolishing stereotypes about intergenerational differences, and methods to enhance retention of Gen Z employees.

##### *6.4.1 Lack of intergenerational differences*

Organizations today should stray from generational stereotypes and meta-stereotypes. Stereotypes relate to the beliefs we have about certain generations, such as older generations being wary of technological advancements or younger generations being self-centred; generational meta-stereotypes relate to how each generation thinks other generations perceive them, for example younger generations may believe their elderly counterparts in the workplace perceive them as lazy and inexperienced, which may actually not hold true when older generations express their true opinions about the former (King et al., 2019). This study showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the perceptions of Generations Z, Y and X on WPS. This suggests these generations are not all that different and should not be treated differently in relation to various dimensions of WPS. It is recommended for organizations today to abolish intergenerational stereotypes and promote age diversity and intergenerational teamwork, showing that these generations have a lot in common, especially as the youngest generations enter the workforce and the eldest generations continue working longer (Harvard Health Publishing, 2018).

The onus lies on the HR department to create mentoring programmes where young employees get a more experienced and more mature employee as a mentor; this will create a meaningful attachment for young employees with their career field and will create informal, friendly



intergenerational relationships (Jena & Pradhan, 2018). It is recommended for organizations to introduce development programmes to instil a sense of WPS in the organization, but these should not distinguish between generations. Instead, it is recommended to carry out needs assessments for certain departments or groups to examine which WPS dimensions are most valued by them (i.e. IL, MW or SC), and subsequently deliver development programmes based on the observed needs of the departments/groups, on top of general spirituality-oriented development programmes for all employees.

#### 6.4.2 *Retention of Gen Z*

As Gen Z are seen to value the SC dimension of WPS, it is recommended for organizations today to focus on cultivating a culture of unity, trust and belonging. HR should implement employee-friendly policies, diffusing the organisational vision in a transparent and driving manner. This will allow the achievement of P-O fit throughout the entire recruitment process: starting from creating an authentic employer brand to encourage the right candidates to apply, and subsequently during employment by encouraging spiritual growth through self-development programmes and providing opportunities for community building both at work (through teamwork) and outside of work (through social events). Line managers should act as messengers of the organizational vision, communicating team and organizational goals, and facilitating spiritual growth of their subordinates (Jena & Pradhan, 2018). This can be achieved by making sure that managers understand their role in diffusing the right organizational culture, are involved in organizational decision-making and receive spiritual development courses, such as mindfulness courses, based around soft skills for dealing with subordinates in an emotionally intelligent manner. Frequent, open and friendly communication is key at each stage of this process. Retention of Gen Z in the workplace will only be possible with full authenticity and transparency.

Moreover, as Gen Z were seen to feel higher stress associated with MW, this suggests that they may be looking for their first employer(s) to provide formal training and ongoing learning to help them transition into the workplace, in line with the Accenture findings reported by Vasudeva and Barea (2017). It is recommended for employers to not throw Gen Z in the deep end, but rather provide extensive formal training on-the-job before providing them with the responsibility of accomplishing highly meaningful work.

## *6.5 Implementation*

A possible route for implementing the above recommendations would be to introduce mindfulness courses for all employees. Implementing mindfulness training programmes will require usually between 6-8 weeks for the entire process and should be accompanied by needs assessments carried out prior to the programme by the HR department. The Irish Mindfulness Academy (2021) provides 6 week online mindfulness training courses for professionals which cost €300 to run. Due to the pandemic, all courses currently take place online. After the completion of the course, the organization should allow a further 8-12 weeks for monitoring outcomes of the programme and gathering feedback.

## *6.6 Conclusion and areas for future research*

In conclusion, we have seen that the findings of this research can be interpreted and explained in many different ways. Considering the complex, dynamic and unpredictable world that surrounds us, opinions about subjects like WPS, work stress and turnover intentions are highly sensitive to environmental and personal circumstances. We have seen that in the present research there was no difference in association between WPS and Generations Z, Y and X. Possible areas of interest for future research could be to investigate this research objective on a multinational research sample, or to investigate whether environmental factors such as location, place of work or sector would portray differences in associations with WPS. Furthermore, we have seen that a positive association exists between overall WPS and work stress for Gen Z, and a negative correlation exists between overall WPS and turnover intentions for Gen Z. It is important to acknowledge that circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic may have influenced respondents' answers. In terms of work stress, it may be of interest to test the association in post-pandemic times in order to control for the higher levels of stress felt in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of turnover intentions, this area may be of interest for employers as a means of increasing employee retention and thus reducing costs related to employee turnover and ongoing recruitment. Future research could investigate whether a negative relationship between turnover intentions and WPS exists in different sectors of the economy in order to generalize the findings for employers.

## **Chapter 7: Conclusion**

### *7.1 Conclusion*

The multidimensional field of research centred around spirituality in the workplace is still in its adolescence and expanding. Academic contributions are constantly adding to the understanding and appreciation of the breadth and depth of this area in the workplace. With the youngest generation now entering the workforce, there remains a lot to be discovered and examined about the place occupied by WPS in their work attitudes and expectations. This research focused on the research question ‘Examining the impact of workplace spirituality on the work stress and retention of Generation Z in the professional services sector in Ireland’. The literature review created a solid grounding for the growing importance of spirituality, how it is mirrored in the workplace, and how it relates to other work-related outcomes such as work stress and retention. Generation Z were at the centre of this research in order to examine their perspectives on higher-order needs associated with inner spirituality, finding meaning at work through self-actualisation and a connection with the wider good of society, and a sense of belonging in the workplace through common goals, missions and interconnected support with the work community.

A quantitative study researched these dimensions in the professional services sector in Ireland and several associations were discovered. The findings of this research added to the current state of the literature field on WPS by discovering that there was no substantive difference in the perceptions of Generations Z, Y and X on WPS, that WPS had an overall increasing effect on work stress for Generation Z, and that WPS reduced the turnover intentions of Generation Z. Based on the findings, it is recommended for organizations to foster a sense of organizational community in order to increase organizational tenure of Generation Z. It may also be of interest for organizations to implement mindfulness training courses in order to promote spirituality in the workplace.

The positive association between WPS and work stress for Gen Z was an unexpected finding in this research. It opens an interesting area for future research to examine whether stress-free workplaces gain importance for employees as they progress to more mature stages of their careers or whether Gen Z perceptions would differ in post-pandemic circumstances. It may also be of interest for future research to examine the relationships between WPS, work stress

and retention in other sectors as well as across international borders to gain more generalizable findings.

Lastly, communication is key when incorporating spirituality into the organizational culture. WPS can only be built upon transparency, trust and mutual respect. Employees need to feel that their employers respect them in a holistic manner, that their work is contributing to a higher goal and purpose, and that they form part of an integral community. Regular and friendly communication must flow between employees, line managers, HR executives and top management in order to maintain a sense of purpose and drive. Based on the literature review, this leads to improved employee wellbeing which translates into improved organizational performance in the future.

## *7.2 Personal statement*

In hindsight, undertaking a more comprehensive, intergenerational perspective for each research objective would have been more useful in terms of comparing each variable across the three generations. However, this was beyond the scope of this research paper. It may have been more relevant to choose only two variables, such as WPS as a retention tool, and to conduct a more in-depth analysis with hypotheses for each generation. Moreover, the six dimensions of the SAW scale should have been condensed to three dimensions for ease of comparison. The three core dimensions which should have been included were IL, MW and Organizational Values. This would have facilitated comparisons of each dimension per age category in a clearer manner. Lastly, the question ‘Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed your view of what you find most important in the workplace?’ should have been phrased more in terms of stress, for example asking ‘Has the Covid-19 pandemic increased your daily stress levels?’. This would have given more insightful responses in terms of controlling for the current stress levels felt by respondents from each generation and could have provided useful data for further discussion under each research objective.

Nonetheless, this study has been effective in capturing generational views on multiple employment variables relating to WPS. Although in hindsight some aspects may have been improved, the researcher acknowledges the study as a whole to be a successful undertaking with several findings which may be of interest to both current organizational practice and academia.

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## Appendix

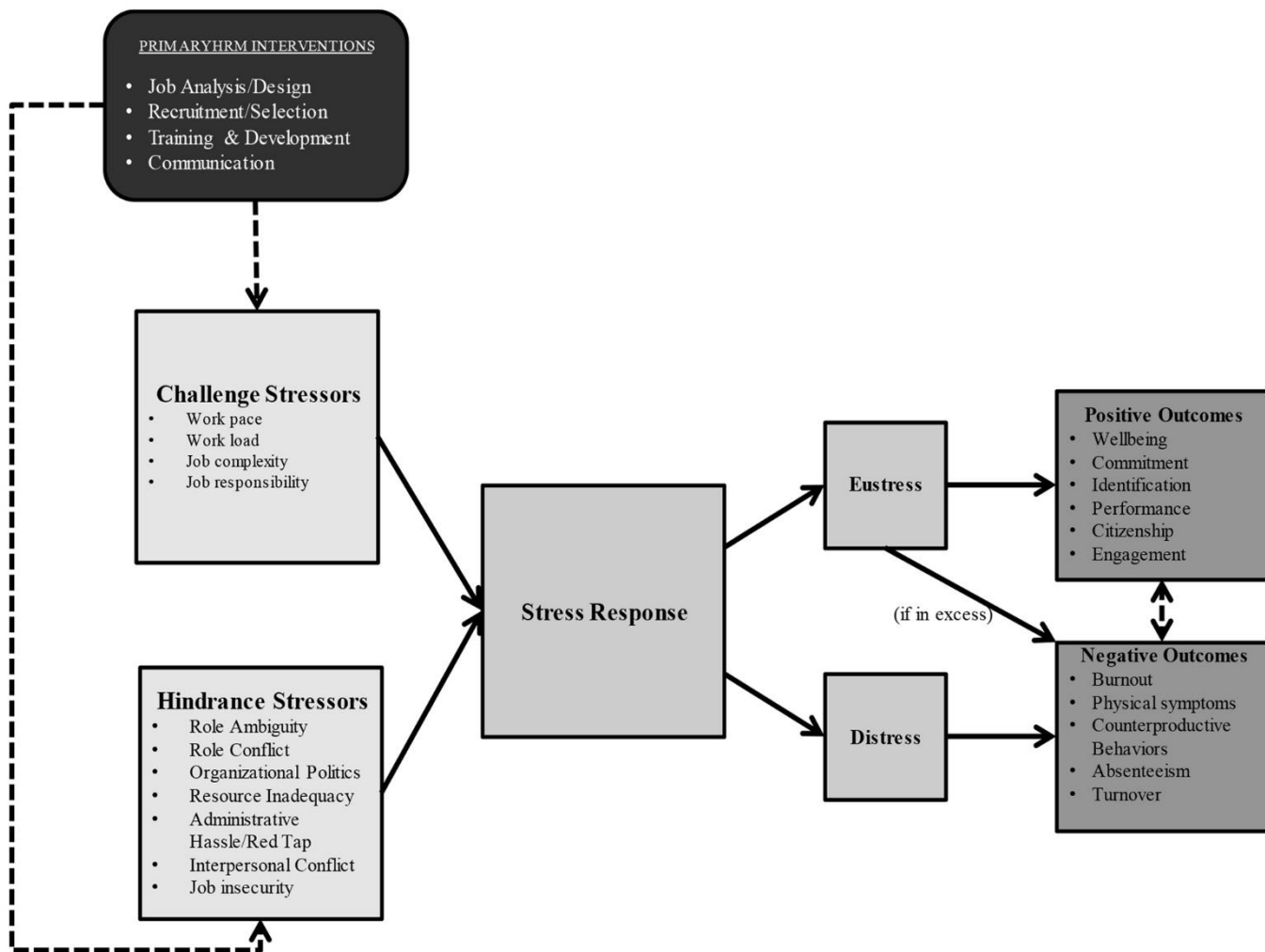
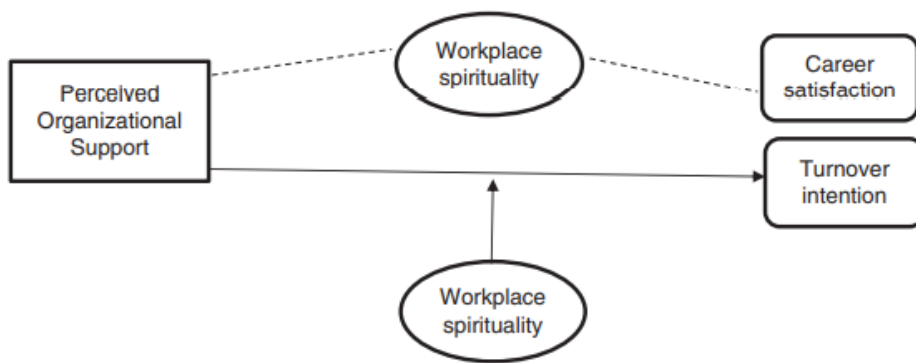


Figure 1. Limiting Distress and Generating Eustress

### Figure 2: HR Eustress Model

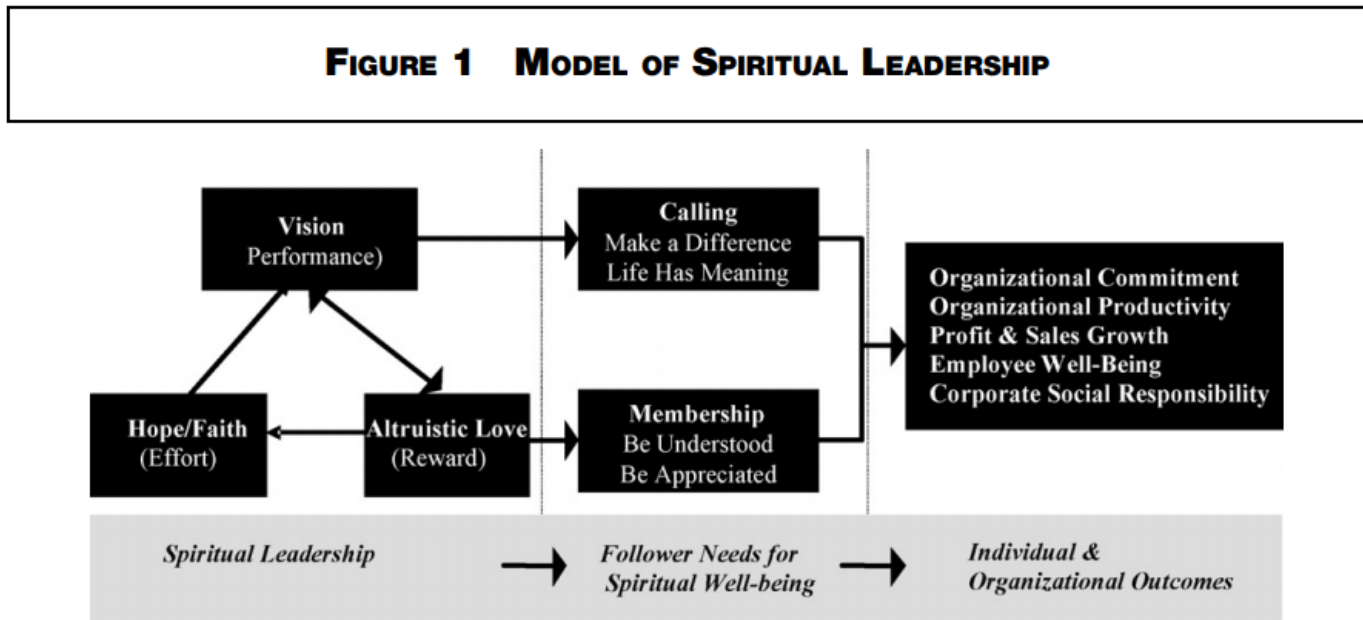
Source: Hargrove, B., Hargrove, D. & Becker, W. (2016) Managing Stress: Human Resource Management Interventions for Distress and Eustress, *Journal of Human Resources Education*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp.25-38.



**Figure 1.**  
Study research model

**Figure 3:** Bhaskar & Mishra (2019) study research model

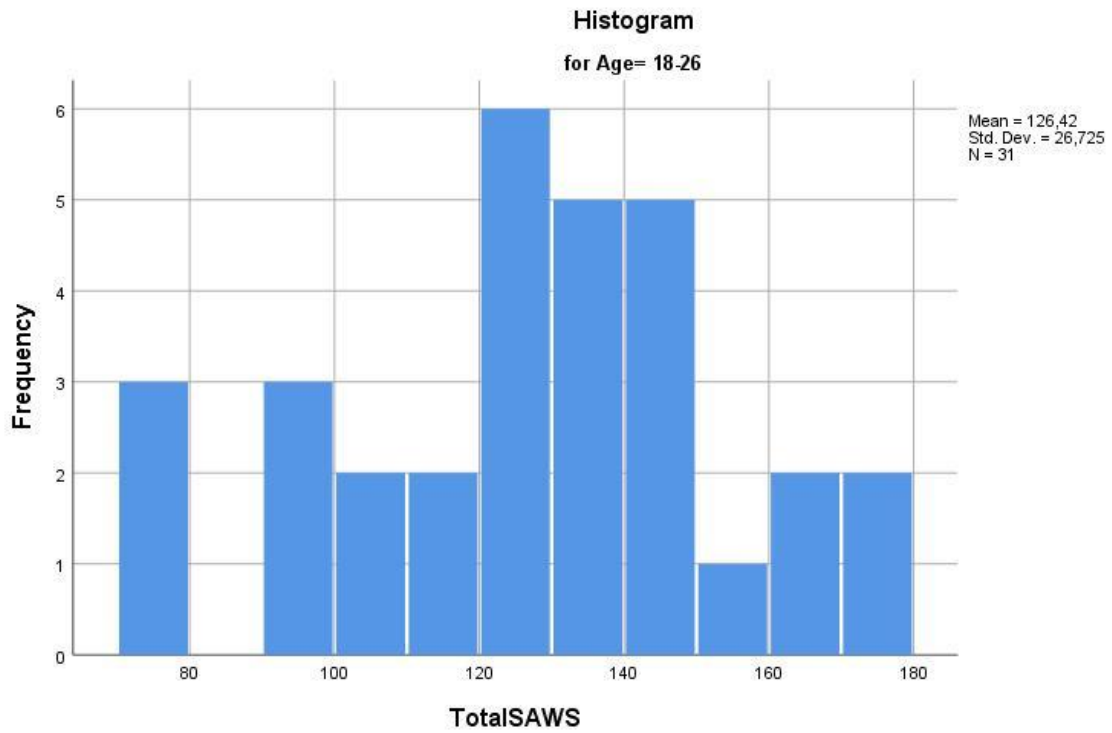
Source: Bhaskar, A.U. & Mishra, B. (2019) Putting workplace spirituality in context: examining its role in enhancing career satisfaction and reducing turnover intentions with perceived organisational support as an antecedent, *Personnel Review*, vol. 48, no. 7, pp.1848-1865.



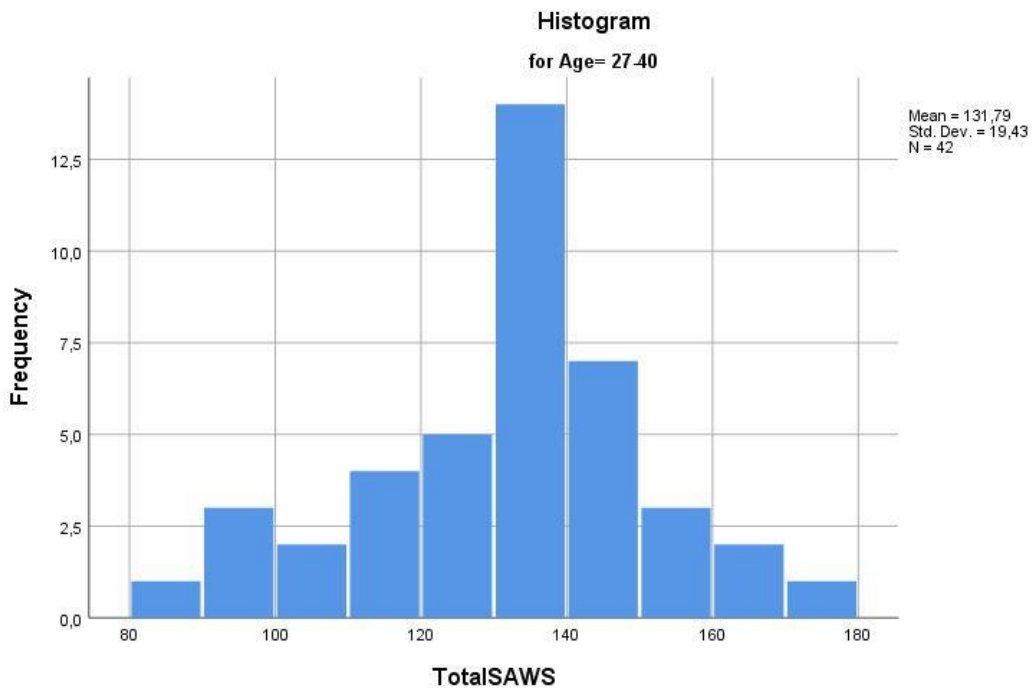
**Figure 4:** Model of spiritual leadership

Source: Fry, L. & Slocum Jr., J. (2008) Maximizing the Triple Bottom Line Through Spiritual Leadership, *Organizational Dynamics*, vol. 37, no. 1, p. 91.

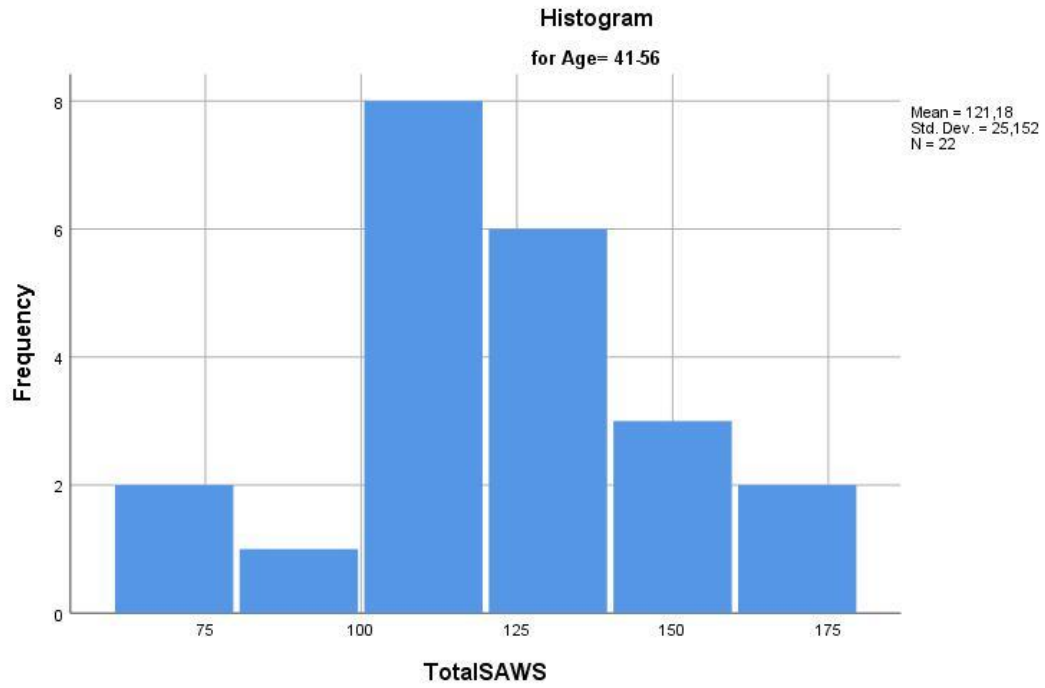
**Figures 5-8: Assumptions for the One-way ANOVA test for H1**



**Figure 5:** Approximately normal distribution of dependent variable SAWS for Generation Z



**Figure 6:** Approximately normal distribution of dependent variable SAWS for Generation Y



**Figure 7:** Approximately normal distribution of dependent variable SAWS for Generation X

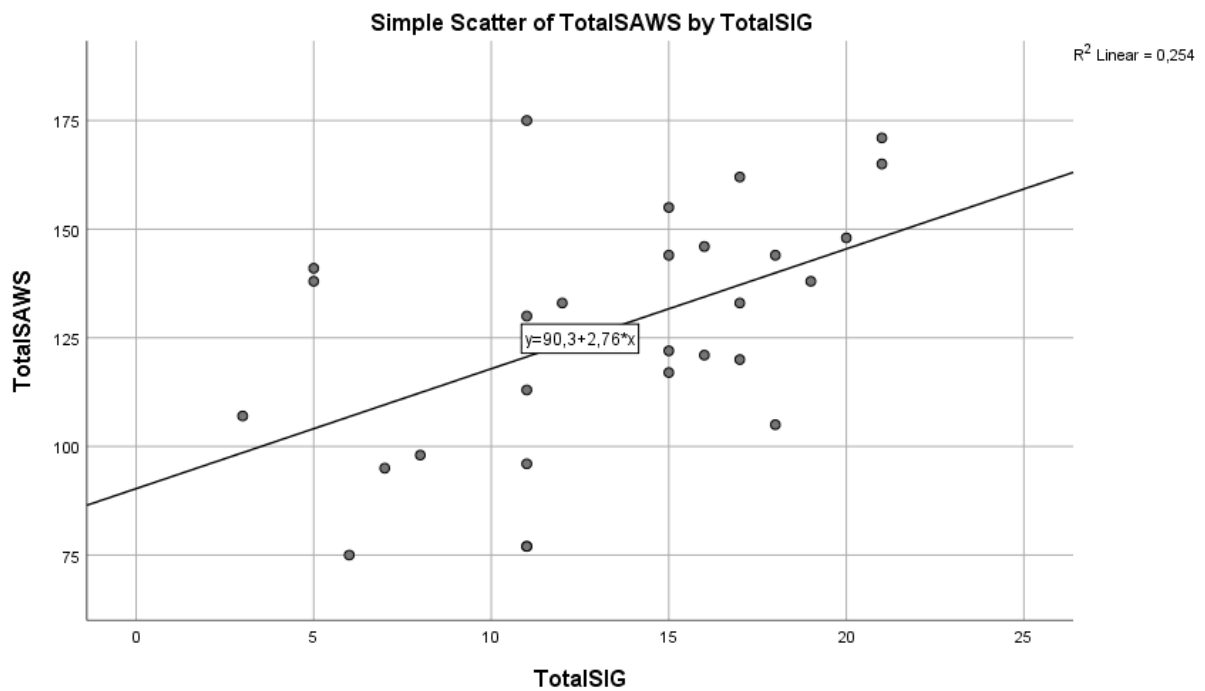
**Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Total SAWS	Based on Mean	2,120	2	92	,126
	Based on Median	2,216	2	92	,115
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2,216	2	89,418	,115
	Based on trimmed mean	2,174	2	92	,119

**Figure 8:** Levene's test proving homogeneity of variances



**Figures 9 – 13: Assumptions for simple linear regression testing of H2**



**Figure 9:** Simple linear scatter plot of positive linear relationship between the DV SIG and IV SAWS for Generation Z

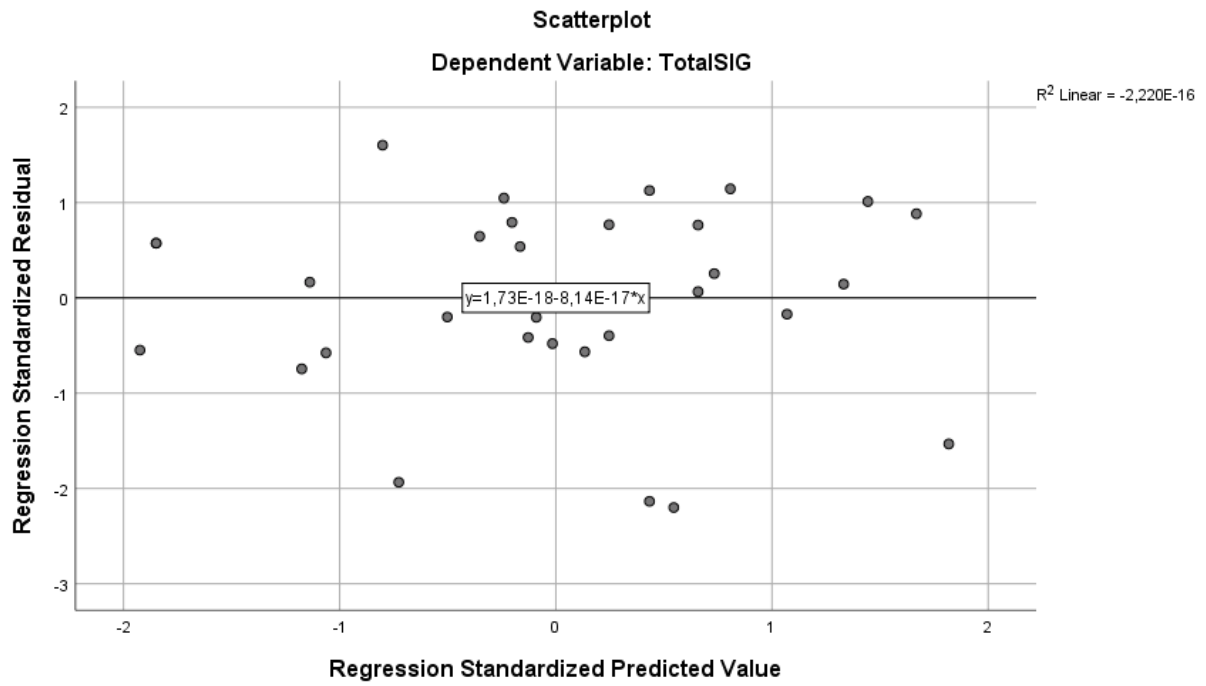
**Durbin-Watson test**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
1	,504 <sup>a</sup>	,254	,229	4,293	,254	9,897	1	29	,004	1,609

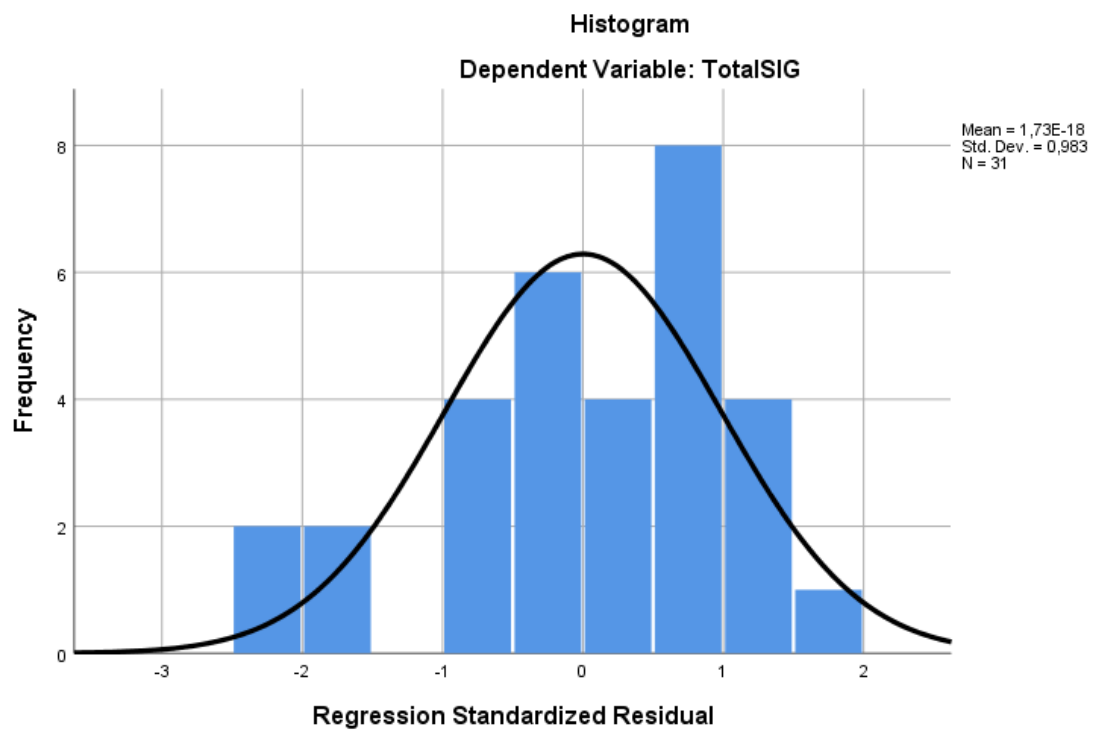
a. Predictors: (Constant), Total SAWS

b. Dependent Variable: Total SIG

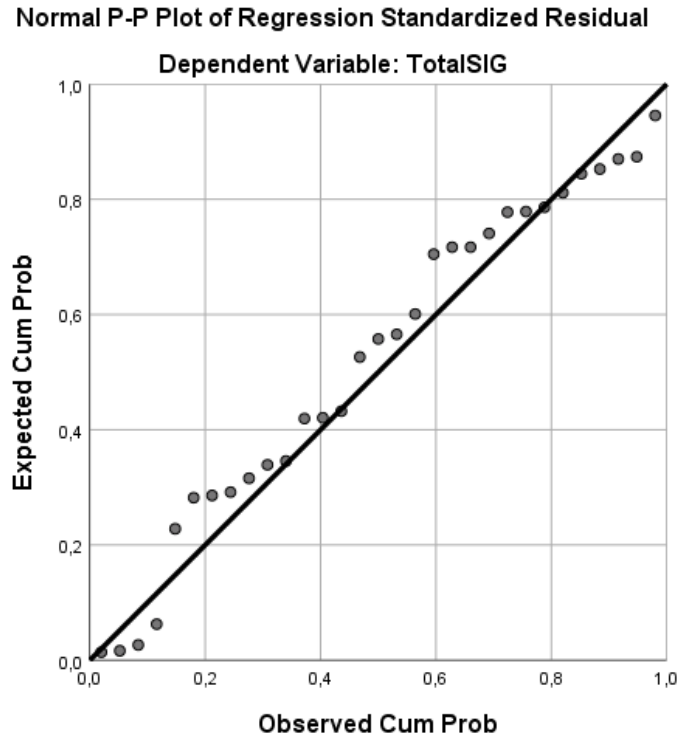
**Figure 10:** Durbin-Watson test for independent of observations



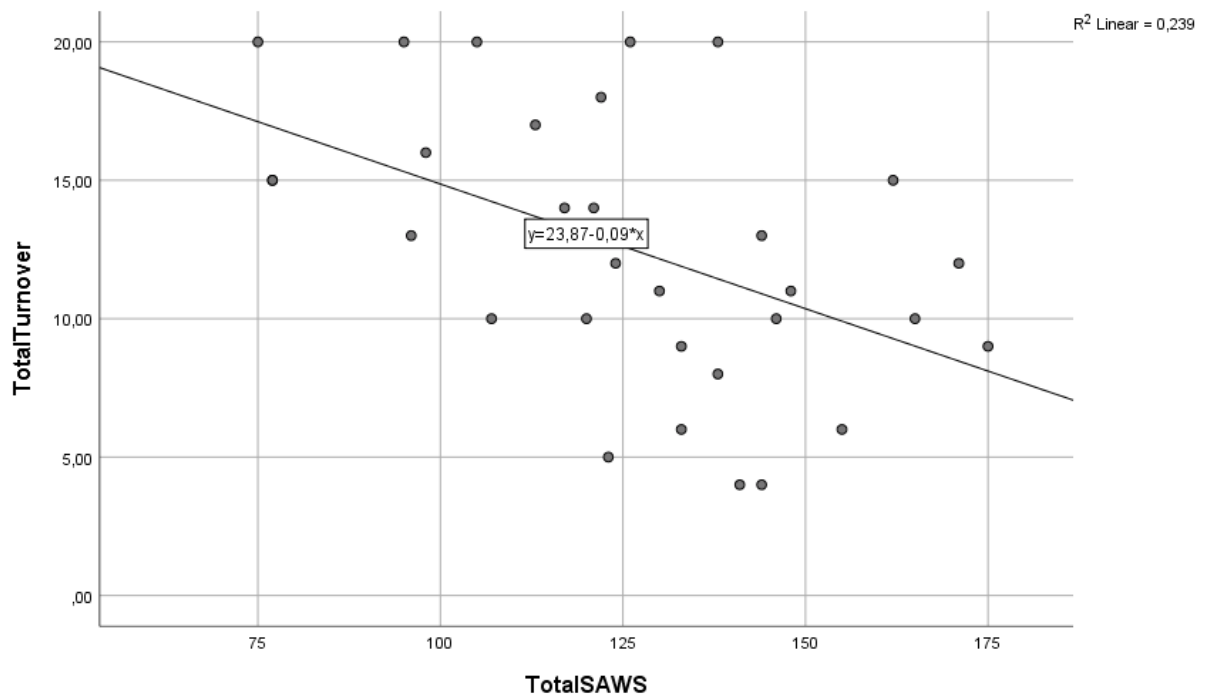
**Figure 11:** Homoscedasticity - Regression standardized residual scatterplot



**Figure 12:** Approximately normal histogram of regression standardized residual



**Figure 13:** Approximately normal P-P Plot of regression standardized residual



**Figure 14:** Assumption for Spearman's correlation for H3: Simple scatter plot of monotonic relationship between paired observations in H3

**Figure 15:** The online survey implemented in the present research



The image shows a screenshot of a participant information sheet for a research study. The title is "Research Study: Participant Information Sheet". The text is organized into several sections: "Title of Research Study:", "You are invited to take part...", "What is the purpose of the research?", "What will taking part involve?", and "Confidentiality and Voluntarism".

## Research Study: Participant Information Sheet

**Title of Research Study:**  
Examining the impact of workplace spirituality on reducing work stress and increasing retention intentions for Generation Z employees as compared to preceding generations in the professional services sector in Ireland.

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide if you would like to participate, please take time to read the following information about the purpose of the research and what it involves on your part.

**What is the purpose of the research?**  
This research is carried out as part of my Master of Arts in Human Resource Management dissertation with the National College of Ireland. The objective of my research is to examine whether the perceptions of young Generation Z employees on the impact of workplace spirituality on reducing work stress and increasing retention intentions show differing tendencies from employees of other generations in the service sector in Ireland. In the context of this research, workplace spirituality has nothing to do with religion. Workplace spirituality is defined as "the experience of employees who are passionate about and energized by their work, find meaning and purpose in their work, feel that they can express their complete selves at work, and feel connected to those with whom they work" (Kinjerski & Skrypnik, 2004, p. 27).

**What will taking part involve?**  
Completing the online questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete and will be split into 4 sections: demographics, workplace spirituality, stress in the workplace and retention intentions.

**Confidentiality and Voluntarism**  
This survey is confidential, voluntary and anonymous. You, as the participant, are free to decide if you would like to participate in the study voluntarily and you have the right to refuse participation, refuse any questions or withdraw at any point and all your information will be discarded. There will be no means of identifying participants. The Participant Consent Form will be kept confidential and will not be used outside of the presented Master

#### What will taking part involve?

Completing the online questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete and will be split into 4 sections: demographics, workplace spirituality, stress in the workplace and retention intentions.

#### Confidentiality and Voluntarism

This survey is confidential, voluntary and anonymous. You, as the participant, are free to decide if you would like to participate in the study voluntarily and you have the right to refuse participation, refuse any questions or withdraw at any point and all your information will be discarded. There will be no means of identifying participants. The Participant Consent Form will be kept confidential and will not be used outside of the presented Master research study. Information provided will not be archived for secondary data analysis. The data gathered from this survey will be retained by myself, the researcher, until after my degree has been conferred. In accordance with NCI policy, the data will be stored for a maximum of up to 5 years and then destroyed. Under freedom of information legislation, you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.

#### What will happen to the results of this study?

The results of this research study will only be used for submitting my Master thesis.

#### What do you have to do?

If you wish to take part in the research, please sign the consent form below. The survey will begin in the next section if consent is granted.

#### Contact

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact myself, Marlena Morgiewicz, a student at the National College of Ireland, at [x19223765@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:x19223765@student.ncirl.ie), or my research supervisor April Hargreaves at [april.hargreaves@ncirl.ie](mailto:april.hargreaves@ncirl.ie). Thank you for taking the time to read this Information Sheet.

I hope you will help me to successfully complete my Master Research Study by kindly responding to this survey.

**\*Required**

#### Declaration of Consent

By signing the consent form below, you agree to voluntarily take part in this Master research project and you understand that you are free to withdraw at any point and your information will be discarded. You understand that the data provided will be confidential, will only be used by the researcher for the purposes of this Master research study, and will not be distributed for external usage. You understand that your identity will remain fully confidential and all data from this survey will be collected and processed in line with the NCI Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants and in line with the details of the information sheet above.

Do you agree to the above declaration of consent? \*

- Yes, I agree
- No, I do not agree

Next

## Demographic Characteristics

Please answer the following demographic questions. The only required question relates to age.

### Age \*

- 18-26
- 27-40
- 41-56
- 57+

### Gender

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Level of qualification

- Bachelor degree
- Master degree
- PhD
- Higher Level Certificate/Diploma
- Secondary education

Level of qualification

- Bachelor degree
- Master degree
- PhD
- Higher Level Certificate/Diploma
- Secondary education
- Prefer not to say

Employment status

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Student
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly salary range

- Under €1500
- €1500-2000
- €2000-3000
- Over €3000
- Prefer not to say/Not applicable

Duration of active participation in the workforce

- Less than 3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-12 months
- 1-3 years
- 3-7 years
- 7+ years
- Not applicable

When did you commence employment?

- Before Covid-19 pandemic
- During Covid-19 pandemic
- Lost work due to Covid-19 pandemic
- Not applicable



Select 3 most effective retention factors for you

- Salary increase
- Positive relationships with co-workers
- Work-life balance
- Job security
- Tangible benefits, e.g. car, laptop, phone etc.
- Healthy organisational culture
- Industry-specific learning opportunities
- Personal development opportunities
- Stress-free work environment
- Career promotion opportunities
- Freedom to be yourself at work
- Management support

Has the Covid-19 pandemic changed your view of what you find most important in the workplace?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

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## Workplace Spirituality

Please rank your perceptions of the following statements on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree. Please base your answers on your current workplace, or most recent workplace if you have recently ceased employment.

In the context of this research, workplace spirituality has nothing to do with religion. Workplace spirituality is defined as "the experience of employees who are passionate about and energized by their work, find meaning and purpose in their work, feel that they can express their complete selves at work, and feel connected to those with whom they work" (Kinjerski & Skrypnek, 2004, p. 27).

1. I feel hopeful about life

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

2. I feel responsible for my own growth

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

3. I feel personally responsible for my behaviour

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

4. I consider myself a spiritual person

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

5. My spiritual values influence the choices I make

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

6. I care about the spiritual health of my coworkers

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

7. I experience joy in my work

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

8. I believe others experience joy as a result of my work

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

9. My spirit is energized by my work

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

10. My work is connected to what I think is important in life

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

11. I look forward to coming to work most days

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

12. I see a connection between my work and the larger social good of my community.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

13. I understand what gives my work personal meaning.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

14. I feel part of a community in my immediate workplace (department, unit, etc.)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

15. My supervisor encourages my personal growth

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

16. I have had numerous experiences in my job which have resulted in personal growth

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

17. When I have fears, I am encouraged to discuss them

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

18. When I have a concern, I represent it to the appropriate person.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

19. At work, we work together to resolve conflict in a positive way

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

20. I am evaluated fairly here

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree



21. I am encouraged to take risks at work

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

22. I am valued at work for who I am

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

23. I feel positive about the values in my immediate work unit

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

24. My immediate work unit has a conscience

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

25. I feel connected with my immediate work unit's goals

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

26. My immediate work unit is concerned

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

27. I feel connected with the mission of my immediate work unit

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

28. I feel positive about my future with my immediate work unit

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

29. The organization I work for cares about whether my spirit is energized by my work

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

30. I feel positive about the values of this organization

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

31. This organization is concerned about the poor in our community

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

32. This organization cares about all its employees

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

33. This organization has a conscience

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

34. I feel connected with this organization's goals

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

35. This organization is concerned about the health of those who work here.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

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## Stress in the workplace

Do you find your current or most recent job stressful? For each of the following 15 words, please choose 'Yes' if it describes your job, choose 'No' if it does not describe your job, and choose 'Unsure' if you cannot decide.

Demanding

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Pressured

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Hectic

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Calm

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Relaxed

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Many things stressful

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Pushed

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Irritating

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Under control

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Nerve-racking

- Yes
- No
- Unsure



Hassled

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Comfortable

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

More stressful than I'd like

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Smooth running

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Overwhelming

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

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## Retention

Please rank your perceptions of the following statements on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree. If you are currently unemployed, please base your answers on your feelings before leaving your most recent job.

I am thinking about leaving this organization

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I am planning to look for a new job

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I intend to ask people about new job opportunities

I intend to ask people about new job opportunities

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

I don't plan to be in this organization much longer

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly agree

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## Debriefing Sheet

0 of 0 points

Thank you for participating in the present study which asked about your perceptions on workplace spirituality, work stress and retention intentions in your current or most recent job. The purpose of the present research study is to examine the impact of workplace spirituality on reducing work stress and increasing retention intentions for Generation Z employees as compared to more mature employees. Every participant's answers will immensely benefit research in the field of workplace spirituality and inter-generational differences in the workplace.

Again, I thank you for taking the time to participate in the study. If you know any friends or family members who would be eligible to take part in the study, I would be grateful if you could recommend this to them and not discuss the questions with them before they have had the opportunity to participate. Prior knowledge of questions can invalidate the outcomes of the study. I appreciate your cooperation.

If you have any further queries about the present research study, please feel free to ask myself the researcher, Marlena Morgiewicz, at [x19223765@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:x19223765@student.ncirl.ie), or my research supervisor April Hargreaves at [april.hargreaves@ncirl.ie](mailto:april.hargreaves@ncirl.ie).

Thank you again for your participation, it is greatly appreciated.

