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Understanding the essence of Spirituality at Work: Subtle interactions.

*Observe how system into system runs
what other planets circle other suns?*

Alexander Pope, 1688–1744

Introduction

Organizations of the 21st century are constantly striving for gaining more and more value in business. With the advent of disruptive technological shifts and constant challenges, organizations must rely greatly on their workforce. Cut-throat competition and uncertainty of business scenarios are forcing them to consider new frontiers and take of review of their existing work practices. People at work are also feeling the heat of the rapidly changing business environment and striving hard to perform. The burden of getting ahead in terms of quantitative performance, they are missing the quality of work and life resulting in low efficiency and outcome.

There is a burgeoning interest by researchers and behavioral theorists in complex networked organizations. These connected organizations primarily have patterned interactions among components. These patterned interactions have grown and developed in a manner adding complexity to the system. the information energy we are consuming now a day is crowded by an array of information resources and they can be understood by the means they are processed. They are of no significant meaning as an isolated entity. The lack of inclusiveness and excessive thrust on self-assertiveness manifesting domination and controlling the organizational system has given rise to the crisis. The market and organizational temperature have created turbulence making them more vulnerable and susceptible to disruptive forces leading them to be more competitive rather than cooperative with other entities or systems with aggression. This aggressive approach is fueling the crisis of the system diluting the purpose of the networked organizational system resulting in chaos and the networked organizations are missing subtlety, the essence of spirituality at the workplace lying in the system.

Definitions

To understand the concept of subtlety, it is essential to get acquainted with some of the terms that are used frequently while describing the networked system. however, these definitions are not satisfactory but they provide a valuable understanding.

System-A system is an assembly of parts or entities having interaction as a complex unified whole (Kast and Rosenzweig, 1970).

Complex System-These are systems behavior of which are extremely difficult to model due to a high degree of interstate transition, gradient, and multifaceted interactions among components. They also reflect some of the peculiar characteristics like non-linear relationship, sensible intelligence, sustainability, and efficiency (Bertalanffy, 1950, Ashby, 1964).

Network- A network, in its simplest meaning can be defined as a composition of interacting nodes and tie-ups. Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) pointed out that a network form can have boundarylessness and can exist at both intra or inter-organizational levels.

Networked Organization-A network is a collection of various related entities aiming towards common objectives. Jarillo (1988) defines networked organizations as a purposeful

arrangement among unique but related entities. Similarly, (Kaneko & Imai, 1987) explained networks as a multitudinal relationship among organizational entities for information flow while (Johanson & Mettson, 1987) conceptualize it as a means to achieve coordination among business forces. (Podoly & Page, 1998) gave a more comprehensive definition stating that the networked organization is a collection of stakeholders having exchanged relations with components both inside and outside the organization.

Info Motive Force (*imf*)- It is the gradient of information potential. The difference of *imf* between synaptic points is responsible for the flow of the information energy in the networked organizational system.

Spirituality at work- It is “the tendency of the systems’ configurational energy to achieve sustainability, stability, and efficiency by assimilating the disorder of the system and transcend it into orderliness inclusively and subtly (Tiwari & Pathak, 2018).”

Subtlety- The literature defines subtlety as so delicate and precise(oxford dictionary). It is the least amount of interaction required for the functioning of the system. It is the essence of spirituality at the workplace emerging from self-regulated minimally enforced interaction among structure and non-structure of system.

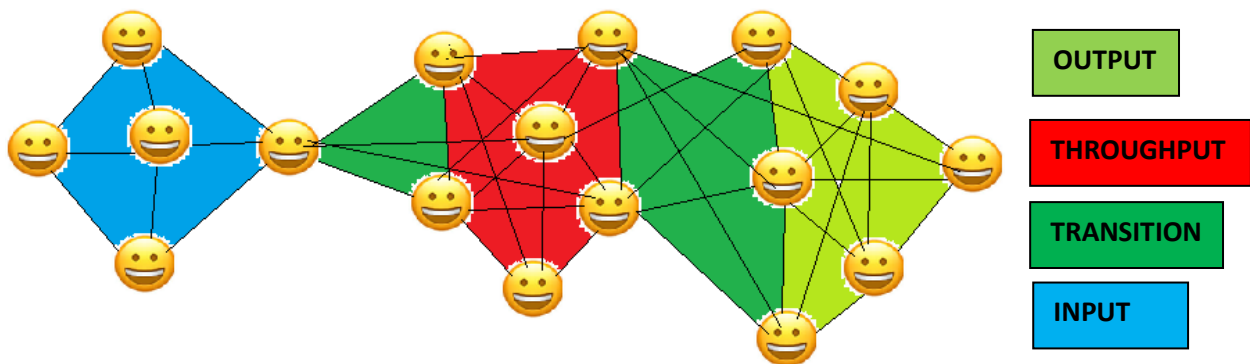


Figure 1- A Typical Complex Networked Organizational System.

Review of Literature

Networked organizations are gaining the interest of theorists and scholars in the era of complexity. Scholars have extended their purview on the connectedness of the organization striving for sustainability(Gulati, 1995b; Gulati and Gargiulo, 1999). A typical networked organization can be described as a connected and distributed socio-technical system for communication, confluence, and sustainability (Bonen,1981; Powell,1990). It has been understood as a collective subset of a business system having interacting actors (Moore,1996). There is an emergence of complexity arising due to the conjunction of partners integrating culture and digitalization. Thorelli (1986) strongly argued that a networked system should be viewed as a supplement to the existing business ecosystem and is comprised of inter and intra-organizational components working in tandem (Lincoln, 1982).

The last 20 years have shown immense interest in Spirituality at Workplace (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Cavanagh, 1999; Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010; Tischler, 1999) and Howard (2002) rightly pointed out that it is the most significant trend of managerial research since 1950. Cowan (1993)defines spirituality as ones’ consciousness making one aware and align with the

“spirits of all creations accordingly. Certain interpretations proclaim it as facilitation of one's experience at work and Giacalone & Jurkiewicz (2010) and Gibbons (2000) claimed it as the manifestation of organizational values and their interconnectedness transcending employees' experiences. Milliman et al. (2003) has the same views and argued that it is individuals' experience in the workplace towards a greater purpose. McCormick (1994) saw it as ones' inner joy felt with work while Dehler & Welsh (1994) explained it as an inner source of inspiration. Mitroff & Denton (1999) argued it as a connection to the universe while Moore & Casper (2006) considered it as an internalization of one's behavior at work. There are three dimensions of spirituality at the workplace in 3 components i.e. Meaningful work, sense of community, and connectedness as given by Ashmos & Duchon (2000) and Milliman *et al.* (2003). They have thrust upon the connectedness but these explanations are incomplete as they focus more on experience at the individual level. They lack the purview of the system approach to understand spirituality and its manifestation, especially in the networked organization. It is essential to understand spirituality at the workplace in the interaction of structure and non-structure. The literature review indicates the necessity of a new doctrinal vision to establish the framework to achieve subtlety which is the essence of spirituality at work leading the flow of informational energy towards the attainment of sustainability, stability, and efficiency.

Why Subtlety?

The progressive organizations of the 21st century inevitably require spontaneous sensible intelligence to achieve collaborative advantages and it is essential to them to participate in the networked system of business to answer the turbulence and volatility created by market temperature. They need to leverage the informational energy of the system to harness the unplanned order arising due to emergent interaction. It must allow the self-evolved flow of informational energy to the system. subtlety in the system allows the smooth transition of the energy to the various components of the system allowing it to ascertain its priorities.

As argued earlier, no organizational system can operate effectively in isolation. Modern complex networked organizations have a presence of emergent interaction and these interactions are not apparent from their subsystems or components in isolation but resulting due to their togetherness as a system. This emergent interaction in a system can describe any phenomena which seem to be difficult and impossible from the smaller entities of the system. The connections both at the structural level and non-structural level are the peculiar features of networked organizations.

Subtlety in Action

- 1. Networking and interconnectedness** -A peculiar feature of the networked system is the connectedness of the various subsystem and components available internally or externally. The configuration of the system is an important aspect of dealing with the arrangement of the system. The configurational energy of the system governs the development of networking in the system. The configuration having open architecture allows other sub-systems to interact and connect with it so that the flow of configurational energy in the form of information can be transferred to the next subsystem. This connectedness in the networked system appears in two forms a) connectedness of structure b) connectedness of non-structure. The connectedness of structure refers to the linear and mechanical interaction while connectedness on non-structure refers to the interaction of the behaviors of the system. Both works in tandem to bring spirituality to the system and add dynamism to the networked system. This networked system is a unique feature of Spirituality at the workplace in the system

approach. This networking is precise and evolving in nature arising due to the requirement of the system. It aims to reduce the contradictions of the system in such a manner that the information energy of the system flows without using external forces. Configurations allow various components to establish subtle networking for smooth inter or intrastate transition. Networking in Spirituality at work provides direction for the hassle-free flow of informational energy and achieves sustainability and revivability with any external interferences. Their subtle relationship facilitates them to grow, mature discard, and develop new connections to assimilate disorder or chaos. A synopsis conjoining two or more components allows the smooth transition of one form to another without disturbing other sub-systems. The primary aim of spirituality and the workplace is to gain orderliness through the interactions within and outside the system. Subtle networking also helps the system to find a new pathway to understand, develop and solve more complex challenges. This pathway provides alternatives to sustainability.

- 2. Synaptic points and Info Motive Force-**Synaptic points are the key features of a networked organization. The idea of synaptic connection is one of the most important and crucial features of networked organizations willing to be organic. These synapses between components allow the flow of informational energy by making the system more open, creative, and flexible. These are the points where the structure and non-structure of the system interact. Synapses and the development of synaptic points are a very important aspect of the networked system as these points facilitate the flow of configuration energy of the system in the form of information. The functioning of these synoptic points depends upon two critical factors 1) Info motive force- info motive force is the gradient of the configurational energy of the system. It is the difference of information energy of two synaptic points and governs the flow of information in the system. If the gradient of the system is high the synaptic points who also work like circuit breakers will be fried out and the flow of information energy will breakdown. Thus, for the smooth transition of information, the gradient of the information potential *imf* should be subtle. The subtlety in *imf* allows the flow of the system as per the processing capability of the system and controls its unbecoming appetite. 2) Organizational Temperature- The system and its components are made up of various smaller sub-components representing the heterogeneity. Organizational temperature refers to all the heterogeneity present in the system internally in the form of skill, knowledge, attitude, diversity, configuration, culture, appetite, etc. their interaction and dynamism give rise or fall to organizational temperature in the networked organization. As argued earlier, no organization can operate in isolation in the 21st century hence, it is also impacted by the market temperature. Market temperature refers to the prevailing market conditions, economic and socio-technical conditions, disruptive advancement, policies, etc. The organizational temperature remains in dynamic equilibrium with market temperature and creates homeostasis- a state of dynamic balance essential for subtle networking and functioning. The researchers argue that organizational temperature is an essential indicator of Spirituality at work and helps synoptic interface to regulate the stability of the system which emergence and subtlety in interaction.
- 3. Complimentarity and Coherence-** The info motive force regulated the flow of informational energy at subtlety enhance cooperation and collaboration among components. This cooperation provides new pathways for the assimilation of unordered patterns of behavior which will result in the development of a coherent system. The coherent system will facilitate synergy in networked organizations. The sub-systems/

components will have lesser and lesser contradictions and they can complement each other in the realization of the ultimate purpose of the networked system- to evolve. This coherence and complementarity help them to attain sustainability, stability, and a high degree of efficiency.

4. **A more Spiritual workplace-** The subtlety is the essence of spirituality at work. By regulating the unbecoming appetite of the system, spirituality at the workplace emerges in the form of subtlety. It facilitates the open system architecture allowing the networked organization to interact with its environment beyond its boundary and gain spontaneity, agility, and adaptability. The subtle system will provide the direction to the organizations towards its purpose and transform the system and its components into an intelligent and sensible organizational system. The subtlety in the networked system manifests the self-regulated and self-evolved organization.

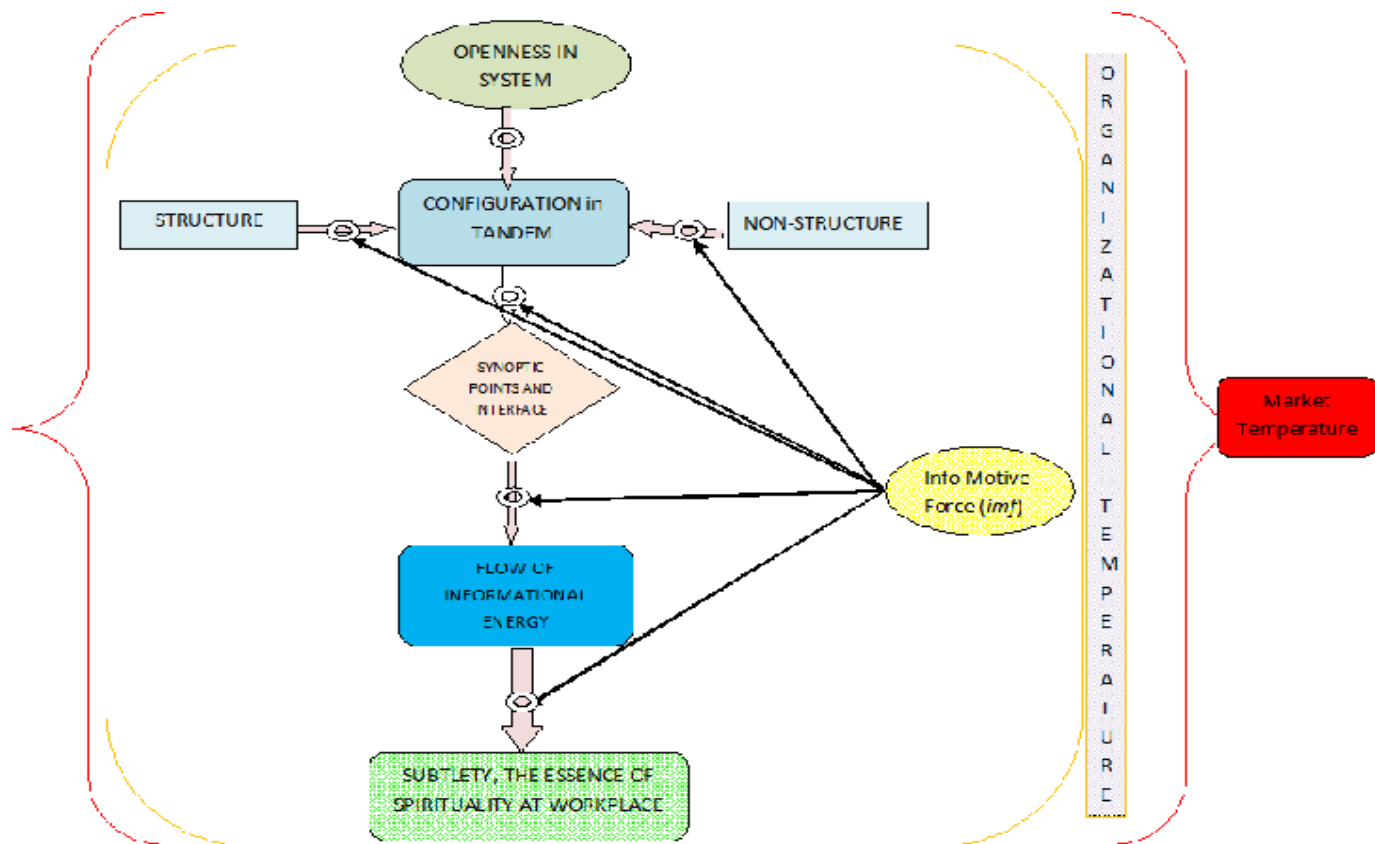


Figure 2- Conceptual Framework of Subtlety in Networked Organization

Conclusion and Future Scope- The progressive networked organizations of this millennium must aim to achieve subtlety. The present conceptual framework helps to understand the modality of *imf* as a regulator and facilitator of informational energy in the networked organization. The collaborative and autonomous functioning of coherent components will result in Spirituality at work in the form of subtle interaction. The subtlety reflects the minimal open-ended interdependence (Tiwari et. al., 2017) The organization will be transformed into a self-evolved intelligent system able to respond to the crisis in an efficient manner. Future scholars may take the quantitative as well as qualitative approach for generalization of the framework. A non-linear approach to understanding the subtlety in the networked organization

could be helpful. Quantification of *imf* can also be a valuable area of research using the present model.

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