

An Attempt to Explore the Spiritual Meditation Philosophy and Studying the Interrelationships amongst Various Challenges towards Adoption of Spiritual Metrics due to Nature of Spirituality

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ABSTRACT

Across all cultures and traditions, people describe spirituality as a dimension of experience that goes beyond the obvious way of perceiving reality as made up of separate physical objects. Buddhism talks about no-self or emptiness, while the Yogic tradition talks about true self or fullness. Abrahamic religions talk about the Creator or the Ground of Being. “Non-religious but spiritual” people might talk about “Awareness,” or nature, or Reality with a capital ‘R’. The truth is that all seem to point to a common unitive or absolute principle that goes beyond words and this common principle is always apprehended and expressed through the filter of the individual’s unique culture and history with language and belief system. Present research work is an attempt to explore the spiritual meditation philosophy and thereafter studying the interrelationships amongst various challenges towards adoption of spiritual metrics due to nature of spirituality. These interrelationships have been study with the help of ISM methodology.

Keywords

Spiritual meditation philosophy ; Christianity ; Spiritual metrics; ISM Methodology

1. INTRODUCTION

Spirituality, literally means the person’s spiritual life or the lived reality of what is perceived to be spiritual. In the words of [1,2], spirituality is described as the socially diverse and highly personalized and interiorized phenomenon. Further, the concept of theology is described by him as the different ways the spirituality is understood and practiced within religious associations through concepts of a relational process between God and people involving devotion and sanctification of the inner self. Theology has been discussed by [2] along with the other aspects of spirituality within a range of religious traditions including catholic Christianity, Islam (literally meaning submission), bhakti yoga and bhakti Marg in Hinduism and Buddhism. He also confess that hellenistically, spirituality is associated with asceticism (physical training) which were related to personal purification, releasing the power of the mind and controlling one’s passions.

1.1 Measurement of Spirituality in Christianity

The questions of spiritual progress and spiritual impact have a deeply rooted legacy in Christian circles in what is known as the area of “discipleship.” Discipleship could cover various

labels as diverse as spiritual growth, spiritual development, spiritual formation, spiritual transformation, faith development, growth in faith, spiritual fitness, spiritual maturity, spiritual vitality, and faith maturity. As far as measurement of spirituality is concerned, a host of sophisticated tools and techniques have been provided by the authors, consultants as well as academics which includes spiritual self-tests and assessments, spiritual disciplines and spiritual mentorship as well as dictatorship to help individuals and churches to assess where they are spiritually and accordingly take appropriate steps to deepen their discipleship.

Why measurement is important ?

Evaluation and assessment can be used to gather information that is then used to plug back into the planning process to “improve the programs” that the organization is running. The information can be used to make activities more effective and efficient, to create new activities and strategies to better accomplish the objectives, or to sharpen or change the objectives themselves if they have proven to be ambiguous or unrealistic. Secondly, a marketing desire to promote the organization’s program can drive the measurement and assessment to gather data to inform any number and type of stakeholders and constituencies of the organization, including financial and material donors, prayer supporters, volunteers, beneficiaries and even the industry as a whole.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

: Inherent Challenges to Spiritual Metrics Due to the Nature of Spirituality [CNS]

An understanding of spiritual metrics has to begin with an understanding of the basic elements of planning and evaluation that take place within an organizational context. An organization gives you the capacity, through a division of labour, to do things you could not do individually or to do them more effectively. So, for example, a development organization is created to make life better for children in a particular community; a mission agency is created to get people out to plant churches; a church is created to provide fellowship, a place to worship, and help believers grow spiritually and equip them to do the works that God has prepared for them to do; and a school is created to give students the best education possible and help them develop the skills they need to be faithful servants and live abundantly.

While organizations may be of different types and as such function with different kinds of constraints, limits, and possibilities, they also face common challenges, such as

defining their purposes and goals; designing (planning) activities to achieve those goals fully, with the highest quality (effectiveness); achieving those goals by making the best use of, by being the best steward of, the resources entrusted to them (efficiency); and learning from experience (evaluating) to improve all of the above. They face, in other words, the challenges of planning and evaluating. Christian development organizations, mission agencies, schools, and churches are all seeking to have some kind of spiritual impact, and are engaged in planning and evaluation to some degree. However, even if the organizations have their planning side of things in relatively good order, the area of spiritual impact presents particularly difficult constraints and challenges because of the nature of spirituality. These challenges and constraints are described in the next section.

Organizations often faces the fundamental challenges of clearly defining goals fully and achieving those goals by making best use of the available resources (efficiency) and highest quality (effectiveness) and learning from experience (evaluating) i.e. the challenges of planning and evaluating. The same is true for Christian development organizations, mission agencies, schools, and churches also. However, even if the organizations have strong plans and are efficient enough to achieve their goals, still the area of spiritual impact presents particularly difficult constraints and challenges because of the nature of spirituality. These challenges have been explored via google search engines and exploring related research works [1-11]. These challenges and constraints are mentioned as follows:

2.1 Range and scope of impact [RSI] : The range and scope of the possible kinds of spiritual impact of these metrics make it difficult for organizations to define and prioritize them.

2.2 Scope and complexity of the variables that cause spiritual impact [SCV]: It is very difficult for organizations to detail a robust theory of change, to detail a robust understanding of what kinds of activities will bring about the spiritual impact desired.

2.3 Difficulty in achieving universal set of activities and objectives [DUSA] : This is important to be impactful and relevant across cultures.

2.4 Practical and theological difficulties [PTD]: The spiritual impact measurement process itself is riddled with practical and theological difficulties, including the fact that spiritual growth is not a linear process.

2.5 Problem of Cultural, Doctrinal and Theological Bias [PCDTB] : Although Bible gives clear and universal guidance on the markers of spiritual maturity, but church, missions, and development history have shown that the interpretation and application of these markers, the prioritization of spiritual objectives, and the conflation of culture and Christian faith traditions with biblical moral mandates has frequently been wicked.

2.6 Problem of Theory of Change [PTC] : Specifying a theory of change is difficult for spiritual arena for a set of reasons. First is the change at the core of people's beliefs about truth, morality and practices based on those beliefs. Secondly, individuals within cultures and communities also are at different level of spirituality vis-a-vis where they are in their relationship with God or with

others.

2.7 Problem of Creating Universal Metrics

[PCUM] : It very difficult to come up with a universal set of metrics for spiritual impact that will be relevant and productive across contexts and cultures. Once again, this is a difficulty that is shared with the metrics of any kind of social change process tailoring it to local circumstances and use it to figure out and report the total impact the organization is having.

2.8 Practical Problems of Measurement

[PPM]: These categories of problems include (i) bias to measure something that is more easily counted, something that is more amenable to a "quantitative" approach, as opposed to what might be harder to measure yet more important and (ii) it can lead to an attempt to measure just about everything and in the process create a huge, unwieldy, time-consuming, and unproductive burden on the organization, its staff, and the people with whom they are working.

2.9 Problem of development and acceptance of metrics by development and mission organizations [PDMO]

When it comes to spiritual metrics, there is a qualitative difference between Christian schools and churches, on the one hand, and development and missions organizations on the other. While schools and churches which are called the "membership organizations", have a very clearly defined set of people, rules, norms and regulations, development and missions organizations which are known as "service" organizations are more prone to undefined rules, regulations etc. They are directed and owned by one set of people, and reach out to and "serve" another much less well defined and constantly changing constituency who pick and choose when, how, and what to be involved in as far as the activities offered by these organizations.

Organizational Capacity, Culture, and Operational Location related challenge

This includes the following sub challenges :

2.10 Unclear and unplanned activities

[UUA] :Organizations may not have clearly defined, planned out, and/or implemented activities geared towards a spiritual impact, nor have wrestled with their theory of change, even in the case of those engaged in conventional planning.

2.11 Unclear purpose [UP]: Organizations tend not to have explored or clearly defined the purpose or purposes for engaging in spiritual metrics, which makes it difficult for them to choose and assess which evaluation tools are the most fruitful and productive for their organization.

3. INTERPRETIVE STRUCTURAL MODELLING METHODOLOGY

Interpretive structural modelling methodology or ISM [13] is a known technique to map the relationships amongst the relevant elements as per decision maker's problems in a hierarchical manner. Starting with the identification of elements, it proceeds with establishing the contextual relationships between elements (by examining them in pairs) and move on towards developing the structural self-interaction (SSIM) matrix using VAXO [13] and then initial

reachability matrix and final reachability matrix and rearranging the elements in topological order using the level partition matrices . A *Mic-Mac* analysis is performed afterwards which categorize the variables as per the driving and dependence power in to autonomous, dependent, driver and linkage category. Finally, a diagram can be obtained.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF ISM MODEL :CASE EXAMPLE

ISM Model is developed in this section to study the inter relationship amongst the various challenges described in section 2.2 above viz. Range and scope of impact [RSI] ; Scope and complexity of variables [SCV] ; Difficulty in achieving universal set of activities[DUSA] ; Practical and theological difficulties [PTD] ; Problem of Cultural, Doctrinal and Theological Bias [PCDTB]; Problem of Theory of Change [PTC]; Problem of Creating Universal Metrics [PCUM]; Practical Problems of Measurement [PPM] ; Challenge to handle the acceptance of metrics by development and missions organizations [PDMO]; Unclear and unplanned activities [UUA]; Unclear purpose [UP].

These metrics are now been studied or the possible interrelationships using ISM methodology in this section.

Explanation : Problem of cultural doctrine and theological biases [PCDTB] impact or influence the range and scope of impact [RSI] these metrics can create . If the concerned organization works with an open mind range then the scope [RSI] will definitely increase else it may have negative impact. Scope and complexity of variable that causes spiritual impact [SCV] is again a very influential metrics . The more complex the variable , the more time it will take to be understood by a normal genre of population who wanted to understand spirituality and hence will take more time to get accepted. Difficulty in achieving universal set of activities and objectives [DUSA] is directly related to cultural , doctrine and theological biases [PCDTB] as well as scope and complexity of variables . If the latter can be resolved , it is also possible to achieve universal set of activities. Practical

and theological difficulties [PTD] arise and increase with scope and complexity of variables (SCV) that causes spiritual impact desired . Problem of theory of change [PTC] is directly related to problem of cultural , doctrinal and theological bias [PCDTB] which in turn create practical and theological difficulties which in turn create difficulty in achieving universal set of activities and objectives . Problem of creating universal metrics [DUSA] as well as the scope and complexity of the variables [SCV] that cause spiritual impact may lead to practical problem of measurement [PPM] . Challenges to handle the difference between schools /churches and development / mission organizations is quite related to impact created. While, schools and churches have their own set of predefined rules and regulations and norms , there is less scope for more refined changes and less affected by problem of theory of change [PTC] . It is the mission organizations who are more influenced by the complexity metrics etc. as they are required to cover a wider arena and wider range of people. If the organizations tend not to have explored or clearly defined the purpose or purposes for engaging in spiritual metrics , it makes it difficult for them to choose and assess appropriate metrics which in turn will create problem in development of universal metrics and hence problem of practical measurement . Also they are more susceptible to the problem of cultural and theological biases.

4.1 Construction of Structural self- interaction Matrix (SSIM)

This matrix gives the pair-wise relationship between two variables i.e. I and j based on VAXO. SSIM has been presented below in Fig 1.

4.2 Construction of Initial Reachability Matrix and final reachability matrix

The SSIM has been converted in to a binary matrix called the initial reachability matrix shown in fig. 2 by substituting V, A, X, O by 1 or 0 as per the case. After incorporating the transitivity, the final reachability matrix is shown below in the Fig 3.

S. No.	Barriers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		RSI	SCV	DUSA	PTD	PCDTB	PTC	PCUM	PPM	PDMO	UUM	UP
1	RSI	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
2	SCV		V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	A	A
3	DUSA			A	A	X	X	V	V	A	A	
4	PTD				X	X	V	V	V	A	A	
5	PCDTB					V	V	V	V	A	A	
6	PTC						X	V	V	A	A	
7	PCUM							V	V	A	A	
8	PPM								V	A	A	
9	PDMO									A	A	
10	UUM										A	
11	UP											A

Fig 1: SSIM matrix for pair wise relationship amongst barriers

S. No.	Barriers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
		RSI	SCV	DUSA	PTD	PCDTB	PTC	PCUM	PPM	PDMO	UUM	UP
1	RSI	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	SCV	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
3	DUSA	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
4	PTD	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
5	PCDTB	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
6	PTC	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
7	PCUM	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
8	PPM	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
9	PDMO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
10	UUM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
11	UP	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Fig 2: Initial reachability matrix

S. No.	Barriers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	D.P
		RSI	SCV	DUSA	PTD	PCDTB	PTC	PCUM	PPM	PDMO	UUM	UP	
1	RSI	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	SCV	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	9
3	DUSA	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
4	PTD	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	8
5	PCDTB	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	8
6	PTC	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	8
7	PCUM	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	6
8	PPM	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
9	PDMO	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
10	UUM	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	10
11	UP	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	11
	De.P	11	3	8	6	7	8	8	9	10	2	1	

Fig 3 : Final reachability matrix

D.P :Driving power ; De.P : dependence power

4.3 Level Partition

From the final reachability matrix, reachability and final antecedent set for each factor are found. The elements for which the reachability and intersection sets are same are the top-level element in the ISM hierarchy. After the identification of top level element, it is separated out from the other elements and the process continues for next level of elements. Reachability set, antecedent set, intersection set along with different level for elements have been shown below in table 1.

Table 1:Iteration I

S. No.	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
1.	1	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11	1	
2.	1,9	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11	9	

3.	1,8,9	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11	8	I
4.	1,3,6,7,8,9	2,3,4,5,6,7,10,11	3,6,7	
5.	1,3,5,6,7,8,9	2,4,5,6,10,11	5,6	
6.	1,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	2,4,5,6,10,11	4,5,6	
7.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	2,10,11	2	
8.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	10,11	10	
9.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11	11	11	

Table 2: Iteration II

S.No .	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
2.	9	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11	9	II
3.	8,9	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11	8	
4.	3,6,7,8,9	2,3,4,5,6,7,10, 11	3,6,7	
5.	3,5,6,7,8,9	2,4,5,6,10,11	5,6	
6.	3,4,5,6,7,8,9	2,4,5,6,10,11	4,5,6	
7.	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9	2,10,11	2	
8.	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10	10,11	10	
9.	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11	11	11	

Table 3: Iteration III

S. No .	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
3.	8	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11	8	III
4.	3,6,7,8	2,3,4,5,6,7,10, 11	3,6,7	
5.	3,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,10,11	5,6	
6.	3,4,5,6,7,8	2,4,5,6,10,11	4,5,6	
7.	2,3,4,5,6,7,8	2,10,11	2	
8.	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10	10,11	10	
9.	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,11	11	11	

Table 4: Iteration IV

S. No .	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
4.	3,6,7	2,3,4,5,6,7,10, 11	3,6,7	IV
5.	3,5,6,7	2,4,5,6,10,11	5,6	
6.	3,4,5,6,7	2,4,5,6,10,11	4,5,6	
7.	2,3,4,5,6,7	2,10,11	2	
8.	2,3,4,5,6,7,10	10,11	10	
9.	2,3,4,5,6,7,10,11	11	11	

Table 5: Iteration V

S. No .	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
5.	5	2,4,5,6,10,11	5,6	V
6.	4,5	2,4,5,6,10,11	4,5,6	
7.	2,4,5	2,10,11	2	
8.	2,4,5,10	10,11	10	
9.	2,4,5,10,11	11	11	

Table 6: Iteration VI

S.No .	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
6.	4	2,4,5,6,10,11	4,5,6	VI
7.	2,4	2,10,11	2	
8.	2,4,10	10,11	10	
9.	2,4,10,11	11	11	

Table 7: Iteration VII

S.No .	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
7.	2	2,10,11	2	VII
8.	2,10	10,11	10	
9.	2,10,11	11	11	

Table 8 Iteration VIII

S.No.	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
8.	10	10,11	10	VIII
9.	10,11	11	11	

Table 9 Iteration IX

S.No.	Reachability set	Antecedent set	Intersection set	Level
9.	11	11	11	IX

4.4 Classification of factors

The critical success factors described earlier are classified in to four clusters viz. autonomous factor, dependent factors, linkage factors and independent / Driving factors are mentioned below.

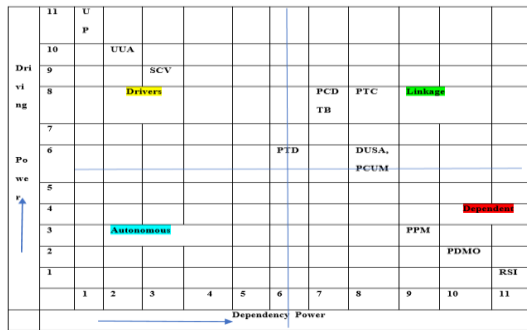


Figure 1 : Driving power and dominance diagram

Fig. 4. Driving Power and Dependence Diagram

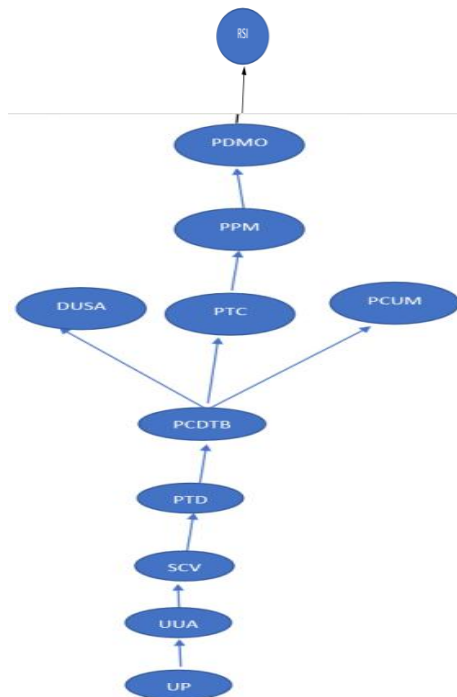


Fig 5 : ISM Diagraph

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