

# **UGSM-MONARCH BUSINESS SCHOOL**

## **Doctoral Research Plan**

### **Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction: A Study of the Ugandan University Setting**

PROGRAM:	D.Phil. in Business Research
SUBMISSION DATE:	June 17, 2013
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Final Draft For Approval Purposes

## INTRODUCTION

Discernible negative consequences in the workplace have been caused by the perception that work is a medium of self-expression and self discovery (Claude and Zamor, 2003). As a consequence, it is often believed that work in today's 24/7 society which requires employees to work for longer hours appears to be doing more harm than good. In Japan the word "karoshi" is used to describe death due to overwork while in the west stress, excessive materialism, lack of joy, layoffs and downsizing seem to typify the workplace. In Uganda strikes by staffs and students in universities are on the increase. The contemporary workforce therefore appears to be de-motivated and disoriented. Indeed, Karakas (2010) argues that today's workplaces are emotionally, spiritually and socially barren.

It can be argued that the conditions described above might result from the management of traditionally run organizations ignoring the spiritual dimension of humanity and work (Claude and Zamor, 2003). While the spirituality in business movement can be traced to the US starting in the late 1980s it has now gained credibility in the management of organizations (Cavanagh, 1999). Definitions of workplace spirituality vary.

Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) have identified five common themes, being: connection, compassion, mindfulness, meaningful work and transcendence. Workplace spirituality seems to be a response to the negative characteristics of the workplace and its promise to yield positive outcomes for organizations (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008) (Kinjerski and Skrypnek, 2006) (Poole 2009).

The concept of workplace spirituality is still a new field of inquiry: it is yet to be clearly defined and there is no generally accepted framework to guide research. (Poole, 2009) (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008) (Kolodinsky et al., 2008). Karakas (2010) reviewed approximately 140 articles on spirituality and found that spirituality is a complex term lending itself to various definitions. Further, Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) have noted that the absence of valid measures has prevented empirical investigation of the impact of spirituality. This would suggest that empirical evidence is therefore required to establish whether work place spirituality is associated with positive outcomes at the organization and individual levels (Gotsis and Kortezi, 2008).

Job satisfaction is by far the most frequently studied variable in organization research because of its direct link to profitability (Wright, 2006). However, a review of extant literature reveals a startling fact. Despite widespread research on job satisfaction the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction remains largely unexamined (Kolodinsky, 2008). The most frequently cited international study on job satisfaction by Lacy and Sheehan (1997) of academics across eight countries did not include workplace spirituality as one of the study variables. Even a similar study by Ssesanga and Garrett (2005) in Uganda exhibits the same limitation of scope. There is therefore an apparent lack of focus on workplace spirituality and job satisfaction within the academic literature and a parallel lack of focus on job satisfaction and spirituality with respect to the academic field. It is therefore argued that further inquiry is needed to deepen the understanding of spirituality at work and its relationship to job satisfaction of academics (Khasawneh, 2011).

While extant literature points to the need to further investigate job satisfaction of academics in higher institutions of learning there are few studies on the relationship of spirituality and organization outcomes (Toker, 2011) ( Pandey et al., 2009) (Khasawneh, 2011). Additionally, in the case of Uganda there appears to be no research of its kind. With this in mind an opportunity to the present research to make a novel contribution to the growing body of knowledge on workplace spirituality and organization outcomes is possible.

Therefore, the focus of the contemplated research is to adress the following:

1. To examine how workplace spirituality is being expressed and experienced by academics in institutions of higher learning;
2. To examine how work place spirituality can influence the expression of job satisfaction by academics;
3. To compare the findings of the present research to the extant academic literature to determine whether or not the characteristics of workplace spirituality are universal and applied in practice;
4. To generate a conceptual model that assists in understanding the relationship between workplace spirituality and job satisfaction with a particular focus on academics in Uganda.

## PROVISIONAL RESEARCH QUESTION

Given the above a provisional research question has been developed as:

“What are the characteristics of a new conceptual model that assists in explaining the relationships between workplace spirituality and the expression of job satisfaction by academic staff of universities in Uganda?”

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

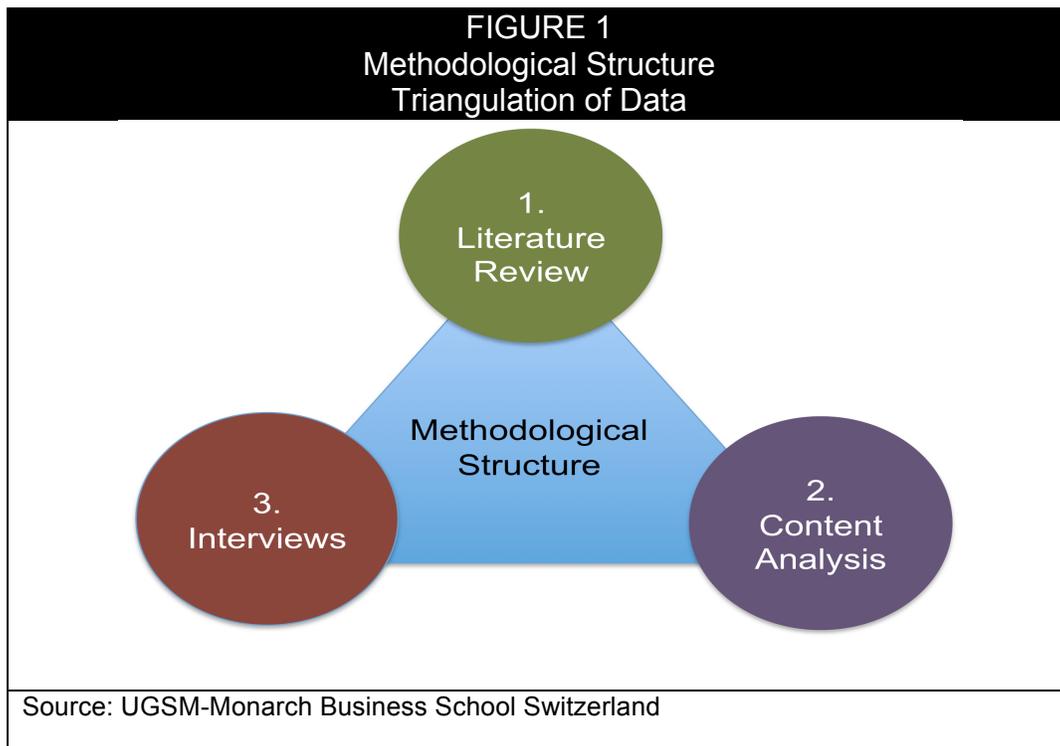


Figure 1 shows that the aim of the contemplated research is to respond to the provisional research question by way of a triangulation of research data, being: 1. literature review of existing seminal academic authors (desk research); 2. content

analysis of existing corporate data (desk research), and; 3. interviews with primary stake holders in industry (field research).

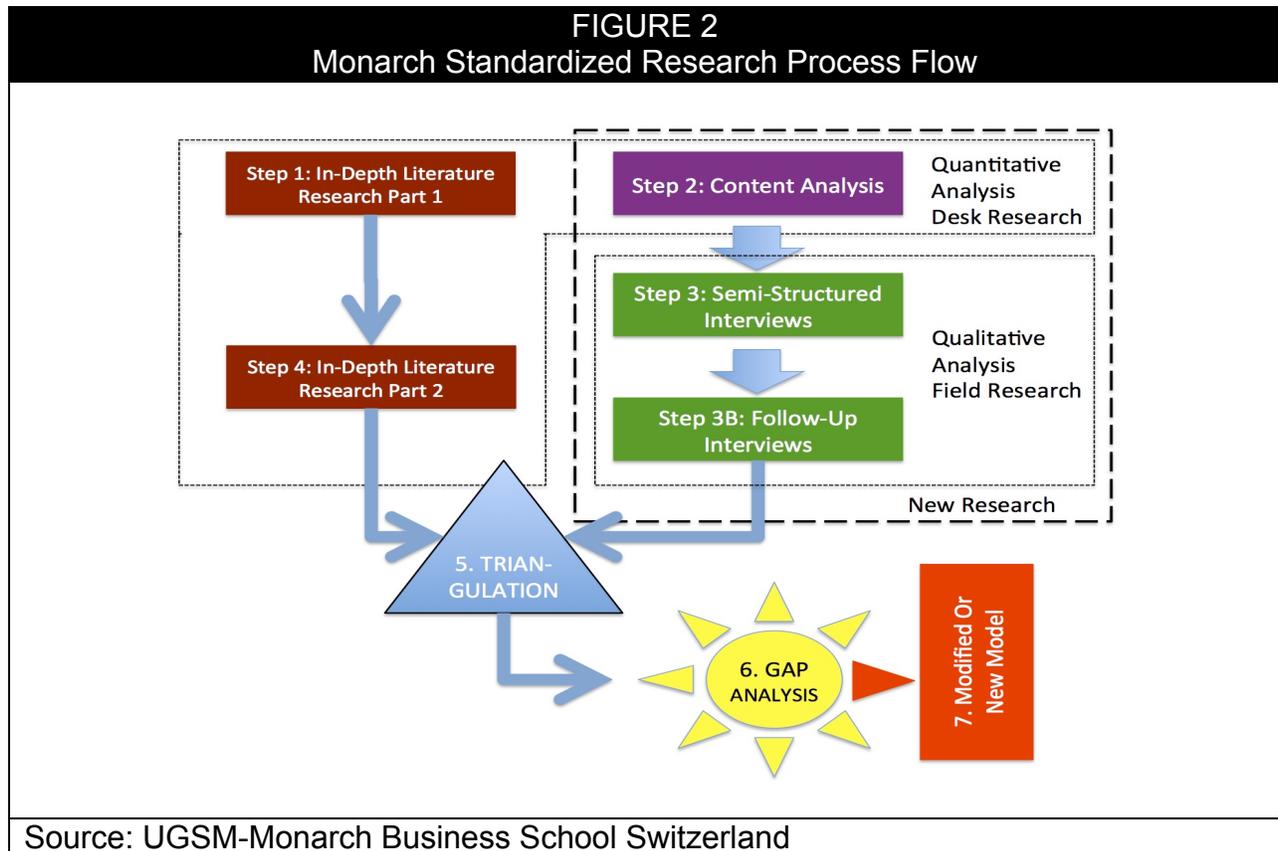


Figure 2 illustrates the steps within the Monarch Standardized Research Process Flow that will be followed within the contemplated research, as:

1. **In-Depth Literature Review-Part 1:** In-depth review of the seminal authors within the study domain will be the first step completed in order to provide a solid academic foundation to the research.
2. **Content Analysis:** An analysis based on data obtained from annual reports, white papers, supporting commercial documents and other commercial data sources will be examined.

**3. Two-Step Semi-Structured Interview Process:**

Step 1. **Preliminary Interviews:** The development of preliminary interview questions will be informed by and synthesized from the review of the literature and content analysis. Stakeholders to be interviewed will be industry participants considered knowledgeable with respect to the research at hand. A minimum sample of thirty (30) unique participants will be interviewed. Interviews will be held in person at a location amenable to the subjects and are expected to be approximately thirty (30) minutes in length. Telephone interviews will be used in the case that physical interviewing is impossible due to resource or time constraints. Interviews will be tape recorded unless objected to by the participant in which case manual notes will be taken.

Step 2. **Follow-Up Interviews:** of a more specific and narrow view informed by the first round of interviews, content analysis and literature review will be concluded with a smaller sub-set of 15 respondents obtained from the first round sample. These interviews will seek to uncover deeply held personal beliefs and understandings on the research subject that will further uncover important aspects in responding to the provisional research question.

**4. Step 4-In-Depth Literature Review-Part 2:** A second more in-depth literature research review will be completed to further refine the scope and consideration of

the existing knowledge within the academic field to add more expertise and specificity to the research analysis.

5. **Step 5 & 6 - Triangulation of the Data & Gap Analysis:** A triangulation of the data will be considered and analyzed in order to determine whether or not the existing academic knowledge is congruent with the practical application of the field on a commercial basis. The result of this analysis should dictate whether or not a “Knowledge Gap” exists between the academic (theoretical) and the practical (applied) domains.
6. **Step 7: Development of New Model:** Building on the Gap Analysis a thorough analysis of the existing frameworks within the academic domain will be made. This analysis will inform whether or not the existing frameworks sufficiently address the requirement for practical application within the industry and whether or not they may be further improved or modified.

## **RESEARCH SCHEDULING & BUDGET**

The contemplated research is expected to conclude over a 36 month period. A breakdown of the time allocation by the different phases of the research is outlined in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3 Provisional Research Timeline													
		Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>PART A</b>	Pre-Literature Review												
	Literature Review Part 1												
	Research Plan												
	Chapter 1												
	Chapter 2 & 3												
	Content Analysis												
		Official Submission of Chapters 1, 2, 3 and Slide Presentation To Obtain Authorization To Continue On To Field Research											
<b>PART B</b>	Interviews Part 1												
	Literature Review Part 2												
	Interviews Part 2												
	Data Analysis												
	Chapter 4, 5, 6												
	Manuscript Perfecting												
	Submission												

Source: UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland

The research will be privately funded. No requests for supplementary grants, Assistantships or scholarships will be made. The total budget of the project is approximately USD \$15,150 . No additional resources or funding will be requested of UGSM-Monarch Business School Switzerland. The budget is presently funded and research may begin immediately upon approval.

TABLE 4 Research Budget in USD Dollars	
Conferences	800
Hotel Accommodation	3,850
Travel	4,000
Books & Articles	1,000
Statistical Software	2,500
Miscellaneous Expenses	3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,150</b>

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