

FIRST SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND THE RISE OF MENTAL WELLBEING AND OCB AMONG CREDIT UNION ACTIVISTS

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the effects of the First Spiritual Exercises (FSE) on mental well-being and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among credit union activists. Contributing to the growing intersection of spirituality and organizational psychology, the study offers empirical evidence on how structured spiritual practices shape workplace behavior. A quasi-experimental design was applied to 53 activists, with the intervention group drawn from Credit Union Kridha Rahardja and the control group from Credit Union Kasih Sejahtera. Pre- and post-test analyses revealed significant improvements in mental well-being and OCB following participation in the FSE. Furthermore, mental well-being was found to have a statistically significant influence on OCB scores. These findings affirm that spiritual exercises may serve not merely as private devotion but as strategic levers for fostering psychological resilience and pro-social behavior in organizations. Managers may consider integrating reflective spiritual practices as part of employee development initiatives to promote healthier, more engaged work cultures.

Keywords: First Spiritual Exercises; Mental Health; Well Being; Organizational Citizenship Behaviors; Credit Union

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, many organizations and companies have been supporting their activists, volunteers, or employees to cultivate spiritual practices such as prayer sessions, meditation, or spiritual retreats. These practices are believed to improve the quality of life of individuals, create a more harmonious work environment, and support the achievement of organizational goals. However, empirical research on the impact of spiritual practices of individuals and organizations are limited. Our research aims to fill gap by examining how the First Spiritual Exercises (FSE), a spiritual retreat program within Christian communities, may influence well being and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) of those who work or volunteer in cooperatives or social enterprises such as Credit Unions (CUs) (Sumarwan, Luke, & Furneaux, 2021). In CUs where volunteers play a vital role in the service and sustainability of the organization (Ward & Mckillop, 2011), the FSE may be an important means in improving well being and OCB.

This study specifically evaluates the impact of the FSE, which is a daily life-based Spiritual Exercises module for about a month (Hansen & Sumarwan, 2021). The module was designed for Christians based on the way Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the Society of Jesus, assisted his companions in cultivating their spiritual lives. The FSE not only assists participants in building a habit of prayer, but also teaches discernment of spirits and Ignatian decision-making. Thus, FSE is a potential tool to improve well being and proactive behavior in the workspace.

Our study builds on previous research by Sumarwan, Tjahjadi, and Wibisono (2023), which showed that participating in FSE can increase positive attitudes toward God, decrease negative attitudes toward God, and improve participants' mental health. The study used Attitudes toward God Scale (ATGS-9) and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) to evaluate 82 FSE participants (intervention group) and 82 non-participants (control group), proving that the FSE explained 13.7% of the variability in the combined changes in attitudes toward God and mental health.

Different from previous studies where FSE participants come from various backgrounds of age, domicile, occupation and service activities, our research focuses on the impact of FSE on Credit Union Kridha Rahardja (CUKR) activists¹, who come from a community with a common vision, mission, and work culture (i.e., improving members' life using financial services and community empowerment). Within this context, our study evaluates the impact of FSE on participants who are related in the work environment and broadens the scope of the FSE's impacts to include OCB as a dependent variable. OCB, which refers to voluntary workplace behaviors that support organizational effectiveness (Organ, 1988), is an important indicator to assess the positive impacts of FSE in cooperative-based organizations such as CUKR.

Our results found that participating in FSE not only improved mental health, but also led to a significant increase in OCB. The FSE activists' group, which initially had lower OCB scores than the control group, showed significant improvement after five weeks of the program. In fact, the final score of the FSE group was higher than the non-FSE group. These findings confirm that spirituality managed through FSE can influence organizational members' proactive, collaborative, and voluntary behaviors, including helping colleagues and supporting organizational progress.

Through this research, we demonstrate that FSE can be one of holistic means for developing human capital in an organization. In cooperative-based organizations such as CUKR, where individual and community empowerment is at the core of organizational sustainability, FSE offers an effective spiritual approach to enhance mental health, OCB and support sustainable organizational growth.

In this article, the literature review section explains in more detail about FSE as a form of spiritual practice in the Catholic community and hypothesizes the influence of FSE on mental health and OCB. After that, our research methodology is presented, including the adoption of a pretest & posttest experimental quasi design with a control group. Next, the research results along with discussion and conclusions are presented.

¹ Here "credit union activists" refers to both employees and volunteers of a credit union.

LITERATURE REVIEW & HYPOTHESIS

First Spiritual Exercises

Every intervention is always conducted with specific goals and objectives (Cook et al., 2002; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The First Spiritual Exercises (FSE) is a series of prayer exercises inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola. The prayers are conducted for 5 weeks in the participant's daily life that last for 30-50 minutes in a day. Each day and week has a different and specific formulation of the grace requested with appropriate prayer materials (Hansen & Sumarwan, 2021; Sumarwan et al., 2023). This grace obtained from God signifies the goal of the intervention and the goal that FSE participants want to achieve, which can have an impact on every aspect of the participant's daily life.

The general guidelines in the Divine Love FSE book formulate the purpose of the FSE as follows: "The FSE is structured to help one ask for and receive the *true peace* that is a gift from God. The first is the gift of *unconditional love*. I have come to realize that the Creator bestows so *many other gifts upon me* as a sign of His love and has lived in such peace that *I need not look elsewhere*" (Hansen & Sumarwan, 2021, p.18).

To experience those gifts, participants need to ask God to bestow. According to the perspective of Ignatian spirituality, all the good things we experience occur because of God's blessings and grace alone and we receive them as a free gift from God. Nevertheless, from the side of FSE participants, they need to pray seriously, because grace also requires effort and cooperation from humans with God. In our research, participating in FSE was considered as the intervention and an independent variable to evaluate and discover how aspects of spirituality may affect other dimensions in the lives of participants (CU activists), including their mental health and OCB.

In previous research (Sumarwan et al., 2023), it was found that FSE improved participants' relationship with God as measured using Attitudes toward God Scale (ATGS-9). The increased relationship with God shows that participants get a sense of security, calmness and peace, and strength in dealing with life's problems. Although the relationship with God can be tense and make people struggle, participants who participated in the FSE tended to have an increase in positive ATSG and a decrease in negative ATSG scores. It is on this basis that this study used FSE as an intervention for the hypothesis formulation.

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being (WEMWB) Scale

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as a state being able to manage reasonable stress in daily life, work productively and fruitfully, and contribute to the local community (WHO, 2004). A positive state of mental health is fundamental to well-being and a prerequisite for individuals and communities to effectively fulfill their roles. Referring to the current academic literature describing well-being psychologically and conceptually, a panel of experts agreed that key concepts of mental well-being include positive affect and psychological functioning (anatomy, competence, self-acceptance, personal growth) and interpersonal relationships (Tennant et al., 2007).

The WEMWB mental health measurement tool developed by Tennant et al. (2007) consists of positive affect (feelings of optimism, cheerfulness, relaxation), good interpersonal relationships and positive self-functioning (energy, clear thinking, self-acceptance, self-development, competence and autonomy). In our study, each research participant answered the WEMWB question via a 5-point Likert Scale (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, and Always) that best described their experience or condition. The WEMWBS focuses on positive aspects and mental health, as this measurement tool promotes mental health to be achieved. The minimum score of the WEMWBS is 14 while the maximum score is 70. A higher WEMWBS score indicates a higher level of mental health.

The grace invoked in the FSE does not explicitly mention grace of good mental health. However, there are quite few statement points in the WEMWBS that align with the grace requested in the FSE, such as "feeling loved", "feeling good about yourself". "Feeling confident", and "feeling close to others". In addition, research by Sumarwan et al. (2023) in the context of

general participants showed that participating in FSE improved participants' mental health. On that basis, the hypothesis of this study is formulated.

H1a: After the FSE, the mental health score of the CU Activist Group that participated in the FSE was higher than the score before the FSE.

H1b: There was no change in mental health scores in the CU Activist Group that did not participate in the FSE (non-FSE CU Activist Group).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) Scale

Organ (1998) identified five behavioral typifications in organizations called Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). According to Organ (1998), OCB is behavior that is voluntary and not part of an employee's formal requirements/role to provide performance beyond the minimum prerequisites given. The five types of citizenship behavior identified by Organ (1998) include Conscientiousness, Sportsmanship, Civic Virtue, Courtesy and Altruism. These five types of behavior are the types of behavior that are believed to encourage transformational change in carrying out tasks and the organization. These types of behaviors are needed in every employee in the organization, including for Credit Union activists. This five behavioral typification were then used as a reference for Podsakoff et al. (1990) to develop a measurement tool for OCB.

Conscientiousness is employee behavior that exceeds the minimum standards of organizational needs. This is done in the area of attendance, obeying rules, and break time. *Sportsmanship* is a behavior related to an employee's willingness to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining. *Civic Virtue* is an individual behavior that shows that he is responsible, participates, is involved, or cares about the life of the company. *Courtesy* is an individual behavior that aims to prevent work-related problems from occurring with others. Meanwhile, *Altruism* is a behavior that has the effect on helping others in tasks or problems relevant to the organization (Organ, 1998; Podsakoff et al., 1990).

OCB measurement in our study uses a measuring instrument consisting of five constructs mentioned earlier (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Each construct consists of several statements that refer to each construct. Respondents were given a questionnaire using a Likert Scale of 1 to 7 ("Strongly Disagree", "Disagree", "Moderately disagree", "neutral", "moderately agree", "Agree". and "Strongly Agree"). The minimum OCB score is 24 and the highest score is 168. The higher OCB scores indicate the higher OCB of a person in the Credit Union organization.

The grace requested in the FSE is not directly related to ideal OCB behavior. However, in general, the FSE is intended to help participants experience God's love and based on that experience, they are expected to be more able to accept themselves and others and be more ready to share that love through service. Thus, this grace is in line with the statement points in OCB, such as "always ready to help other activists", "doing something that is not required, but is important to improve the image of the organization", and "not taking advantage of the kindness of others for my own benefit". On that basis, the following hypothesis was formulated.

H2a : After participating in the FSE, the OCB scores of the CU Activist Group that participated in the FSE were higher than the scores before the FSE.

H2b: There was no change in OCB scores in the CU Activist Group that did not participate (non-FSE CU Activist Group).

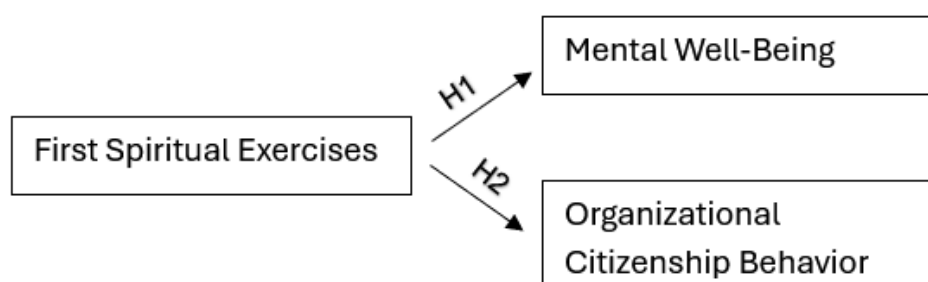


Figure 1. Empirical Research Model

RESEARCH METHOD

This study will utilize a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design (Cook et al., 2002; Maruyanma & Ryan, 2014), to assess the effects of participation in the FSE on mental health and OCB among CU activists. The two main research hypotheses (Hypotheses 1a and 2a) were tested by comparing the condition of FSE participants before and after the program. To strengthen the conclusion that the changes were caused by participation in the FSE and not by other causes, data was also collected from a group of FSE non-participants, who acted as a control group. The FSE participants were activists from CUKR, Central Java dan Yogyakarta, while the nonparticipants were activists from CU Kasih Sejahtera (CUKS), Atambua, Nusa Tenggara Timur. To measure mental health, the WEMWBS was used, while to measure OCB a measuring instrument developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990).

When filling out the registration form, FSE participants from CUKR were asked to fill out the WEMWBS and OCB questionnaires as a form pre-test. At the same time, the researcher also sent a similar questionnaire to CUKS activists who did not participate in the FSE. A similar procedure was carried out to obtain the post-test result. By collecting repeated pre-test and post-test data on the control group, we were able to control for the effects of repeated measurements on the group sample, thereby reducing threats to internal validity of the study.

There were 53 study participants in total, consisting of 27 CUKR activists and 26 CUKS activists. There were 18 women (35%) and 35 men (66%). Their ages range from 28 to 70 years old and they are part of X Generation (26 people; 49.06%), Y/Millennial Generation (24 people; 45.28%), and Z Generation (3 people; 5.66%). They comprise the Management, Committee and Board of Supervisors of CUs in their respective group.

Treatment and Data Analysis

The CU FSE Activist Group prays daily for about 30 to 50 minutes based on prepared materials and reflects on the prayer, and once a week has a group spiritual conversation (Sumarwan et al.2023). To understand the practice of discernment, they also attended two discernment webinars. Meanwhile, the non-FSE group did not do these activities.

To measure the impact of FSE on changes of scores on each statement item related to the mental health and OCB measurement tools, a Paired Samples t Test was conducted separately in each two dependent variables as a whole on all data. To measure the impacts of participating FSE to all those who participated in this study regarding their mental well being and OCB, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted on the combined data of the FSE CU Activist Group and the non-FSE Activist Group (Allen, Bennett, & Heritage, 2014).

RESULT

Tables 1 and 2 display all WEMWBS and OCB statements, the mean, standard deviation of the pretest and posttest scores of the FSE and non-FSE CU groups, the change in scores and the statistical significance of the change. Both WEMWBS and OCB constructs were reliable with Cronbach's Alpha values of more than 0.8. Thus, the data we used is reliable and provides consistent results.

Hypothesis Testing 1a and 1b

Hypothesis 1a predicts that after participating in the FSE, the well-being score of the FSE Group CU Activists is higher than the score before the FSE. Meanwhile, hypothesis 1b predicts no change in mental health scores for non-FSE Group CU Activists.

Table 1. Changes in pretest & posttest Well Being scores in FSE and non-FSE groups

	FSE Group (N: 27)						Non-FSE Group (N: 26)					
	Before FSE		After FSE		Changes		Before FSE		After FSE		Changes	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	Sig.	M	SD	M	SD	M	Sig.
Well Being												
1 I've been feeling optimistic about the future	4.22	0.75	4.26	0.71	0.04	*	4.69	0.62	4.65	0.49	-0.04	n.s.
2 I've been feeling useful	4.04	0.71	4.22	0.64	0.18	*	4.58	0.58	4.54	0.65	-0.04	**
3 I've been feeling relaxed	3.74	0.71	3.93	0.83	0.19	n.s.	4.19	0.69	3.88	0.82	-0.31	**
4 I've been feeling interested in other people	4	0.83	4.07	0.68	0.07	n.s.	4.19	0.69	3.85	0.78	-0.34	*
5 I've had energy to spare	4.15	0.66	4.11	0.75	-0.04	n.s.	4.5	0.71	4.08	0.63	-0.42	*
6 I've been dealing with problems well	3.74	0.66	4.04	0.76	0.3	**	4.34	0.75	3.96	0.6	-0.38	n.s.
7 I've been thinking clearly	3.74	0.76	4.04	0.71	0.3	***	4.42	0.58	4.04	0.82	-0.38	n.s.
8 I've been feeling good about myself	4	0.73	4.26	0.71	0.26	**	4.58	0.64	4.19	0.8	-0.39	n.s.
9 I've been feeling close to other people	3.52	0.8	4	0.68	0.48	*	4	0.69	4	0.63	0	*
10 I've been feeling confident	3.93	0.87	4.04	0.81	0.11	n.s.	4.46	0.95	4.42	0.76	-0.04	n.s.
11 I've been able to make up my own mind about things	4.04	0.7	4.15	0.72	0.11	n.s.	4.35	0.69	4.15	0.78	-0.2	n.s.
12 I've been feeling loved	4	0.73	4.37	0.63	0.37	n.s.	4.38	0.69	4.38	0.64	0	n.s.
13 I've been interested in new things	4.11	0.64	4.22	0.64	0.11	n.s.	4.35	0.63	4.27	0.67	-0.08	n.s.
14 I've been feeling cheerful	4.07	0.68	4.26	0.59	0.19	*	4.42	0.7	4.27	0.78	-0.15	n.s.
Combinded Well Being Score	3.99	0.53	4.14	0.55	0.18	***	4.39	0.39	4.19	0.46	-0.19	n.s.
<i>description</i>												
*** $p \leq 0.001$												
** $p \leq 0.01$												
* $p \leq 0.05$												

The CUKR Activist Group who participated in the FSE had a lower baseline mean mental health (well-being) score ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.53$) compared to the CUKS activist group who did not participate in the FSE ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.38$). The data was inspected using Mixed Model ANOVA to investigate the impact of taking the FSE on the mental health of the CU Activist Group. A statistically significant improvement effect for FSE participant CU activists was found $F(1,51) = 12.99$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .203$. The mean score of the CU group participating in the FSE, increased from a baseline of 3.99 ($SD = 0.53$) to 4.14 ($SD = 0.55$) after participating in the FSE, or an increase in mental health scores of 0.18. Although non-FSE CU activists had a higher baseline state of mental health ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 0.38$), this score decreased after 5 weeks ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.46$). The change was not statistically significant for the non-FSE group, $F(1, 51) = .004$, $p = .947$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$.

The findings confirm hypothesis 1a and 1b, that there was a significant positive impact on the well-being of CU activists who participated in the FSE. Graph 1 shows an increase in well-being for the FSE group, and a decrease in well-being scores for the group that did not participate in the FSE.

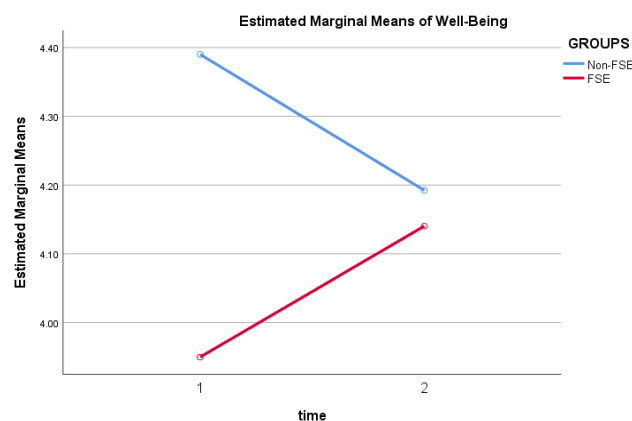


Figure 1. Change in Well-Being Scores

Hypothesis Testing 2a and 2b

Hypothesis 2a predicts that after participating in the FSE, the Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) scores of FSE Group Activist is higher than the scores before the FSE. Meanwhile, hypothesis 1b predicts no change in Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) scores for non-FSE Group CU Activists.

Table 2. Changes in OCB pretest & post test scores in FSE and non-FSE groups.

Organizational Citizenships Behavior Dimensions		FSE Group (N: 27)						Non-FSE Group (N: 26)					
		Before FSE		After FSE		Changes		Before FSE		After FSE		Changes	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	Sig.	M	SD	M	SD	M	Sig.
Conscientiousness													
1	Attendance at work is above norm.	5.52	0.94	5.6	1.12	0.08	<i>n.s.</i>	5.65	1.09	6	0.85	0.35	<i>n.s.</i>
2	Does not take extra breaks.	5.07	1.14	5.26	1.26	0.19	<i>n.s.</i>	5.31	1.41	5.58	1.17	0.27	<i>n.s.</i>
3	Obeys company rules and regulations even when no one is watching	5.7	1.46	5.85	1.41	0.15	<i>n.s.</i>	6.15	1.22	6.39	0.75	0.24	<i>n.s.</i>
4	Is one of my most conscientious employees.	4.52	1.05	4.67	0.96	0.15	<i>n.s.</i>	5.69	1.01	5.46	0.99	-0.23	<i>n.s.</i>
5	Believes in giving an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.	5.81	1.04	6.04	1.29	0.23	<i>n.s.</i>	6.38	1.02	6.15	1.08	-0.23	<i>n.s.</i>
Combined Conscientiousness Scores		5.32	1.13	5.48	1.21	0.16	<i>n.s.</i>	5.84	1.15	5.92	0.97	0.08	<i>n.s.</i>
Sportsmanship													
1	Consumes a lot of time complaining about trivial matters. (R)	4.93	1.52	4.93	1.64	0	<i>n.s.</i>	5.19	1.52	4.73	1.59	-0.46	<i>n.s.</i>
2	always focuses on waht's wrong, rather than the positive side. (R)	5.41	1.42	5.41	1.62	0	<i>n.s.</i>	5.54	1.17	5.19	1.47	-0.35	<i>n.s.</i>
3	Tends to make "mountauns of molehills. (R)	6.19	0.92	5.85	1.09	-0.34	<i>n.s.</i>	6	1.17	5.62	1.44	-0.38	<i>n.s.</i>
4	Always finds fault with what the organization is doing. (R)	4.26	0.86	4.44	1.19	0.18	<i>n.s.</i>	4.8	1.47	4.46	1.7	-0.34	<i>n.s.</i>
5	Is the classic "squeaky wheel" that always needs greasing. (R)	4.48	1.59	4.56	1.53	0.08	<i>n.s.</i>	4.89	1.61	4.42	1.86	-0.47	<i>n.s.</i>
Combined Sportsmanship Scores		5.05	1.26	5.04	1.41	-0.02	<i>n.s.</i>	5.28	1.39	4.88	1.61	-0.40	<i>n.s.</i>
Civic Virtue													
1	Attends meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important.	5.19	1.36	5.3	1.07	0.11	<i>n.s.</i>	6.08	0.8	5.65	1.13	-0.43	<i>n.s.</i>
2	Attends functions that are not required, but help the company image.	5.15	1.32	5.71	1.1	0.56	*	5.88	1.21	5.7	1.1	-0.18	<i>n.s.</i>
3	Keeps abreast of changes in the organizations.	5.7	0.81	6.07	0.78	0.37	*	6.27	0.87	6.19	0.8	-0.08	<i>n.s.</i>
4	Reads and keeps up with organization announcements, memos, and so on.	5.81	0.88	5.96	0.65	0.15	<i>n.s.</i>	6.12	0.82	6.04	0.82	-0.08	<i>n.s.</i>
Combined Civic Virtue Scores		5.46	0.85	5.76	0.73	0.30	*	6.09	0.76	5.88	0.79	-0.19	<i>n.s.</i>
Courtesy													
1	Takes steps to try to prevent problems with other workers.	5.81	1.24	6.41	0.75	0.6	*	6.38	0.85	6.27	0.87	-0.11	<i>n.s.</i>
2	Is mindful of how his/her behaviors affects other people's jobs.	5.81	0.88	5.93	0.92	0.12	<i>n.s.</i>	5.65	1.55	5.5	1.45	-0.15	<i>n.s.</i>
3	Does not abuse the rights of others.	5.85	1.51	6.26	1.23	0.41	<i>n.s.</i>	5.88	1.61	5.85	1.57	-0.03	<i>n.s.</i>
4	Tries to avoid creating problems for coworkers.	6.37	0.74	6.33	0.83	-0.04	<i>n.s.</i>	6.38	0.69	6.08	1.16	-0.3	<i>n.s.</i>
5	Considers the impact of his/her actions on coworkers.	5.74	0.86	6	0.88	0.26	<i>n.s.</i>	5.81	1.2	5.85	1.01	0.04	<i>n.s.</i>
Combined Courtesy Scores		5.92	0.66	6.19	0.73	0.27	*	6.02	0.66	5.91	0.95	-0.11	<i>n.s.</i>
Altruism													
1	Helps others who have been absent.	5.7	0.72	5.89	0.89	0.19	<i>n.s.</i>	5.81	0.98	5.73	0.87	-0.08	<i>n.s.</i>
2	Helps others who have heavy work loads.	5.29	0.95	5.81	0.88	0.52	*	5.46	1.03	5.42	0.99	-0.04	<i>n.s.</i>
3	Helps orient new people even though it is not required.	5.26	0.98	5.59	0.89	0.33	<i>n.s.</i>	5.81	0.89	5.85	0.92	0.04	<i>n.s.</i>
4	Willingly helps others who have work related problems.	5.67	0.78	5.93	0.83	0.26	<i>n.s.</i>	5.77	0.95	5.5	1.33	-0.27	<i>n.s.</i>
5	Is always ready to lend a helping hand to those around him/her.	5.85	0.95	6	0.83	0.15	<i>n.s.</i>	5.96	0.92	6	0.89	0.04	<i>n.s.</i>
Combined Altruism Scores		5.56	0.73	5.84	0.71	0.28	*	5.76	0.84	5.7	0.8	-0.06	<i>n.s.</i>
Organizational Citizenships Behavior Scores		5.46	0.53	5.66	0.6	0.2	***	5.79	0.51	5.66	0.58	-0.13	<i>n.s.</i>
description													
***p < 0.001													
**p < 0.01													
*p < 0.05													

Mixed Model ANOVA was conducted to investigate the impact of following the FSE in the OCB changes of the CU Activist group. A non-significant change for non-FSE activists was found $F(1,51) = 0.34$, $p = .056$, partial $\eta^2 = .007$. An examination of the results for CUKR activists following the FSE found a significant increase $F(1,51) = 12.46$, $p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .025$. An examination of the mean scores showed that, although non-FSE CU activists had higher initial states of OCB ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 0.51$), these scores subsequently decreased after 5 weeks ($M = 5.66$, $SD = 0.58$). In contrast, for the group of CU activists participating in the FSE, despite having a lower baseline of 5.46 ($SD = 0.53$), this score then experienced a significant increase after attending the FSE for 5 weeks, to 5.66 ($SD = 0.60$), or an increase of 0.2.

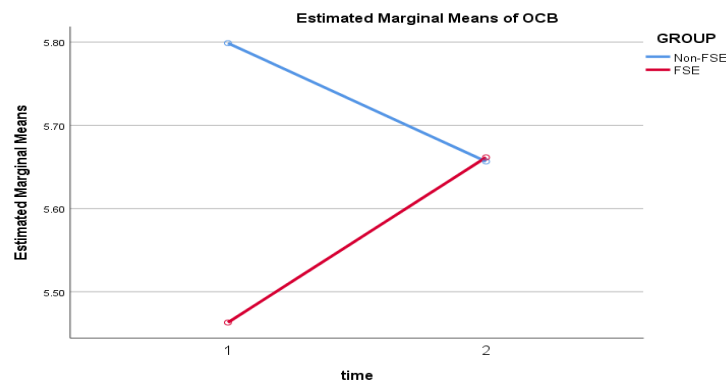


Figure 2. Changes in OCB Score

The statistical finding confirms hypothesis 2a and 2b, that there is a significant positive increase in the OCB of CU activists who participated in the FSE. Graph 2 shows an increase in OCB scores for the FSE group, and a decrease in scores for the group that did not participate in the FSE.

Control Variables and the Effect of Mental Health in OCB

In addition, our study also tested whether gender and age generation (X Generation, Y/Millennials Generation, and Z Generation), and FSE participation can statistically predict changes in a person's mental health and OCB. We first tested the dependent variable of change in mental health score. Using a two-step multiple linear regression (Allen et al. 2014), we first included gender and age generation as control variables. In the second step, we added FSE participation as the next predictor variable. The results found in the first step regression $R^2 = .037$, $F(4,48) = .455$, $p = .768$. Meanwhile, for the second step it was found that R^2 change = .223, $F(5,47) = 3.302$, $p = .012$. Based on the results of this test, gender and age generation cannot predict changes in mental health, they do not significantly affect changes in a person's mental health condition, because they can only explain 3.7% of the variability in changes in mental health scores. Whereas, when they participated in the FSE, it appears that the FSE can affect 26% of the variability in changes in a person's mental score, the remaining 74% is explained by other factors.

Our second test was conducted on the OCB final score variable. We wanted to see if the FSE and mental health predictor variables could influence the OCB final scores. The first steep analysis (gender and age generation) of this regression found $R^2 = .106$, $F(4,48) = 1.429$, $p = .239$. The second step (gender and age generation, FSE) found R^2 change = .107, $F(5,47) = 1.121$, $p = .362$. As for the third model (gender and age generation, FSE, and mental health) the analysis results found R^2 change = .537, $F(6,46) = 8.896$, $p = .000$. Based on the results of this regression analysis, it was found that a person's mental health condition can influence 43.1% of the variability in a person's OCB final scores. Together with other variables, mental health conditions influenced 53.7% of the variability in one's OCB final score while the remaining 46.3% was explained by other factors. FSE participation cannot predict OCB end state, as it can only explain 10.7% of the variability in OCB end score.

Table 3. Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results

Predictor	Dependent Variable - Mental Health Changes β	Dependent Variable - OCB's Final Scores β	Dependent Variable - OCB Changes β
Step 1 - Control Variable			
(Constant)	-.071	5.630	.070
Gender	.095	.053	-.034
X Gen.	.107	.139	.010
Y Gen.	.023	-.069	-.001
Z Gen.	-.102	-.230	-.345
R^2	.037	.106	.117
Step 2 - Predictor Variable 1			
(Constant)	-.494	5.647	-.316
Gender	.118	.052	-.011
X Gen.	.295	.133	.203
Y Gen.	.391	-.078	.301
Z Gen.	-.027	-.232	-.267
FSE	3.767***	-.015n.s	.501***
R^2 Change	.223***	.000n.s	.233***
R^2	.260***	.107n.s	.350***
Step 3 - Predictor Variable 2			
(Constant)		2.482	-1.266
Gender		.091	.007
X Gen.		-.011	.137
Y Gen.		-.131	.277
Z Gen.		-.283	-.290
FSE		.039n.s	.526***
Mental Health		.119***	.301**
R^2 Change		.431***	.088**
R^2		.537***	.438**

description

*** $p \leq 0.001$; ** $p \leq 0.01$; * $p \leq 0.05$

The last regression test on the dependent variable is the change in scores, or the difference in increasing or decreasing OCB scores. The first step regression results with the control variables gender and age generation were found to be unable to predict a person's OCB condition $R^2 = .117$, $F(4,48) = 1.595$, $p = .191$. The second step with the predictor variable of FSE participation in the analysis found R^2 change = .233, $F(5,47) = 5.065$, $p = .001$. Thus, FSE participation can explain 35% of the change in OCB scores. The third step added the predictor variable of mental health, it was found that R^2 change = .088, $F(6,46) = 5.984$, $p = .000$ can significantly predict an increase in OCB. Based on the results of this data analysis, mental health together with participating in FSE and other control variables can explain 43.8% of the increase in OCB, while the remaining 56.2% is explained by other factors.

DISCUSSION

The initial state of mental health of the FSE CU Activist Group was 'worse' compared to the non-FSE CU Activists Group. The results of the intervention on the CU Activist Group who participated in FSE proved that FSE as an independent variable and a means of self-improvement spirituality program proved the hypothesis that activists who participated in FSE for 5 weeks showed an increase in their mental health score. Some of their states such as "I can think clearly", "I manage various problems well", and "I feel comfortable with myself" significantly increased after their participation in FSE. The increase in these points also shows specifically the aspects of personal improvement (including self-acceptance) in mental health that increases positively after participating in FSE. These findings support previous research by Sumarwan et al. (2023) that participating and processing in FSE can positively affect the mental health of participants. This also supports the statement that FSE has an impact on anyone who follows it, not limited to age, occupation, or certain groups.

The change in OCB scores of the FSE CU group was statistically significant with $p = .001$. FSE activities carried out in everyday life, without disrupting the routine as CU activists, appear to have an impact on the willingness of activists to volunteer to do organizational work that is outside their main duties. This is shown in their OCB post test results which increased significantly, compared to before participating in the FSE. Compared with the non-FSE CU group, the scores change occurred negatively, or decreased. This shows that, without self-improvement intervention in the form of FSE, a person's OCB score may decrease from day to day.

Civic Virtue, Courtesy and Altruism are the dimensions that experience the largest changes, respectively experiencing score changes. The biggest changes in these three dimensions are interesting and prove that FSE participation can increase a person's OCB. *Civic Virtue* points that state things about voluntary behavior of organizational members to care, be actively involved, and feel responsible for the progress of the organization that experienced the largest changes in the OCB dimension (Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Borman et al., 2001; Halal, 2001; Wang et al., 2023). This is also in line with how grace requested during the FSE process is obtained by CU participants and they can bring it in service as CU activists. The grace to realize self-love and love for others also brings changes to the behavior of CU FSE activists in interacting and collaborating with fellow activism in the organization. This is shown by the large and significant increase in the *courtesy* dimension. The behavior of realizing that all of the actions will affect other people in the organization, trying to maintain a good climate of cooperation and not taking advantage of the good deeds of others to benefit ourselves is the fruit of CU FSE activists who get the grace of love for themselves and others when participating in FSE. Increased sensitivity, awareness and volunteering to help others (*Altruism*) are also distinctive parts of participants have received so far, through anyone and anything (Seguino, 2011). Through this grace, participants are also invited to do everything as a manifestation of the love they have received so far (Elias & Farag, 2010; Tremellen & Everingham, 2016; Van Buren et al., 2010), so it becomes consistent that the *Altruism* dimension also gets a big increase, because this behavior is also based on the manifestation of gratitude for love to fellow CU activists.

In contrast to the 3 dimensions of OCB mentioned above which experienced major changes, the dimensions of *Consciousness* and *Sportsmanship* did not experience a significant increase after CU activists participated in the FSE. The grace of following the FSE felt by participants was not enough to increase the behavioral motivation of CU activists to give

themselves more in terms of quality and quantity of work than the minimum standards that have been given. It also did not make activists more tolerant of certain conditions that were deemed less than ideal in the organization. Thus, there were no significant changes in the scores of consciousness and sportsmanship. Based on these findings we may not conclude that the grace of the FSE does not improve *Consciousness* and *Sportsmanship* of CU FSE activists since there may be other possible factors outside the spiritual aspects that may affect the final score of the two dimensions of OCB. Although participating in FSE cannot improve the aspects of consciousness and sportsmanship, overall, according to statistics, following the FSE can increase a person's total OCB score.

The results of the data analyses above have answered the research question about whether the spirituality dimension can intervene and influence the condition of a person's OCB in the organization. Previous research related to OCB has evaluated the impact of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and work life balance on OCB of employees or organizational members (Hu et al., 2010; Sardžoska & Tang, 2012). Fitriani and Wulandari (2021) found that organizational commitment affects OCB, when employees had high commitment and dedication to advancing the organization where they work, there was OCB. OCB also increases when organizational executives support all the needs of the organization and individuals in it to advance the organization. Furthermore, Fitriani and Wulandari (2021) also found that employees who were satisfied with their jobs tend to have high OCB, because employees who were happy and optimal at their jobs tend to voluntarily help other colleagues' work, talk positively about the organization and provide work results that exceed the minimum requirements. Similarly, Soelton (2023) explained how the work-life balance conditions experienced by organizational members have an impact on influencing a person's OCB.

In conjunction with these two studies and the previous finding that participating in the FSE improves participants' mental health (Sumarwan et al., 2025), one of which occurs in work-life balance, our research shows that participating in the FSE can improve OCB as well. Through this research, we found that aspects of one's spirituality can influence OCB. The results of our research prove the initial hypothesis that following the FSE as a means of cultivating oneself spiritually, has a positive effect on OCB in organizational members. The state or condition of the spirituality of organizational members who are organized and good in their daily lives, can shape the voluntary behavior of CU members or activists to care more about colleagues, the progress of the organization to provide work results exceeding the minimum standards given by CU. The results of the research from the FSE CU Activist Group which had an initial condition of OCB "worse" than the non-FSE CU Activist Group, after 5 weeks of engaging spiritual practice of FSE, showed a very significant positive improvement, even having a higher OCB final score compared to the final score of the non-FSE CU group.

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER STUDY

This study concludes that participation in the First Spiritual Exercises (FSE) significantly improves both mental well-being and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) among Credit Union activists. Mental well-being not only serves as a personal benefit of spiritual practice but also emerges as a key driver of voluntary, prosocial behavior in organizational settings. The findings underscore that spirituality, when practiced intentionally, can shape work behavior both directly and indirectly through improved psychological states. However, the study is limited by its sample size and focus on a single religious framework within two credit unions, which may constrain the generalizability of its conclusions. Future research should explore other dependent variables influenced by spiritual practice, as well as compare similar interventions across diverse religious and cultural contexts—Islamic dzikir, Buddhist meditation, Hindu yoga, or Confucian moral cultivation. For practitioners, organizations—particularly member-based and service-driven ones—should consider structured spiritual practices as part of employee or volunteer development strategies to strengthen psychological resilience and collaborative culture.

ETHICAL DISCLOSURE

All participants provided written informed consent prior to participation. They were informed about the study's purpose, their voluntary participation, the right to withdraw at any time, and they confidentiality of their responses.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare no conflict of interest and no funding received from any organizations or institutions.

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