

## SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: EXPLORING ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

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### Abstract

This study conducted a systematic literature review on spiritual leadership in an organizational context. From 539 articles identified through the Scopus database, 21 articles were selected based on the criteria of year of publication, relevance to business management and accounting, and the keyword "spiritual leadership." Results show that antecedents of spiritual leadership include core values such as shared vision and altruistic love. In contrast, consequences include improved performance, employee engagement, innovation, as well as reduced workplace exclusion. Spiritual leadership also increased organizational commitment and citizenship behaviour (OCB) through the mediation of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. This study concludes that spiritual leadership plays an important role in creating an inclusive and supportive work environment, as well as improving employee well-being and innovation. A recommendation for future research is to explore the application of spiritual leadership in various industry contexts.

**Keywords:** Spiritual leadership, SLR, organizational performance, commitment, OCB.

## **Introduction**

Leadership is influencing others to carry out activities to achieve common goals (Crosby & Bryson, 2018; Rudolph et al., 2018). Various leadership literature acknowledges that leadership is a critical predictor in determining the fate of an organization through decision-making and strategy and influencing the functioning of organizational members (Hughes et al., 2018; Yahaya & Ebrahim, 2016). Leadership can also influence the efforts to achieve organizational goals, shape employee motivation, and impact initiatives to improve team dynamics and culture (Safwani & Suryani, 2020). Academics continue to explore various theories to explain leaders' role in complex and dynamic systems (Dinh et al., 2014). The relatively rapid development of knowledge has given rise to different types of leadership. Every organization should understand that leadership dynamics involve different levels, analysis, and time spans (Yammarino & Dansereau, 2011). Therefore, organizational practitioners must be careful when adopting the type of leadership to implement (Bush, 2018; Dinh et al., 2014).

Based on emerging leadership theories, one of the approaches used in classifying types of leadership is leadership based on ethical and moral values (Dinh et al., 2014). This study identified four types of ethical or moral leadership: authentic leadership theory, ethical leadership theory, spiritual leadership theory, and servant leadership theory. These four leadership theories focus on positive and humanistic behaviors (Dinh et al., 2014). As such, these leadership theories are expected to address the shortcomings of other leadership theories. While there are various leadership theories, this review explicitly addresses one theory, namely the spiritual leadership theory. Today, one of the most prominent organizational challenges leaders face is the need to continuously develop new business models while paying attention to the company's economic performance. Therefore, Spiritual leadership is considered appropriate for aligning ethical leadership, employee well-being, organizational social responsibility, and financial performance (Fry et al., 2005; Fry & Cohen, 2009). Spiritual leadership theory is a causal theory developed within the intrinsic motivation model. It collaborates vision, instills hope, and practices altruistic love (Fry, 2013). Conceptually, this theory is slightly different from other theories. Explicitly, this theory motivates leaders to include components of spiritual values in inclusive behavior (Gotsis & Grimani, 2017). Through this kind of leadership, leaders can tap into the basic needs of leaders and followers to be more organized, committed, and productive (Fry et al., 2005, 2017). As such, spiritual leadership can create integrity, humanism, ethics, and respect in organizations (Lee et al., 2014). In this study, the spiritual leadership theory explains the relationship between the variables of spiritual leadership, organizational commitment, and spirituality in the workplace.

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Spiritual leadership is defined as a construct that "consists of the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to intrinsically motivate oneself and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through vocation and membership." (Fry, 2003) Meaningful work that fulfills life's purpose instills a sense of vocation. 'Membership' is when one is understood and valued, providing a sense of belonging to the organization. The combination of 'calling' and 'membership' allows one to survive in the organization spiritually and enhances one's spiritual well-being (Fry, 2003).

Presented by Fry (2003), spiritual leadership is a combination of attitudes, behaviors, and values that aim to meet the spiritual needs of themselves and others based on calling and membership through inner motivation. Spiritual leadership includes calling/vision, hope/faith, and selfless love. Leaders' governance is based on love, and their motivating behavior towards employees is based on self-value rather than rewards or safety (Dent et al., 2005).

On the one hand, spiritual leaders motivate employees based on intrinsic self-significance and self-value by caring for and valuing them (Fry et al., 2005). In this case, subordinates gain more trust from their leaders and subsequently show more enthusiasm and initiative, thus effectively increasing their innovative behavior. On the other hand, spiritual leadership can significantly enhance employees' work motivation to innovate by clearly describing the organization's future development path and goals for employees and creating future prospects (Fry, 2003). Furthermore, compared to other leadership styles (e.g. ethical leadership or servant leadership), spiritual leadership contributes to employees' innovative behavior mainly because it focuses on the spiritual needs of subordinates (Fry, 2003), whereby subordinates can be intrinsically motivated and, therefore, innovate positively.

Spiritual leadership theory suggests that leaders' values, attitudes, and behaviors create a spiritual environment that helps followers thrive (Fry, 2003; Reave, 2005). The leader's altruistic love and compelling spiritual vision are critical dimensions of spiritual leadership that enhance spiritual well-being in the organization (Ferguson & Milliman, 2008). Selfless love is the leader's care and concern for others, emphasizing their growth and development. Therefore, the leader creates a warm and caring environment, increasing followers' intrinsic motivation to expend effort. An empirical study found that altruistic love demonstrated by spiritual leadership positively influences followers' faith in organizational leadership (Fry et al., 2005). Followers believe that leaders have their best interests at heart and are intrinsically motivated to expend effort.

Vision in the spiritual leadership model provides intrinsic meaning and purpose to life. (Chen & Yang, 2012) and is spiritually grounded (Fairholm, 1996). It gives individuals working for the organization a sense of purpose beyond just making money (Ferguson & Milliman, 2008). What

keeps the vision alive is the hope instilled by spiritual leaders. Leaders believe that a spiritually grounded vision is achievable and can inspire employees to have confidence (Chen & Yang, 2012). Scholars disagree about the level of analysis of spiritual leadership theories (Phipps, 2012), with some claiming it to be an individual-level phenomenon and others an organizational-level one. The scale items in Fry et al. (2005) reflect the organizational value system created by leaders' attitudes, values, and behaviors (e.g., 'my organization really cares about its people'). The individual behavior of leaders and how it creates a culture of spirituality needs to be understood (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Empirical work on spiritual leadership is sparse, with most focusing on validating Fry's theoretical framework (2003). As suggested by Fry (2003), spiritual leadership theory is a causal theoretical framework in which leaders' actions, values, attitudes, and behaviors create a core value system within the organization. The core values of selfless love and spiritually grounded vision generate a sense of 'calling' and 'membership'. This 'calling' and 'membership' influence individuals' commitment to the organization and productivity. This model is firmly embedded in intrinsic motivation-based theories.

Amidst the growing number of studies on *spiritual leadership*, a literature review that explicitly examines the construct's antecedents and consequences has yet to be found. Therefore, this *systematic literature review* aims to identify and examine the antecedents and consequences of *spiritual leadership* in various previous literature.

## **Methods**

This paper follows the SLR protocol proposed by Tranfield et al. (2003). A systematic review is essential in academic work (Lunde et al., 2019). According to Tranfield et al. (2003), reviews in management are often conducted to enable researchers to map and assess existing intellectual territory and to determine research questions suitable for further development of current knowledge. They argue that literature reviews in management emphasize single descriptive accounts of contributors, are often selected for inclusion by researchers' implicit biases, and are condemned for lacking critical appraisal. The systematic review methodology needs to rectify this weakness in the literature review methodology. A systematic review synthesizes research in an organized, transparent, reproducible literature review (Walker, 2010). It is considered appropriate in management because it "helps develop a reliable knowledge base by pooling knowledge from multiple studies" (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

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SLR differs from traditional reviews in that the process is openly reported in the same way as empirical research (Pittaway & Cope, 2007). According to Tranfield et al. (2003), SLR includes three main stages:

Phase I - planning the review (including definition of the review objectives and research questions).

Phase II - conducting the review (a rigorous method for conducting the review based on the identification of relevant literature using explicit and reproducible criteria for inclusion and exclusion, supported by an assessment of the quality of the studies reviewed and the strength of their findings).

Phase III - reporting and dissemination (including reports, recommendations, and getting evidence into practice).

The aims and objectives of the review (Phase I) have been set out in the introduction. The remainder of this method section focuses on the approach used to identify and select the most relevant literature (Stage II). Then, the next section of the paper (Stage III) presents the analysis based on the relevant data extracted from the selected articles.

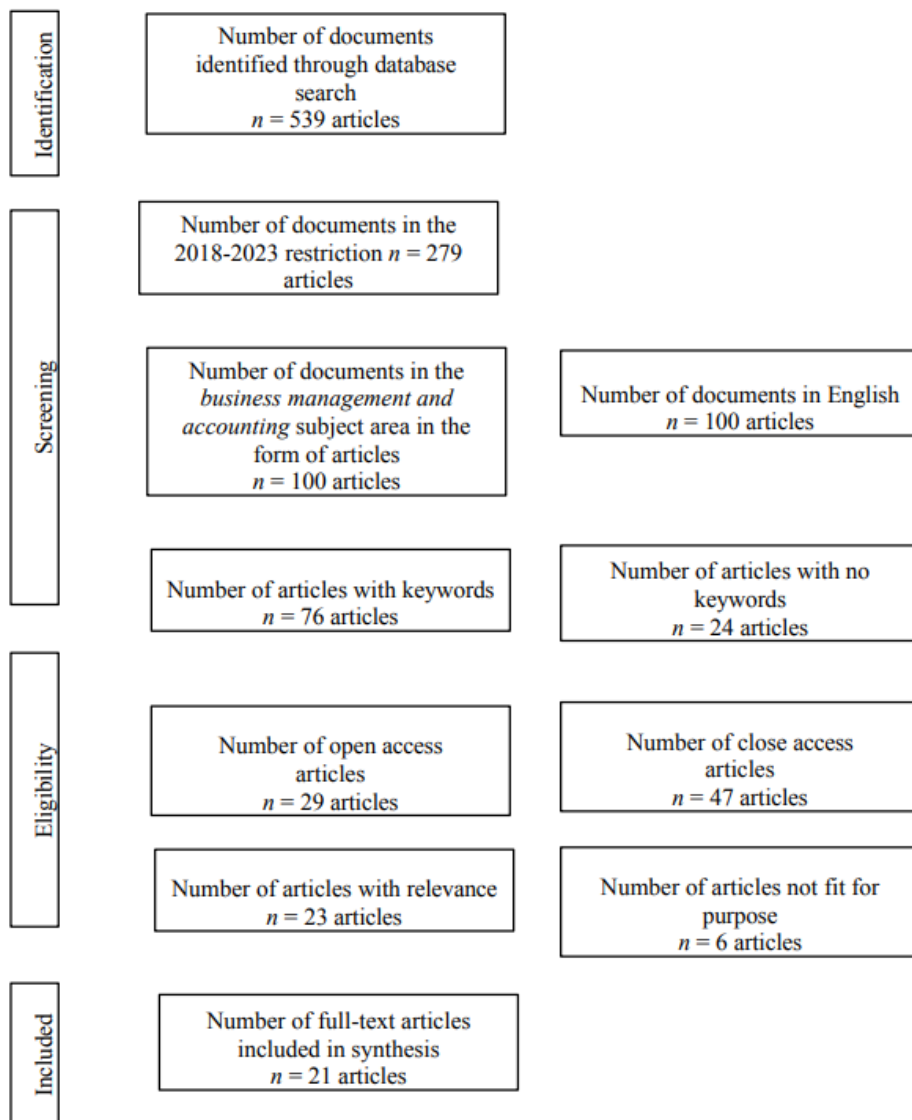
## **Literature Review**

Researchers start by identifying a set of keywords and search terms based on the purpose of the review, other journal articles, and previous experience. Then, these keywords are built into search strings - an interactive process that is prone to rearrangement (Pittaway et al., 2004). To search for studies, we used the keyword "spiritual leadership" to capture all studies using the label spiritual leadership specifically, which is the most widely used term in the literature.

We followed David and Han's (2004) recommendation to use only journal articles published by scientific sources to select information sources. The next decision concerned which database to use in the search process. We decided to use the Scopus database because it has a broader data coverage than the ISI database, which has stricter methodological criteria for database coverage (Díaz-García et al., 2015).

After identifying what to look for and where to look, a series of filters were developed to help select articles (David & Han, 2004). The systematic literature analysis process went through several structured stages. At the identification stage, 539 articles were found by searching relevant databases. After restricting the range of publication years (2018-2023), the number of articles screened was reduced to 279. At the screening stage, the articles were further filtered based on the appropriate subject area, resulting in 100 articles that focused on business management and accounting and were written in English.

Next, the articles were checked against the keyword "spiritual leadership", and 76 relevant articles were found. At the eligibility stage, accessibility screening was conducted, where 29 articles were open access and 47 were closed access. From the relevance evaluation, 23 articles were selected, while six were considered irrelevant. In the final stage, 21 full-text articles made it into the synthesis for further analysis. The graph with the PRISMA version below provides an overview of the results after each filter is performed.



Source: managed by researchers

Figure 1. Prisma

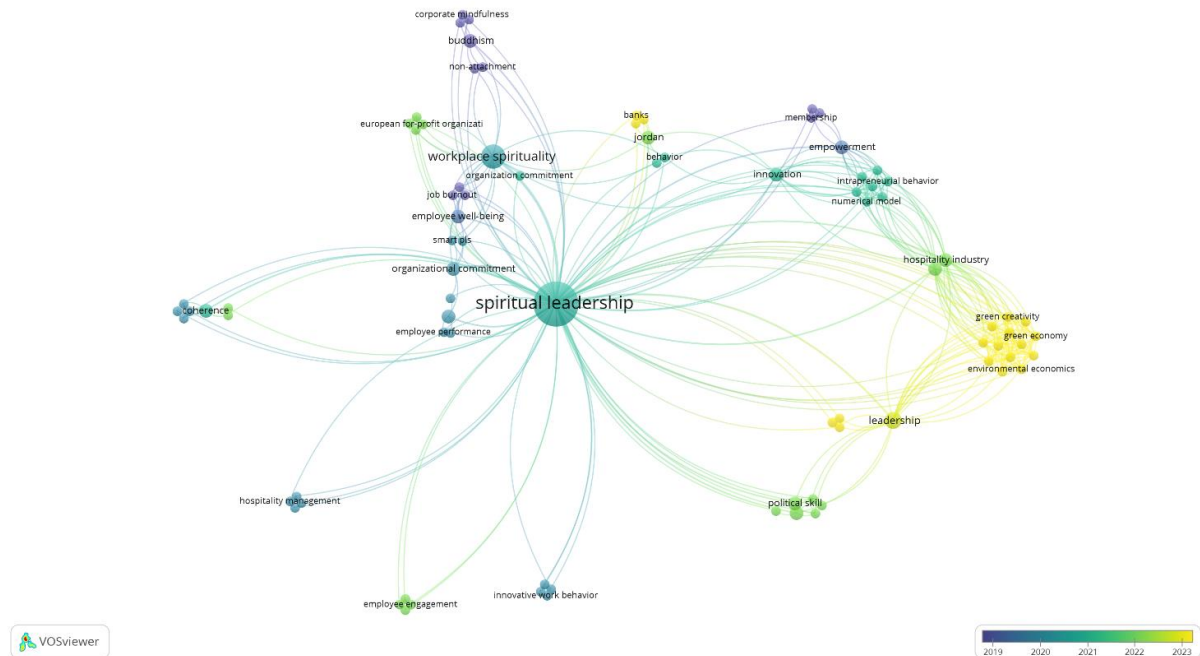
## Results and Discussion

The network visualization shown in the previous figure shows the main topic of *spiritual leadership* as the center of a vast network, with various other themes closely related. This visualization was created using VOS-Viewer software, which enables analysis of the connectedness of various topics

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in academic literature based on their frequency of occurrence in keywords or article abstracts. The network is divided into clusters, each representing a theme or concept that frequently co-occurs in research on *spiritual leadership*. Each cluster has a different color to facilitate the identification of the dominant theme in the literature. The cluster division is shown in the following figure 2:



Source: VOSviewer

**Figure 2. Network Visualization**

The network visualization shown in the previous figure shows the main topic of *spiritual leadership* as the center of a vast network, with various other themes closely related. This visualization was created using VOS-Viewer software, which enables analysis of the connectedness of various topics in academic literature based on their frequency of occurrence in keywords or article abstracts. The network is divided into clusters, each representing a theme or concept that frequently co-occurs in research on *spiritual leadership*. Each cluster has a different color to facilitate the identification of the dominant theme in the literature. The cluster division is shown in the following figure 3:

<b>Cluster 1 (14 items)</b>	satisfaction	resonance	interactive qualitative ar
empowerment	smart pls	spiritual well-being	leadership
hospitality industry	spiritual leadership	<b>Cluster 5 (6 items)</b>	scale development
hotel industry	work engagement	banks	<b>Cluster 9 (4 items)</b>
innovation	workplace spirituality	behavior	employee engagement
intrapreneurial behavior	<b>Cluster 3 (13 items)</b>	creative behaviors	innovative behaviour
membership	environmental economi	jordan	theory of planned beha
numerical model	green creativity	service	work-life balance
organisational citizenshi	green economy	workplace climate	<b>Cluster 10 (4 items)</b>
organisational commitn	green human resource r	<b>Cluster 6 (6 items)</b>	hospitality management
psychological empower	green work engagemen	buddhism	job social support
psychology	hotels	corporate mindfulness	justice orientation
theoretical study	human resource	non-attachment	workplace ostracism
tourism management	model test	qualitative research	<b>Cluster 11 (4 items)</b>
work centrality	research work	skilful means	innovative work behavi
<b>Cluster 2 (14 items)</b>	resource management	wisdom	job crafting
employee performance	strategic approach	<b>Cluster 7 (6 items)</b>	knowledge sharing
employee well-being	sustainable developmer	alienative commitment	statistical indicators
job burnout	united arab emirates	political skill	<b>Cluster 12 (4 items)</b>
job engagement	<b>Cluster 4 (7 items)</b>	skilled labor	european for-profit orga
job satisfaction	coherence	social capital	human resource manag
life satisfaction	entrainment	survey method	quality of work life
organization commitme	interconnectedness	work alienation	sustainability
organizational citizenshi	intraentrainment	<b>Cluster 8 (4 items)</b>	
organizational commitn	organizational entrainm	african management ph	

Source: VOS-Viewer

Figure 3. Cluster Division

Table 1. Antecedens & Consequens

No	Title	Author	Object of Research	Antecedents	Consequently	Outcome
1	Spiritual leadership and job burnout: Mediating effects of employee well-being and life satisfaction	(Hunsaker, 2019)	USA	Spiritual Leadership	Job Burnout	Spiritual leadership reduces burnout through spiritual well-being
2	Leveraging Spirituality and Religion in European For-profit-organizations: a Systematic Review	(Maidl et al., 2022)	Europe	Spiritual Leadership, Workplace Spirituality	Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment	Positive influence of spiritual leadership on job satisfaction and commitment
3	Do organizational citizenship behavior and work satisfaction mediate the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee performance?	(Supriyanto, Ekowati, et al., 2020)	Indonesia	Spiritual Leadership	Employee Performance	OCB and job satisfaction mediate the relationship between spiritual leadership and performance



4	Towards sustainable development in the hospitality sector: Does green human resource management stimulate green creativity?	(Abualigah et al., 2023)	UAE	Spiritual Leadership, Green HRM	Green Work Engagement, Green Creativity	Spiritual leadership facilitates green creativity through green work engagement
5	Undermining alienative commitment through spiritual leadership: a moderated mediation model of social capital and political skill	(Ali, Usman, Aziz, et al., 2022)	UK	Spiritual Leadership	Alienative Commitment	Spiritual leadership reduces alienative commitment through social capital
6	Spiritual leadership, job satisfaction, and its effect on organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.	(Djaelani et al., 2020)	Indonesia	Spiritual Leadership	Organizational Commitment, OCB	The effect of spiritual leadership on organizational commitment and OCB
7	Innovative behavior in religious-based theory of planned behavior perspective	(Arifin et al., 2022)	Indonesia	Spiritual Leadership, Work-Life Balance	Innovative Behavior	Spiritual leadership increases innovative behavior through employee engagement
8	Fueling the intrapreneurial spirit: A closer look at how spiritual leadership motivates employee intrapreneurial behaviors	(Usman et al., 2021)	USA	Spiritual Leadership	Intrapreneurial Behaviors	Spiritual leadership motivates intrapreneurial behaviors through psychological empowerment
9	The art of spiritual leadership in contemporary organizations from a Buddhist perspective using skillful means	(Chen & Yang, 2012)	Vietnam	Spiritual Leadership	Altruistic Love, Intrinsic Motivation	Spiritual leadership from a Buddhist perspective encourages

10	Is there corporate mindfulness? An exploratory study of Buddhist-enacted spiritual leaders' perspectives and practices	(Vu & Gill, 2018)	Vietnam	Spiritual Leadership	Mindfulness, Wisdom	intrinsic motivation Buddhist spiritual leadership increases mindfulness and wisdom
11	Driving organizational entrainment through spiritual leadership	(Sandra & Nandram, 2020)	South Africa	Spiritual Leadership	Connectedness, Well-being	Spiritual leadership increases organizational connectedness and well-being
12	Spiritual leadership and organizational commitment: The mediating role of workplace spirituality	(Sapta et al., 2021)	Indonesia	Spiritual Leadership	Organizational Commitment	Spiritual leadership enhances organizational commitment through workplace spirituality
13	Engaging employees through spiritual leadership	(Hunsaker & Jeong, 2020)	China	Spiritual Leadership	Employee Engagement	Spiritual leadership increases employee engagement through spiritual well-being
14	HOW SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP INFLUENCES CREATIVE BEHAVIORS: The mediating role of workplace climate	(Khaddam et al., 2023)	Jordan	Spiritual Leadership	Creative Behaviors	Spiritual leadership enhances creative behaviors through workplace climate
15	Being ignored at work: Understanding how and when spiritual leadership curbs workplace ostracism	(Ali et al., 2020)	UAE	Spiritual Leadership	Workplace Ostracism	Spiritual leadership reduces workplace ostracism through job social support

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16	Spiritual leadership and work alienation: analysis of mechanisms and constraints	(Ali, Usman, Soetan, et al., 2022)	UK	Spiritual Leadership	Work Alienation	Spiritual leadership reduces workplace alienation through social capital
17	Spiritual leadership within the ambit of African Management philosophies using interactive qualitative analysis	(Sibanda & Grobler, 2023)	South Africa	Spiritual Leadership	Employee Contentment, Welfare	Spiritual leadership improves employee well-being and satisfaction
18	Antecedents of Service Innovative Behavior: The Role of Spiritual Leadership and Workplace Spirituality	(Alfarajat & Emeagwali, 2021)	Jordan	Spiritual Leadership	Service Innovative Behavior	Spiritual leadership enhances service innovative behavior through workplace spirituality
19	The role of leader's spiritual leadership on organizational outcomes	(Nguyen et al., 2018)	Vietnam	Spiritual Leadership	Organizational Outcomes	Spiritual leadership improves organizational outcomes
20	Evaluating Spiritual Leadership Coherence at a Professional Services Company as a Way to Drive Connectedness and Well-Being in Organizations	(Sandra, 2022)	USA	Spiritual Leadership	Spiritual Well-being	Spiritual leadership improves well-being through coherence
21	Factors Affecting Innovative Work Behavior: Mediating Role of Knowledge Sharing and Job Crafting	(Supriyanto, Sujianto, et al., 2020)	Indonesia	Spiritual Leadership	Innovative Work Behavior	Spiritual leadership influences innovative behavior through knowledge sharing

Source: managed by researchers

From the table above, it is clear that spiritual leadership is positively related to the psychological empowerment of frontline employees, which in turn increases intrapreneurial behavior. Work centrality strengthens this positive relationship (Usman et al., 2021). In addition, spiritual leadership

has a negative relationship with workplace exclusion, both directly and through social support at work. This negative relationship is strengthened by justice orientation in the organization (Ali et al., 2020)

Another study found that spiritual leadership does not directly influence employee performance. However, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction also acted as a mediator in the relationship (Supriyanto, Ekowati et al., 2020). Spiritual leadership also does not directly influence employees' innovative behavior at work, but knowledge sharing significantly mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and innovative behavior. Work craft is an additional mediator in the relationship (Supriyanto, Sujianto, et al., 2020).

Spiritual leadership and employee well-being negatively influence work-family conflict, both in terms of work-to-family and family-to-work role interference. (Hunsaker, 2021). In addition, spiritual leadership involves self-reflection and continuous transformation, where leaders need to reflect on personal experiences and apply them in an organizational context. Mindfulness in organizations includes more than just meditation; it is also a process of self-reflection and growth. Ethics and responsibility play a crucial role in spiritual leadership, where leaders seek to safeguard employees' physical and psychological well-being, ultimately increasing organizational productivity (Vu & Gill, 2018).

In the context of service sector employees, spiritual leadership reduced feelings of work alienation. Employee social capital acts as a mediator in reducing alienation, while employee political skills are a moderator that strengthens the impact of spiritual leadership on social capital (Ali, Usman, Aziz, et al., 2022). Spiritual leadership also has a positive effect on organizational commitment, mediated by spirituality in the workplace. Leaders who pay attention to the spiritual needs of employees can increase their attachment and commitment to the organization (Sapta et al., 2021).

Sandra's (2022) research shows that coherence in spiritual leadership positively impacts the spiritual well-being of individuals and groups in organizations. The core values of spiritual leadership, such as shared vision, selfless love, and hope, contribute to increased connectedness among team members. In addition, spirituality in the workplace plays a role in improving employee job satisfaction, health, and productivity (Maidl et al., 2022).

In an academic context, spiritual leadership and job satisfaction positively influence organizational commitment, which impacts organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among lecturers. Organizational commitment acts as a mediator between spiritual leadership and OCB and between job satisfaction and OCB (Djaelani et al., 2020).

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Research in China shows that spiritual leadership significantly affects employee engagement, which strengthens their commitment to the organization. Employee spiritual well-being (SWB) is a mediator in this relationship, where spiritual leadership enhances a sense of meaning and purpose at work, promoting higher employee engagement (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2020).

Research results in the Islamic banking sector in Indonesia show that spiritual leadership does not significantly influence employee performance. However, spiritual leadership positively influences OCB, which in turn improves employee performance. Job satisfaction is a significant mediator between spiritual leadership and employee performance. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to exhibit higher OCB, which, in turn, positively impacts their performance (Hunsaker, 2019). Further research shows that spiritual leadership creates a supportive work environment, which reduces employee burnout levels. Life satisfaction acts as a mediator in this relationship, where employees who feel satisfied with their lives can better manage work stress (Hunsaker, 2019).

## **Conclusion**

The systematic literature review that has been conducted shows that spiritual leadership has various antecedents and significant consequences for organizations. From an antecedent perspective, spiritual leadership is based on core values such as shared vision, selfless love, membership, and calling. These values provide a strong foundation for leaders to intrinsically motivate themselves and their followers and create a harmonious and inclusive work environment. With these antecedents in place, spiritual leadership builds closer relationships between leaders and followers and enhances the spiritual well-being of individuals and groups within the organization. In terms of consequences, spiritual leadership positively impacts various aspects of the organization. Firstly, spiritual leadership is shown to increase the psychological empowerment of employees, which in turn motivates them to exhibit intrapreneurial and innovative behavior. Work centrality acts as a moderating factor that strengthens this relationship. Second, spiritual leadership strengthens employee engagement and performance, with spiritual well-being and knowledge sharing as essential mediators. Third, organizational commitment and citizenship behavior (OCB) are other consequences of spiritual leadership. In this case, job satisfaction and OCB mediate the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational performance. Finally, spiritual leadership also plays a role in reducing workplace ostracism, where social support from coworkers mediates the relationship, and justice orientation strengthens the ostracism reduction effect. Based on the findings of this study, several future research directions need to be explored further. *Firstly*, research on spiritual leadership in the context of different industries still needs to *be* developed. *Second*, studies on spiritual leadership in a multicultural context also need to be enhanced. *Third*, further

research is needed to understand the long-term impact of spiritual leadership on organizational performance and innovation. *Fourth*, experimental studies on spiritual leadership interventions need to be conducted to see how they can be practically applied in different organizations. *Finally*, integrating spiritual leadership with green management practices is a potential area for further research.

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