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Spiritual leadership in improving managers' performance

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Abstract: A leader does not only count on good intellectuals, but also on proper emotional and spiritual capabilities. This study aims to describe how spiritual leadership is applied, as well as its impacts on the managers' performance. This study used a qualitative method of phenomenology with a case study approach at PT Telkom Indonesia. The primary data in this study were obtained by using an interview technique with two interviewees, who are the current and former area managers. The result showed that the leaders of PT Telkom Indonesia took the training of spirituality and has been implementing the spiritual principles in management function besides cultural activity in the organisation with the spirit of the Islamic context. By having a strong spiritual ability, the managers are able to manage and control the employees easily, specifically in their integrity and work ethic, which leads to high performance based on sincerity. Additionally, it can shift the work orientation, from material and transactional oriented into sincere-oriented that prioritised totality and doing the best.

Keywords: spiritual leadership; improving performance; manager performance.

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1 Introduction

Spirituality in the workplace has become a concern in management science, particularly human resources. This is seen from the emerging of training phenomenon cored in spirituality materials that vividly held by various organisations or companies. Most organisations or companies conduct and/or send their employees to attend many kinds of spiritual leadership training. The training is aimed at preparing them for promotions and position appointments, as well as preparing them for current and future leadership.

The training is in the form of spiritual training or leadership training. They are conducted to reach the goals of the organisation and to develop human resources, mainly performance and leadership competency improvement.

The importance of spiritual leadership and human development correlation was demonstrated by Komarudin Hidayat, a professor in one of the state universities during leadership training in Leadership Training Centre of Human Resource Development, Indonesian Finance Ministry. Another fact was shown by *BPJS Kesehatan* (National Healthcare Insurance Agency) that launched *Cakupan Semesta 2019*. To implement a strategic plan, *BPJS Kesehatan* held a leadership training program for junior managers aimed at improving their leadership quality, increasing managerial knowledge, and internalising *BPJS* culture.

The leadership training with a spiritual basis is also regularly held by the ESQ training centre owned by Ari Ginanjar. The training also highlights the principles of emotional and spiritual quotient which the leaders should have. Instead, we are leaders for ourselves, it is important to improve our leadership manner. In fact, leadership is not necessarily identical to be a leader in a big organisation with many members. Besides, leading ourselves is the key to leading others, since we will not be called as a good leader when we cannot be a leader for ourselves. The principle of being a caliphate on earth turns out to be a guide for the life journey of each individual, as well as for the wider community.

Several topics of training offered by ESQ Training Centre is employees' leadership, namely Tips of Leadership, How to Lead A-Team, and How to be a Leader (esqtraining.com). These topics are publicly consumed, both for organisation and company in the form of in-house training activity for the employees or employers.

In addition, there are four leadership functions in education. For example, headmaster, which was once a topic in the discussion integrated with the concept of Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) by Ary Ginanjar. The focus was on the function of planning, organising, actuating, and controlling (Ridho, 2016). The leadership training referred here is **not only** based **on good** intellectual ability, **but also** good **emotional and spiritual** abilities, therefore it creates modern and qualified human resource.

Moreover, the concern on the spiritual aspect in the life of organisation and leadership has been presented by various scientific journals since the beginning of the 1990s, such as Neck and Milliman (1994), Osborne (1995) and Fairholm (1996) (Abdurrahman and Agustini, 2011). Various studies have shown that spirituality development in the workplace gave positive impacts on the behaviour and attitude of the employees individually. There will be an increase in work satisfaction, commitment, happiness, work involvement, and innovation. Spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality have a strong and positive correlation (Abdurrahman and Agustini, 2011).

Spirituality itself has become an interesting discussion topic of the research. Spirituality is not merely about religion, but also the view of the human being centralised

in the self-awareness, life goals, and public involvement. Spirituality in the workplace is studied in depth to move towards sustainability. Several reviews of workplace spirituality discuss the topic in three dimensions: the dimension of the inner life which refers to self-ego, such as identity and values; sense of purpose dimension which refers to work significance perception; and the definition of community dimension which refers to relation and involvement. The perspective of workplace spirituality becomes a theoretical discussion showing that human factors are manageable by revealing the relation needs in three levels, namely intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional (Bella et al., 2018).

Since the spirituality of the workplace has been a thriving issue that improves the number of organisations, employees, and job-seekers, spirituality has become a discussion topic in human resource management. In today's fluctuating business, there are more people seek the workplace that can facilitate their spiritual needs, meanwhile, the organisation finds out that a positive work result is related to the workplace which supports the employees' spiritual needs. Each aspect of spirituality may also support the development of company culture in the form of religious pluralism (Moore, 2008).

Accordingly, we need to understand about the spiritual leadership. In this case, it refers to leadership that can bring a worldly dimension to a spiritual dimension (divinity). God is the truest leader who inspires, influences, serves, and touches the hearts of His servants in the wisest way through the ethical and representative approach. Hence, spiritual leadership is also named as leadership with a religious ethic base. In the other words, it can be interpreted as leadership that inspires, raises awareness, influences, make moves through example, service, compassion, as well as implementation of God's values and other divinity characters in the leadership goals, process, culture, and behaviour. It is further explained that the concept of leadership overlies in a paradigm, concept, and characteristic of a spiritual quotient. Hendricks and Ludeman stated that corporate mystic is a concept of spiritual quotient. Parcy described going deep as an exploration of spiritual depth in life and leadership. Zaluchu proposed spiritual leadership in the Bible perspective (Rafsanjani, 2017).

Meanwhile, Tjahjono's definition of spiritual leadership is referred to the fourth-dimension leadership, which is a leadership quality that lies in faith and conscience or it can be interpreted as leadership with a kind heart, giving, serving, enlightening, and winning souls based on a spirit of gratitude and love. Spiritual leadership is identic with prophetic leadership. It is in line with Kuntowijoyo's statement, a leadership with holy vision and mission as a deep religious call (divinity) containing three components, such as humanisation/emancipation, liberalisation, and transcendence or enlightenment, liberation, and spiritualisation (Rafsanjani, 2017).

The influence of spiritual leadership can create the harmonious value across the strategic and empowered teams, as well as at the individual level to positively support the higher value of employees' health, better psychology and spirituality, supporting organisation commitment, productivity, and performance at the end of the organisation (Fry and Matherly, 2006).

Whereas, the causal theory of spiritual leadership is developed in an intrinsic motivational model combining vision, hope or belief, and altruistic love, spirituality theory at work, and spiritual survival. The purpose of spiritual leadership is to create a harmonious vision and value across the strategic and empowered teams, as well as at the individual level. In the end, it will positively support the realisation of higher levels of

organisational commitment and productivity (Fry, 2003; Fry and Cohen, 2009; Fry et al., 2011).

Spirituality is essentially a capacity and tendency which has existed in all human beings to find and build the meaning of life and existence, also to make improvements towards individual growth, responsibility, and social relation (Myers and Williard, 2003).

Individual development and company reinforcement require a leader as the director who can raise optimism and belief in implementing big ideas of the company. It becomes a leadership challenge to make every person feel called into their duties and roles while making them feel like a member of the community in a universal society with strong future goals and idealism. Fry urged that the 'calling' and 'membership' are important for the spiritual resilience of the employees. This is to encourage internal motivation and self-commitment to the achievement of the company's goals. Additionally, a leader is called a spiritual pathfinder who has the power to make social renewals, build hopes, and improve future goals. Sisk and Torrence described them properly as 'being in the world, but not of it' which means having the ability to transform the social conditions, even though the conditions limit them (Hendrawan, 2009).

The quality of a spiritual pathfinder is what was meant by a leader as a pathfinder or a director. This quality can drive the calling into their duties and roles, as well as a strong membership feeling in the corporate organisation. A search of spirituality in the organisation actually means practicing the concept and approach of a spiritual perspective. In other words, taking spiritual factors as a trigger in implementing good principles and organisational behaviour which then leads to the achievement of satisfactory results. In the next step, through the organisation's achievements, an individual gains spiritual satisfaction. Thus, there is a cycle with a reinforcing effect on an individual spiritual condition.

Moreover, there is a term of spiritual wisdom listed in the 99 Thinking Hats, several of them are: the courage to have a power while keep being pure, act according to *Rahman-Rahim* principles, fair and wise; the courage to create while still accountable and acknowledgeable; the courage to be prosperous while keep being emphatic, generous, trustworthy, and respectable; the courage to be independent while still being trusted, strong, and brave to take a new start (Agustian, 2001).

For example, making a decision in a complicated situation, Levi Strauss compiled some consciences, those are the courage to maintain, when company existence has to be maintained; the courage to protect, when children should be prevented from poverty and prostitution; also, the courage to pay the wage and occupy the job to children. In solving the problem, Levi Strauss being fair and wise (Agustian, 2011).

A case above shows the implication of spirituality in the workplace which adds leadership theory. Therefore, spiritual leadership is indeed simple, as it deals with the most essential part of human beings that is conscience, it is also interpreted as leading with the heart (Hadju, 2011).

Previous studies demonstrated that there was a dynamic correlation among spiritual leadership, religious welfares, and the organisation's achievement with the same of a military leader. By using the SEM analysis technique, the result described the **positive and significant correlation between spiritual leadership and several achievements of unit level, organisation's commitment, and four performance measures**. This correlation was explained or mediated by welfare spirituality (Fry et al., 2011).

An exploration survey tested the correlation between dimensions chosen from spirituality and effective leadership practice acquired by the healthcare manager. Variant

analysis proved a significant difference in the statistics of three effective leadership practices. Confirmatory model factor analysis based on theory showed a positive correlation between spirituality and leadership (Strack et al., 2008).

Other studies referred to secondary materials through a literature study discussing the model of organisation culture improved by the Islamic perspective. The prominent patterns were trusting Allah, the spirit of missionary, justice, accountability, mutual respect, mutual trust, absolute integrity, hard work, cooperation, excellence, medical treatment of fraternity, honesty, and truth, good behaviour, sacrifice, diligence, as well as cleanliness. The implication of the study is useful for Muslim managers and employees who experience an ethical dilemma between traditional and Islamic organisation culture in Muslim countries which represent a quarter of the world population.

This study also strengthens the behaviour of Muslim managers and makes them more aware of ethical codes according to Quran and Sunnah in the modern organisation setting. The practical implications of the findings from this study can be used as a guideline for Islamic organisation culture in Muslim countries. It might also be practically implemented in social sciences, such as politics, management, and studies of organisation, education, international law, and human resource management (Hoque et al., 2013).

The next study is an exploratory study of spiritual care in the neonatal environment by analysing the importance of spiritual leadership roles from the health team in that context. The nurse must carefully consider the treatment given can affect the baby and family. The theme related to the spiritual needs of the baby, family, and staff in this area has been identified. Whilst, the manager's spiritual leadership might support the staff and help to fulfil the spiritual needs in the practical manner of this work area (Caldeira and Hall, 2012).

On the other side, the spiritual leadership process was a topic in the researches done in two main societies of China, namely China and Taiwan, as well as three Chinese big industries in the field of manufacture, finance or banking, and retail industries. Factors of spiritual leadership, vision, expectation or faith, and altruistic love suggested by Fry (2003) were found to be mediated in three types of factor affecting organisation result:

- a attribute of employee's spirituality to work – meaningful or calling
- b attribute of employee's spirituality to organisation or team – membership
- c attribute of employee's spirituality to inner self or self-esteem and self-efficacy.

The inner self aspect of spirituality was uncovered with the other two types of factors that affecting the organisation's achievements, including self-management behaviour, carrier, and productivity. This pattern is consistent in all Chinese samples and industries (Chen et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, in other studies to test the spiritual leadership causal model and its impact on organisation performance, the author used samples from 347 employees hired by an electrical source distributor in 43 companies. The result specified that spiritual leadership gave significant support and it was important in organisation commitment (80%) and productivity (56%), as well as marketing growth (13%) (Fry and Matherly, 2006).

Additionally, the involvement role of the creative process between leaders was discussed in a field study of the family planning program (KB) in society to improve work and performance satisfaction of field workers. According to the theory of spiritual

leadership, observation of spirituality in the workplace and creative involvement process to raise work and performance satisfaction is necessary. The study result indicated that spirituality in the workplace and creative involvement process are the requirements for work satisfaction which then leads to performance satisfaction to run the government's program (Fachriyannisa and Adhiatma, 2014).

Whereas, this study used a qualitative method of phenomenology with a case study approach. This study aims at describing how spiritual leadership was implemented in PT Telkom Indonesia and its impact on the managers' performance improvement.

2 Literature review

2.1 Spirituality

Spirituality is a noun, derived from an adjective 'spiritual'. The noun is the spirit, adapted from a Latin spirit which means 'breathing'. There are several meanings of the spirit, such as:

- a the principle of living or vital that it lives up physical organism
- b supernatural creature
- c intelligence or a person's immaterial side.

In an adjective, spiritual is related to the spirit, related to belief, related to phenomena or supernatural creatures.

In Arabic and Parsi, the terms used for spirituality are *ruhaniyyah* (Arabic) and *ma'nawiyyah* (Parsi). The first term is taken from the word *ruh*, whereas the second term is taken from the word *ma'na*, which has an inner connotation of 'the truth' as opposed to 'visible'. Both terms are related to the higher reality than anything material and psychological (Hendrawan, 2009).

A discussion concerning spirituality cannot be separated from religion. Religion is one of the ways to recognise spirituality at a better level. Religion is a system of belief and spirituality is its implementation in life. Religion is the theory and spirituality application. Without theory, we have lack of knowledge; without application, we will never be better than an abandoned book in the library that waits to be thrown.

Discussing spirituality is similar to the discussion of field practice. It is possible that theories (in religion) that we take as beliefs might be different from what other people believe, yet it is the spirituality that drives people to sit together in peace and tolerance. The context of spirituality is broader. It can pass through various beliefs. Although every religion has its unique way to describe the spirituality of the followers (Tualeka, 2012).

McCormick (Moore, 2008) defined spirituality as an inner piece of individual experience that can be evidence of his/her behaviour. Owa (Moore, 2008) discussed spirituality in the context of upheld values. Leher and Milliman (Moore, 2008) described spirituality as a way of expressing our wishes to find the meaning and purpose of life and a life process of an individual from personal's upheld values. Dehler and Welsh (2010) wrote that spirituality is an individual's inspiration for inner source. Mitroff and Denton (1999) defined spirituality as a basic feeling connected with complete selfless, people, and the entire universe. Therefore, spirituality is generally seen as 'internal substance', 'value, belief, act, or emotion', 'that affects people's behaviour' (Moore, 2008).

There is a difference between spirituality and religion. Religion is related to theological belief, ritual prayer, ritual ceremony, and practice to be formalised into ideas. Spirituality according to Snyder and Lopez, on the contrary, is a quality of awareness from within the human soul. This includes the concept of positive psychology, such as love and compassion, patience, tolerance, mercy, satisfaction, personal responsibility, and harmonious feeling with the environment (Fry et al., 2011). Spirituality pursues the vision of service towards other people; through modesty as the capacity possession to consider oneself as the same individual yet not higher value of others; through deeds, or altruistic love; and through the truth, which goes beyond the truth of the story to engage one's capacity to see things the way they do, thus, it limits the subjective distortion. From this perspective, spirituality is needed for religion, however, religion is not necessarily spirituality. Consequently, spirituality in the workplace might be inclusive or exclusive in the theory as well as the practice of religiosity (Fry, 2003).

2.2 Spiritual leadership

Spiritual leadership is defined as a leader with high spirits to realise the organisation's vision and mission. Spiritual leadership theory is based on an intrinsic model of motivation that combines vision, expectation, faith, and altruistic love, spirituality theory in the workplace, and welfare spirituality (Fry, 2003).

The implementation of spiritual leadership aims to get into the fundamental needs of both parties, namely the leader and follower to create spiritual welfare through the calling and membership, to create vision and harmony value (Fachrunnisa and Adhiatma, 2014).

By considering fundamental needs, spiritual leadership will result in the trust of the followers, intrinsic motivation, and commitment needed to optimise the welfares of human beings, social responsibility, and organisation performance. Spiritual leadership in the wider context appear in developing countries which are working on spirituality in the workplace to reach organisation members, the needs of transcendence and connection, to intrinsically motivate oneself and others as well as fulfilling basic needs of spiritual welfare through calling and membership (Fry et al., 2011).

Hari explained that spiritual leadership focuses on a socially collective process, which is the effect of involving all people and allow a group of people to meaningfully work together (Fry et al., 2011). Spiritual leadership also places less emphasis on a centralised leader approach, changes the focus by involving all members to spiritual needs and improves the organisation's commitment and performance. Through spiritual leadership, everyone will positively make an effort to improve the calling, membership, and performance.

2.3 Managers' performance

Managers perform by implementing the management function. This management function consists of four basic functions described by Terry and Rue (1982), such as planning, organising, actuating and controlling. These four basic management functions are described as follows:

- a Planning is a function of making and using the estimations or assumptions for the future by describing and formulating activities needed to reach the expected purpose.

- b Organising is a function of determination, classification, and compilation of a variety of activities needed to reach the expected purpose, employees' placement for the activities, provision of physical factors suitable for working needs and designation of authority relation, which then taken over by a person in charge of the events held.
- c Actuating is a function of evoking and supporting all members of the group to make a strong willing and effort to reach the purpose with sincerity and harmony by the planning and ways of organising made by the leader.
- d Controlling is a function of determining what needs to be achieved, namely standards; what is being done, namely implementation; evaluating implementation; and make an improvement when needed. Thereby, the implementation should be in line with the plan that is according to the standard.

3 Research method

² This study used a qualitative method of phenomenology with a case study approach at PT Telkom Indonesia. The primary data in this study were obtained by using an interview technique with two interviewees, who are the current and former area managers.

Data analysis in this study refers to the systematic test of the data obtained by reduction technique, categorisation, and interpretation. This was conducted to sort relevant data, determine its parts, correlation among the findings, and partial correlation of the whole meaningful concept (Dana and Dumez, 2015).

4 Result and discussion

According to the interview conducted, it was known that the leader of PT Telkom Indonesia had acquired a spiritual training and implemented spiritual principles in the management function, as well as a cultural activity in the organisation.

The spiritual principles were included in the program of cultural activation which was packaged into 4 types of activities, such as the rational process, sports, spiritual process, and sensing process. The rational process consists of strategic and operational management activities. Sports are defined quite clear by doing sports activities regularly. The sensing process is the process of art, singing, or other artistic activities. While the spiritual process is spiritual activities.

The cultural activity of the spiritual process is implemented in the form of spiritual activity within an Islamic context. Any employees' activity involves spiritual process, such as listening to preach, congregational *tahajud* prayers (*jamaah*), pausing any activity during the call to prayer (*adzan*), listening to short Islamic lecture. The spiritual process is conducted in every operational activity, meetings or big events of the organisation. It is scheduled once in a month to encourage the team to attend the regular Islamic lecture in the office for the Muslims, to accustom the habit of congregational prayers in the office's mosque after *adzan*, kindly remind each other to pray in the praying time. Therefore, almost all employees experience the spiritual process in the form of a religious lecture or spiritual training. Accordingly, they grow the spirits within themselves by doing congregational prayers and attending the regular Islamic lecture and so on.

Besides, the former area manager informed that every activity should have contained the aforementioned four elements. For example, in the management meeting, the meeting discussed targets and strategies of achievement that were a rational process. In order to make a life balanced, there should be a management meeting that consists of the other three elements. The former area manager explained, after the meeting, at night there must be gathering where there are arts performances, creative and fun video making, or anything entertaining. Commonly, those activities are contested. In such event, the employees are invited to go outbound to strengthen the cooperation among them. The elements, namely rational process, sports, spiritual process, and sense process must be implemented in the rundown of every event held by PT Telkom Indonesia. It is aimed to make all staff of PT Telkom Indonesia live a balanced life. Thus, spirituality is inveterate among the employees, which is a part of spiritual leadership, not only balanced but also strong in spirituality.

By having a strong spirituality, employees are easier to be directed and controlled, especially their integrity and work ethic, which ended in high performance with a sincerity basis. Besides, the managers remind the employees in every job or event being held, that "life is valued from the effort, not the result, thus our responsibility is to do our best".

The manager also performed by implementing the functions of planning, organising, actuating, controlling with the spirituality element. Spirituality implementation done by PT Telkom Indonesia was in accordance with the spirituality principle itself, which needs embodiment, no matter what the form was, whether in the frame of religion or sect. In the different levels of conscience on both individual and group, the organisation needed to set a credo and value system (Hendrawan, 2009).

The implementation of spiritual leadership conducted by the management was manifested in an effort to activate the mosque and respect other religions. For example, faithfully fasting, hold social charity for the orphans and the poor during Eid and Christmas Eve.

Spiritual leadership implemented by PT Telkom Indonesia was also based on the intrinsic motivation model which encouraged the employees to change the work orientation, from initially material-and transactional-oriented into sincere-oriented, that prioritised totality and doing the best. This motivation combined the vision, expectation, faith, and altruistic love induced by the leader, therefore, the employees were encouraged and raised awareness to perform. Spirituality that existed within PT Telkom Indonesia seemed to practically become inclusive in a religious context (Fry, 2003).

The impact of this spiritual leadership according to the current area manager was to invite the employees to set the working intention properly, encourage them to implement it on daily work, and to educate oneself to be the role model.

Another fact regarding performance which affected the ongoing spiritual leadership as the captured implementation was the culture of asking for leave and reporting. This conscience was more conducted. The culture of asking for leave and reporting in every activity done was sufficiently effective to increase each individual performance, as they practiced to take responsibility from every activity.

The fact of spirituality in the workplace at PT Telkom Indonesia demonstrated the second dimension suggested by Bella et al. (2018), which is a sense of purpose dimension. This dimension referred to the perception of work significance. The spirituality perspective in the workplace became a theoretical discussion demonstrated

that the human factors are manageable by stating the relation need in three levels, namely intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional (Bella et al., 2018).

The spiritual leadership implementation made the employees became more spiritual, more ethical, have higher integrity and have higher performance. The manager's performance appraisal is outlined in a tiered management contract.

The president director deals with the directors in the form of a performance target contract as outlined in the management contract with four dimensions, such as financial focus, customer focus, internal business process, learning, and growth. Every dimension that divided into some indicators is called a Key Performance Indicator. The target is determined and agreed upon between the President's Director and the Directors.

5 Conclusions and suggestion

Spirituality has become a crucial part of the life of the organisation and leadership. Spiritual leadership based on religious ethic was proven inspiring, awareness-raising, influencing and driven through example, service, compassion, and implementation of values and other divinities in the purpose, process, culture, and attitude of the leader.

The study result indicated that spiritual leadership support the realisation of the organisation's goals and developed the human resource, especially the performance and leadership competency improvement.

For future studies, it is suggested to use a quantitative method by measuring several independent variables that give impacts on spiritual leadership. Spiritual leadership may also be an independent variable which affects the bound variable in the management of the human resource.

This study described that the role of spiritual leadership implemented by the managers at PT Telkom Indonesia can provide support to workers and help in fulfilling the employees' spiritual needs in the daily working practice. In addition, it was found that there are spiritual values in the organisational culture at PT Telkom Indonesia. The culture to work wholeheartedly impacting how the employees view the leadership as a management function in managing the employees and their daily works.

Spiritual implementation in the workplace based on religion, ethics, and core value by following the spiritual needs of its followers could motivate the employees through the basic values of honesty, work wholeheartedly as worship while increasing cooperation between the leaders and employees (Meng, 2016).

This spiritual leadership is similar to servant leadership in emphasising the vision of the leader's mission and conducting an organisational cultural approach that impacts the organisation's achievement indirectly. There are some impacts of the implementation of spiritual leadership in leading the employees, among others are the employee will always contribute to it through improved performance in accordance with the cultural context in the organisation (Torres, 2016). This happens because the essence of spirituality developed in leading the employees is to be a servant of God, which is applied in the workplace to become a pious servant by working well (Tobroni, 2015).

The main contribution in this study was the foundation of the spiritual value of Islam played by the manager at PT Telkom Indonesia who does not implement a model of Western-based leadership, where in practice, the management separates religion and works. Besides, the culture organisation at PT Telkom Indonesia which strongly influenced by Islamic spiritual patterns emphasises work as a part of the worship.

The limitation of this study was to use an individual-centred approach perspective, by looking at the leader's role. In the future, the other researchers need to use an organisation-centred approach perspective by looking at general employee welfare, profitability, revenue growth, and other financial performance indicators.

In addition, it is necessary to study the correlation of spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality with respect to the needs related to the three levels of intrapersonal, interpersonal and institutional. Then the spiritual approach in developing leadership abilities needs to be more conceptual and applicable, therefore, future research would be able to obtain data from more varied types of organisations and respondents.

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