

Spiritual Leadership: Meaning in the Sustainable Workplace

Over many years, the attention of the concept of leadership has been incrementally gaining, along with the determinants of achieving successful leadership. Researches emerged in search for the most effective leadership styles have produced many traditional theories scarcely based on traits, abilities, skills, behaviours, or situational factors, such as; the great man theory; behavioural theory; contingency theory and many more conceptualised ideas to tackle this quest. The theory of spiritual leadership is considered as the fifth leadership perspective that focuses attention on the whole soul nature of a leader.

The first ever publication about spiritual leadership was recorded in 1980 on the Scopus database, the next one was recorded after 9 years, in 1989 and following that one was 5 years later. This shift has been gaining momentum and gradually gearing towards completing the other spectrum of a successful leadership with focus on emotional, ethical, and authentic facets, which were known to be ignored previously. "The effect of spirituality on a person's ability to lead others has been studied. Many research studies have shown that influence through vision, values, and relationships is better than influence through fear, power, and control" This article about spiritual leadership has been articulated by Joanna Samul in aims to diminish the gap in leadership literature while addressing the significance of spirituality in cultivating a sustainable workplace.

A huge chunk of the article highlights the methodology of research that was carried out in the field of leadership literature. For this research, 373 articles were analysed. The most significant type of publication was articles at 66%. Followed by book chapters (17%), reviews (5%), books (5%), conference papers (3%), and other publications including editorial materials, notes, and undefined materials (3%). The journal with the largest number of published articles was the "Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion". Through the method of cluster analysis, four main clusters were found: Workplace Spirituality, Leadership, Spiritual Leadership, and Transformational Leadership. Workplace spirituality relates to work, values, outcomes, commitment, culture, empowerment, and paradigms. Spiritual leadership coincides with performance, behaviour, and servant leadership which were the most discussed topics. Emerging topics such as organisational commitment and spiritual

intelligence also showed correlation with Spirituality. Transformational leadership shed light towards issues that are still ongoing, such as, ethical leadership, ethics, authentic leadership, and charismatic leadership.

There are a myriad number of definitions for leadership that literature can provide you with, however, the most repeated attribute given in the description is the ability to motivate and inspire other people. The term “spirituality” has been derived from the Latin word “spiritus”, defined as “soul, courage, energy”. According to Helen S. Astin, an American professor at UCLA who wrote, “Some Thoughts on the Role of Spirituality in Transformational Leadership”, believes spirituality is about our sense of who we are; our beliefs about why we are here; the meaning we identify our work with our lives; and our sense of connection to others and the world around us. Many authors and researchers have pointed out universal values of spirituality that can naturally be inculcated within a leader to pose a certain influence towards his/her followers, for instance, an attitude of consciousness, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance, sense of harmony, and search for morality rooted in the desire of development. “The theory of spiritual leadership allows us to better understand how our internal life affects our abilities to lead others successfully”. In fact, in order to create a sense of purpose, spiritual leaders should also strive to include their employees in their spiritual evolution, so that their own “spiritual well-being” can also be shared to foster a positive environment. Fry (2003) identified three components of spiritual leadership: vision, hope, or faith, and altruistic love. “This enables employees to feel part of the larger whole, both universally and organisational-wide, which then promotes them to internally and permanently be inspired and motivated”

Sustainability is raising awareness in all aspects nowadays, so why should it not when we speak with regards to organisations? People spend more than half their life working, which makes it dire to pivot towards organisational sustainability. “There is growing attention by both practitioners and academics about organisational sustainability. The term “sustainability” is most often associated with longevity, maintenance of core principles or purposes, and responsibility to external needs” The same way human resource management works in an organisation to provide and fulfil the needs of their employees, it is a main key factor to be able to easily gravitate into sustainability, thus, a sustainable organisation needs sustainable human resources. This mindset is required to be influenced among everyone at the

workplace in order to change the behaviour of all employees and their outlook about the company mission and vision. Creating a sustainable workplace will better facilitate employment practices, procedures, and policies that link employees' work-life balance and well-being, enabling them to thrive in their personal and family lives as well while driving the best performance at work.

The impact of spiritual leaders in a sustainable workplace reaps many benefits on every level of the organisation. This model of spiritual leadership gives insight on how to achieve sustainability in the triple bottom line (People, Planet, Profit) "Personal spiritual qualities provide the foundation on which leaders may build to hone their skills and competencies to foster a sustainability mindset by seeking higher levels of consciousness, self--awareness, and other--centeredness, creating a spiritual workplace, which is essential for maximising the triple bottom line through spiritual leadership" The table below gives countless advantages of the above.

Table 3. Benefits of spiritual leadership for a sustainable workplace at the individual, team and organizational levels.

Levels	Benefits
Individual level	A sense of life satisfaction [65] Human health and well-being improvement [69] Greater morale, and commitment [73] A sense of meaning and calling a job [73] Greater employee and leader motivation, satisfaction, and task involvement [30,79] Self-career development, engagement, loyalty [55] Less conflict, frustration, absenteeism, turnover, and job burnout [54,55,65,70,74] Less counterproductive work behavior [75] Higher unit productivity, self-efficacy [39,54,55,74,80] A sense of autonomy, competence, and connections [79]
Team level	Higher commitment and motivation [31] A sense of team and community [81] Learning in teams [83] Spiritual climate [83] Team-level innovative behaviors [83] Higher group productivity and performance [30,31,39,54,74,80] Communication improvement [81]
Organizational level	Organizational learning [81] Organizational citizenship behavior [59] Higher productivity, performance excellence [31,78,84] Greater flexibility of the organization [84] Greater creativity of the organization [84] Faster growth, higher efficiency [81]

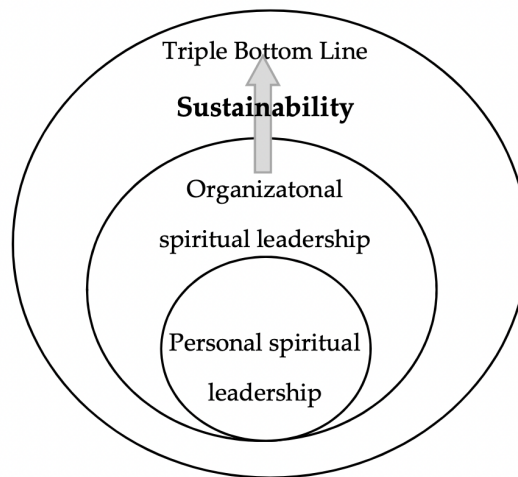


Figure 2. Model of spiritual leadership.

Leaders who care about people and have a high level of spirituality unconsciously pass this "spirituality" on to their staff. As a result, employee spirituality grows as they feel safe and supported. On a bigger note, this eventually aids in leaders reaching their long-term goals much faster than expected, heightened productivity levels and more a sustainable attitude that is instilled and pushed into the workplace environment. "Thus, spirituality can be understood as harmony with self and the others, and with all that seem to be an external environment, although it is a part of us. Comparatively, sustainability can be understood as harmony with society and the environment."

This Literature review of Spiritual Leadership and a sustainable workplace allows for more development on this matter as this topic is still growing and fairly new and upcoming. Spiritual Leadership is based on moral and ethical values that are embodied in a sustainable workplace directed toward the achievement of business and social goals. The exploration of this relationship between the two also illuminates the need for HR practices to expand their work into this area with easy solutions to promote sustainability. The inclusion of the spiritual dimension is a unique perspective which is generally not considered in previous models, but can naturally provide extensive assets to an organisation. To conclude, this kind of positive leadership in today's realm has the potential to become "a highly spirited paradigm of management in today's environment."