

# The role of workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership in promoting ethical behaviour in the South African small business environment

## Authors:

Ms Mangaleni Hlatywayo<sup>1</sup>  
[0000-0001-5471-3178]

\*Prof. Freda van der Walt<sup>1</sup>  
[0000-0001-6110-0716]

## Affiliation:

<sup>1</sup> Department of Business Management, Central University of Technology, South Africa

## E-mail:

mhlatywayo@cut.ac.za  
\*fvdwalt@cut.ac.za

## DOI:

10.15249/18-1-351

## Keywords:

ethical behaviour; spiritual leadership; unethical leadership behaviour; workplace spirituality

*\*corresponding author*

## Abstract

The rise of unethical leadership practices suggests a need to emphasise value-based workplaces and leadership, encompassing workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership. Most previous research focusing on ethical behaviour in the work context has been conducted with larger organisations. This study examines the influence of workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership on ethical behaviour within the small business context. A quantitative survey research design was employed. The final sample consisted of 385 employees of small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in various industries in a central district of South Africa. Structural equation modelling was utilised during the data analysis process. The study revealed that workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership had a positive and statistically significant influence on ethical behaviour in SMMEs, and workplace spirituality mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour. The study extends on existing literature as this relationship has previously not been investigated in the African small business context. Also, the findings hold practical significance for small businesses struggling with unethical behaviours and leadership. The findings of the study imply that a culture of spirituality in the workplace enhances the impact of spiritual leadership in promoting ethical behaviour in the small business environment.

## 1. Introduction

Corporate scandals, unethical behaviour, and corruption of business leaders represent a global pandemic (Antunez et al., 2024; Manara et al., 2020). These concerns have also been observed in South Africa among business and political

leaders (Scherrer, 2019). African business leaders often find themselves in challenging situations where unethical practices, such as nepotism, disregard for punctuality and appointments, cults of leadership, complacency, bribery, fraud, and kickbacks, are regarded as cultural elements ingrained in the value system (Agbim et al., 2013). These deviant leadership behaviours are experienced and observed by employees, shaping their perception of organisational functioning and ultimately influencing their own behaviour (Koys & DeCotiis, 1991). Furthermore, the perception of positive leadership behaviour is crucial for creating empowering work environments for employees (Bester et al., 2015). The question that arises is whether this is true in a small business environment as most of the previous research has focused on large corporations.

With the rise of unethical leadership practices, respect and trust in corporate governance have declined (Antunez et al., 2024), leading to increased scrutiny of contemporary leadership legitimacy. Unethical behaviour often stems from self-centredness, greed, egocentrism, and selfish motivations (Pawar, 2009), which promote unethical behaviour (Belle & Cantarelli, 2017). To counteract such behaviour, it is suggested that spiritually infused workplaces should be created in which leadership upholds spiritual values, such as meaningful work, interconnectedness, respect, trust, and benevolence (Mhatre & Mehta, 2023). Furthermore, organisations are becoming more concerned with value-based and spiritual leadership to address issues such as trust, moral ambiguity, and workplace inclusivity (Oh & Wang, 2020). Therefore, it is argued that spiritual workplaces, created through spiritual leadership, have the potential to mitigate unethical behaviour to a significant extent (Van der Walt, 2019). However, despite this argument, this relationship in the context of African small business has not previously been established in empirical research.

While large organisations often receive the most attention regarding unethical behaviour, it is worth noting that smaller enterprises are particularly vulnerable to ethical misconduct due to their lack of necessary skills, professional advice, handling of funds, strategic information, business relationships, and networks to implement ethical practices (Turyakira, 2018). This is concerning considering the pivotal role that small, medium, and macro enterprises (SMMEs) play in driving economic growth and job creation in developing countries such as South Africa (Dhanah, 2016). It is estimated that South African SMMEs employ 47% of the workforce, pay 6% of corporate tax, and contribute 20% to the country's GDP (Liedtke, 2019). Despite the national importance of SMMEs, many challenges inhibit their effectiveness and growth, such as inadequate business support services, selective implementation of regulations, corruption, human resources issues, and financial resources (Nkwinika & Muzhedzi, 2016). These and other challenges are directly and indirectly affecting employees and as a result, employees have become dispirited, as is evidenced in rising absenteeism, low morale, and average performance, which makes it more difficult for organisations to reach a competitive edge in this dynamic global marketplace (Naidoo, 2014). This statement is confirmed by Trevino (2018), who regards dispirited employees as an organisational risk since they may be prone to engage in unethical behaviour.

Several empirical studies have been conducted on workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership and they have found it is significantly related to organisational effectiveness (Karakas, 2010), commitment (Garg, 2018; Scott & Tweed, 2016), satisfaction (Hassan et al., 2016; Van der Walt & De Klerk, 2014), employee performance (Malik et al., 2017), ethical and spiritual motivation (Guillen et al., 2015), and productivity (Scott & Tweed, 2016).

However, as far as it could be established, these mentioned empirical studies have not been conducted within the small business context. They also have not considered the role of spiritual leadership in promoting ethical behaviour within the South African context. In addition, there is a call for more empirical research on behaviour outcomes, as most previous studies investigated spiritual leadership in relation to attitudinal outcomes (Oh & Wang, 2020). Anane (2015) and Fry and Cohen (2009) assert that further scholarly research regarding spiritual leadership is needed.

Demoralised workers often engage in toxic and unethical behaviour. Therefore, to promote ethical behaviour in the workplace, it might be necessary to consider creating spiritually-based organisations that focus on the work experience rather than solely on work outcomes (Van der Walt, 2018). The need for further academic investigation of ethics in the context of SMMEs is noted by various scholars (Dutta & Banerjee, 2011; Rambe & Ndofirepi, 2017; Van Wyk & Venter, 2022). Furthermore, the scarcity of organisational perspectives on workplace spirituality within the context of SMMEs is noted (Van Der Walt, 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this research study is to examine the influence of workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership on ethical behaviour within the small business context. This was established by conducting quantitative research and employing structural equation modelling.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Theoretical framework

Positive psychology theory guides the theoretical approach of this study. 'Positive psychology' is viewed as an umbrella term for research in three areas: (i) positive organisational psychology, (ii) positive organisational behaviour, and (iii) positive organisational scholarship (Donaldson et al., 2019). This study is mainly concerned with positive organisational psychology, which is defined as "the scientific study of positive subjective experiences and traits in the workplace and positive organizations, and its application to improve the effectiveness and quality of life in organizations" (Donaldson & Ko, 2010:178). Workplace spirituality is regarded as an emerging domain in the field of positive psychology because of the effect and influence it has on positive organisational outcomes (Binu Raj et al., 2023). Furthermore, research found that individual and organisational factors promote ethical behaviour (Geeta et al., 2016). Thus, it seems appropriate to establish the influence of workplace spirituality (i.e., an organisational factor) and spiritual leadership (i.e., an individual factor) on ethical behaviour to confirm and extend previous findings using this theoretical framework.

## 2.2 Ethical behaviour

The concept of ethics includes rules and principles that guide the conduct one has to observe within society and the philosophy thereof (Halis et al., 2007). In a diverse society such as South Africa, it is essential to acknowledge individual perceptual differences regarding what is ethical. This requires that various theories of ethics, such as consequentialism, deontology, justice ethics, and virtual ethics (Boshoff et al., 2014; Kaptein & Wempe, 2011), should be considered. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on business ethics (Ferrell et al., 2013).

Business ethics is considered from a normative perspective which relates to principles, values, and norms which guide organisational behaviour and decisions (Ferrell et al., 2019). The theory of normative ethics is concerned with whether actions are good or bad, right or wrong, virtuous or vicious, worthy of praise or blame, or worthy of a reward or punishment (Smith & Hasnas, 1999). Thus, normative ethics deals with what actions one ought to or ought not to perform (Morris et al., 2002). The theory of normative ethics relates to the moral standards and rules that govern employees' conduct in the internal (i.e., with their managers/owners and peers) and external world (i.e., customers, suppliers, investors, and government agencies) (Rambe & Ndofirepi, 2017). The scholars mention that the range includes among others, the safety of employees and stakeholders in the business context, honesty and trustworthiness in the distribution chain (from sourcing of raw materials to final disposal of product), socially acceptable marketing practices, and fair pricing to refrain from misrepresentation of the contents of products or constitution of services. Ethical conduct such as patience, courtesy, and humility towards customers and suppliers could be fundamental to effective SMME relationships with their stakeholders, particularly given the intimate and personal relations between them (Rambe & Ndofirepi, 2017).

## 2.3 Spiritual leadership

The leading expert and prominent researcher in the field of spiritual leadership theory is L.W. Fry (2003, 2005) (Vedula & Agrawal, 2024). The scholars noted that Fry (2003, 2005) made a commendable contribution to spiritual leadership theory and has gained significant attention among leadership researchers. Fry (2003) defines spiritual leadership as the beliefs, perspectives, and behaviours necessary to genuinely inspire oneself and others so that they feel they have a mission and community to which they belong. Furthermore, spiritual leadership implies the creation of a social/organisational culture based on unselfish love whereby leaders and staff members demonstrate genuine concern, love, and respect while developing a sense of belonging, understanding, and appreciation (Fry, 2003).

For the purpose of this study, spiritual leadership is operationally defined as “the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership” (Fry et al., 2005:838). The scholars propose spiritual leadership as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of dimensions such as vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love, which

are related to the spiritual leader's attitude, values, and behaviours; meaning/calling and membership, which are related to followers' need for spiritual survival; and organisational commitment and productivity, which are regarded as organisational outcomes.

## 2.4 Workplace spirituality

Workplace spirituality is described as

the spiritual nature of the organisation itself evidenced by spiritual organisational values and a culture that facilitates employees' experience and sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy with the recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work in the context of the work community. (Van der Walt & De Klerk, 2014:381)

This study adopted the operational definition of workplace spirituality as suggested by Ashmos and Duchon (2000:137), which states that workplace spirituality is "the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community". As suggested by this definition of workplace spirituality, the construct is multi-dimensional in nature consisting of dimensions such as meaning at work, inner life/self, and community or connectedness. Thus, workplace spirituality is considered from an individual and organisational perspective.

## 2.5 Hypothesis development

### 2.5.1 Spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality

The success of leadership is to a large extent dependent on the organisational culture that they create (Arif et al., 2019). The scholars refer to organisational culture as inclusive of patterns of beliefs and values. Spiritual leadership has a positive and significant influence on meaningful work, which is a core component of workplace spirituality (Widodo & Suryosukmono, 2021). Afsar and Rehman (2015) found a positive relationship between spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality for an Asian sample. Furthermore, Afsar and Rehman (2015) and Jufrizen et al. (2019) confirm that spiritual leadership has a positive and significant impact on workplace spirituality. Against this background, the following hypothesis (H) is formulated:

*H<sub>1</sub>: There is a positive statistically significant relationship between spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality in the small business setting.*

### 2.5.2 Spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour

A study conducted by Pio and Lengkong (2020) found that spiritual leadership has a statistically significant influence on ethical behaviour. An ethical, caring climate positively moderates the relationship between spiritual leadership and the autonomous motivation of employees (Zhu et al., 2022). The scholars state that the creation of an ethical, caring climate is important to positively influence employees' behaviour decisions, which is aligned with the notion of spiritual leadership which makes employees more receptive to their leaders' management and guidance.

However, both studies were conducted in an Asian context in large organisations, and as far as it could be established, this relationship has not been tested in an African small business setting. Against this background, the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H<sub>2</sub>: There is a positive statistically significant relationship between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour in the small business setting.*

### **2.5.3 Workplace spirituality and ethical behaviour**

Research has highlighted the connection between spirituality and ethics (Furnham, 1995; Gunther, 2001), with some authors contending that spirituality is an essential element of moral behaviour (Furnham, 1995; Gull & Doh, 2004). According to McGhee and Grant (2008), the relationship between spirituality and ethics is mediated by Aristotelian virtue. They contend that the aspects of spirituality, such as the inner life, sense of purpose, and sense of belonging to a community, serve as a model for norms (McGhee & Grant, 2008) which is the normative disposition that guides an individual's conduct and adjusts his or her motivation (Oakley & Cocking, 2001). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

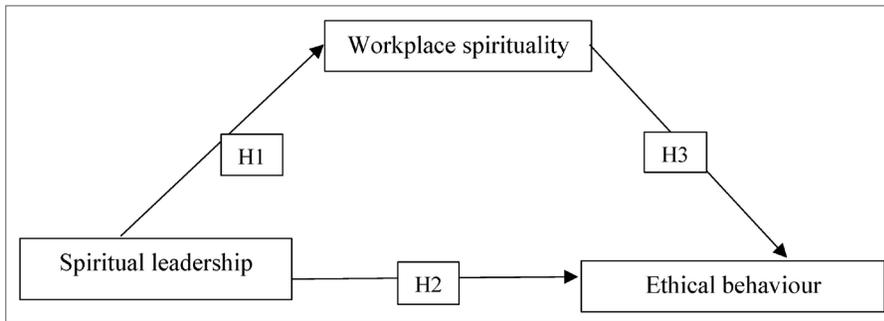
*H<sub>3</sub>: Workplace spirituality has a positive statistically significant influence on ethical behaviour in the small business setting.*

### **2.5.4 Workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership, and ethical behaviour**

Tecchio et al. (2016) assert that workplace spirituality includes values such as honesty, excellence orientation, and justice, which can also be regarded as moral and ethical values. Thus, if organisational leaders are spiritual and create spiritual workplaces, ethical behaviour will be influenced positively. Aligned with positive psychology theory, it is postulated that leaders could bring about positive employee behaviour through modelling. This implies that if spiritual leaders display spiritual values such as genuine concern, love, and respect, within an organisational context that is aligned with this type of leadership, positive employee behaviour, such as ethical behaviour, may be infused. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H<sub>4</sub>: Workplace spirituality mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour.*

Aligned with the developed hypotheses, the conceptual framework which guides the study is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study**

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Method

A positivist research paradigm is adopted because the relationships between the constructs included in this study, namely workplace spirituality, spiritual leadership, and ethical behaviour, were measured objectively using quantitative research. The study evaluated whether workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership influence ethical behaviour in the work context of small businesses. As such, the study is descriptive and explanatory in nature (Saunders et al., 2016).

### 3.2 Data collection and sampling

The study was approved by the Faculty of Management Sciences Research and Innovation Committee at the Central University of Technology in South Africa, and ethical clearance was given to conduct the study. Entrepreneurs and small business owners were requested to participate in the study. Once permission was granted, ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were upheld.

A survey strategy that was cross-sectional in nature was deemed appropriate because this strategy is utilised when descriptive, explanatory, and causal research is undertaken (Babbie & Mouton, 2016; Saunders et al., 2016). Using convenience sampling, the final sample consisted of 385 individuals working at small businesses situated in the central region of South Africa. A total of 56% of the sample identified as men and 44% as women. In terms of age, the majority of the sample (60%), were 21 to 30 years old, followed by 22% of respondents in the age group 31 to 40 years, 12% were younger than 21 years, 4% between the ages of 41 and 50, and 2% were 51 years and older. Most of the respondents (72%) indicated that they had five years or less working experience, 19% had six to ten years of work experience, 8% had 11 to 15 years of work experience and 1% indicated that they had 16 years or more working experience. In terms of educational qualifications, most respondents indicated that they completed secondary school (54%) and the rest of the sample indicated that they studied further towards either a certificate, diploma, or degree qualification.

The study used a self-administered structured questionnaire to collect data. When constructing the questionnaire, the researcher ensured that questions were equally spread and that understandable language was used. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. In section A, demographical questions were posed to describe the sample. Section B consisted of 33 questions to measure spiritual leadership. The questions were developed using the Spiritual Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) developed by Fry et al. (2005). A bibliometric analysis conducted by Vedula and Agrawal (2024) indicates that Fry's (2003, 2005) spiritual leadership theory is essential. Questions that were asked in this section are as follows: "I have faith in my organization's vision for its employees", "I always do my best in my work because I have faith in my organization and its leaders", and "The leaders in my organization walk the walk, and talk the talk".

In Section C, workplace spirituality was measured using an abridged version of the Spirituality At Work (SAW) questionnaire, developed by Ashmos and Duchon (2000). Similar to the SLQ, Ashmos and Duchon's (2000) article is regarded as essential in the field of workplace spirituality. The abridged version of the SAW questionnaire consisting of 21 questions was used. As was mentioned previously, workplace spirituality was only considered on individual and organisational levels, and as such an abridged version of the SAW was used. Questions that were asked in this section are as follows: "I believe others experience joy as a result of my work", "I see a connection between my work and the larger social good of my community", and "I consider myself a spiritual person".

In Section D, ethical behaviour was measured. An abridged version of an ethical behavioural scale developed by Van der Walt (2019) was used, consisting of ten questions. This questionnaire was chosen because it was usable in the South African context. Example questions included, "My decisions and actions are always in the best interest of society" and "I never share confidential information that has been entrusted to me". Statements were scored on a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (5).

Prior to distributing the final questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted to measure the initial reliability of the questionnaire and to ensure content validity. A total of 40 participants from the target population who were not included in the final sample were involved in the pilot project. Subject experts assessed whether the constructs included in the questionnaire were covered in a balanced manner, meaning that each component was adequately and similarly represented in the questions or items (Kumar, 2014). Data was collected once-off using a self-administered questionnaire. The research questionnaire was distributed electronically and manually to avoid the risk of low response rates associated with the electronic distribution of questionnaires (Saleh & Bista, 2017). For the manual completion of the questionnaire, the field workers visited small businesses that agreed to participate in the study. The owners and employees were requested to complete the research questionnaires. The field workers explained to the respondents what is expected of them, and then requested to collect the completed questionnaires three weeks after the distribution date at the central point. For online completion, a link

was sent to business owners and employees who requested to complete the questionnaire online due to work and time constraints. Data collection was completed within a month.

### 3.3 Data analysis

SmartPLS version 4.0 (Ringle et al., 2024) was used to test the research hypotheses. SmartPLS is a variance-based structural equation modelling software that accounts for the total variance and uses the total variance to estimate parameters (Hair et al., 2019). To determine the impact of workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership on ethical behaviour, a multiple regression analysis was explicitly carried out. Multi-collinearity was considered to evaluate the mediated impact of workplace spirituality on the association between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour (Hair Jr et al., 2016). The conceptual model tested in this study comprised two second-order reflective-reflective factors, and, as such, the model tested in this study can be described as a complex model as it comprises many constructs (Hair et al., 2019). According to Hair et al. (2019), PLS-SEM results are evaluated in two stages. Stage one evaluates the measurement model results and stage two evaluates the structural model results. In this study, the measurement model specification is reflective and not formative. In a reflective measurement model, the factors exist independently of the items and are not a combination of the items (Coltman et al., 2008).

The structural model comprised two second-order reflective-reflective constructs. To assess the reliability and validity of the second-order factors, the embedded two-stage process was used (Sarstedt et al., 2019). This process entails estimating latent variable scores by using the repeated indicator approach and then using the construct scores as indicators of the second-order factor. This process enables the assessment of the second-order factor measures using the principles outlined for assessing the first-order factors. After establishing that the measurement model is satisfactory, the PLS-SEM results were evaluated to assess the structural model. Based on Hair et al. (2019), the following PLS-SEM results were used to assess the structural model.

Firstly, Variance inflation factors (VIFs) were evaluated to assess the extent of collinearity biasing the regression results. The VIF should be close to 3.0 and lower. Secondly,  $R^2$  of each endogenous construct was assessed to report the model's in-sample predictive accuracy. According to Kline (2015), a structural equation model (SEM), an endogenous construct, is a latent variable that is influenced by other variables in the model. The following guideline was used to interpret the  $R^2$  values in a structural model – 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak in-sample predictive power. Thirdly, the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficient were assessed. In PLS-SEM, bootstrapping is used to calculate the  $t$ -statistic for the relationship, the  $p$ -value (two-tailed), and the confidence interval for the relationship. In this study, the bootstrap method was the percentile bootstrapping procedure, the bootstrap confidence interval was 95% and 10 000 subsamples were used (Guenther et al., 2023). The statistical significance of path coefficients was evaluated at  $\alpha=0.05$  (two-tailed).

Mediation analysis using PLS-SEM entails assessing the statistical significance of each indirect effect and then the statistical significance between the exogenous and endogenous constructs using the 95% percentile confidence intervals using the bootstrapping routine (Mattews et al., 2018). Evidence of full mediation is when the direct effect is not statistically significant when including the mediation effect (also statistically significant). Partial mediation occurs when the direct effect is statistically significant when controlling for the mediation effect (also statistically significant).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Assessment of the measurement model

As was mentioned, the measurement model specification is reflective and not formative. In a reflective measurement model, the factors exist independently of the items and are not a combination of the items (Coltman et al., 2008). The initial assessment results indicated that 26 items had loadings less than 0.708. Two items had a loading of less than 0.4, and as suggested by Hair Jr et al. (2017), these two items were excluded from the measurement model. The remaining outer loadings were all statistically significant. Furthermore, six items were additionally deleted to establish an AVE of 0.5 for all constructs in the measurement model. The results of the modified measurement model after deleting the items are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Results of the refined measurement model**

Item	Outer loading	p-value (two-tailed)	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
AL1	0.620	0.000	0.801	0.857	0.502
AL2	0.805	0.000			
AL3	0.734	0.000			
AL4	0.744	0.000			
AL6	0.663	0.000			
AL7	0.672	0.000			
CC1	0.732	0.000	0.750	0.842	0.571
CC2	0.815	0.000			
CC3	0.736	0.000			
CC4	0.736	0.000			
EC1	0.780	0.000	0.754	0.835	0.506
EC2	0.819	0.000			
EC3	0.666	0.000			
EC9	0.678	0.000			
EC10	0.590	0.000			
FH1	0.682	0.000	0.802	0.863	0.559
FH2	0.768	0.000			
FH3	0.781	0.000			
FH4	0.810	0.000			

Item	Outer loading	p-value (two-tailed)	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
FH5	0.688	0.000			
IL2	0.753	0.000	0.741	0.836	0.560
IL3	0.714	0.000			
IL4	0.755	0.000			
IL5	0.771	0.000			
MC1	0.768	0.000	0.837	0.891	0.671
MC2	0.870	0.000			
MC3	0.826	0.000			
MC4	0.810	0.000			
MEM1	0.780	0.000	0.836	0.882	0.601
MEM2	0.829	0.000			
MEM3	0.758	0.000			
MEM4	0.768	0.000			
MEM5	0.736	0.000			
MW1	0.826	0.000	0.733	0.830	0.552
MW2	0.751	0.000			
MW3	0.692	0.000			
MW4	0.694	0.000			
OC2	0.724	0.000	0.675	0.789	0.567
OC3	0.942	0.000			
OC4	0.539	0.000			
OV2	0.722	0.000	0.711	0.821	0.536
OV3	0.768	0.000			
OV4	0.777	0.000			
OV5	0.655	0.000			
PRO1	0.639	0.000	0.711	0.826	0.617
PRO2	0.823	0.000			
PRO3	0.875	0.000			
V2	0.694	0.000	0.750	0.843	0.573
V3	0.811	0.000			
V4	0.785	0.000			
V5	0.732	0.000			

Table 1 presents the results of the revised measurement model. Fourteen items had loadings of less than 0.708 but higher than 0.4. All items were statistically significant. More importantly, the loadings less than 0.708 did not threaten the internal consistency reliability of the measures or the validity. Though the Cronbach's Alpha for Organisational Commitment was 0.675, the CR values exceeded 0.7. For all other constructs, the Cronbach's Alpha value is close to 0.7 or exceeds 0.7, and all CR values exceed 0.7. Furthermore, the AVE of each construct was higher than 0.5.

Next, the discriminant validity of the first-order factors was assessed. The HTMT results are indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2: HTMT results of the first-order factors**

	AL	CC	EC	FH	IL	MC	MEM	MW	OC	OV	PRO
AL											
CC	0.532										
EC	0.528	0.783									
FH	0.728	0.500	0.559								
IL	0.397	0.679	0.675	0.476							
MC	0.701	0.596	0.588	0.712	0.462						
MEM	0.759	0.545	0.478	0.568	0.459	0.709					
MW	0.581	0.699	0.759	0.583	0.650	0.657	0.561				
OC	0.479	0.393	0.331	0.336	0.325	0.480	0.474	0.432			
OV	0.515	0.796	0.644	0.446	0.539	0.450	0.544	0.630	0.474		
PRO	0.395	0.417	0.315	0.225	0.355	0.320	0.445	0.410	0.707	0.524	
V	0.701	0.479	0.512	0.769	0.403	0.589	0.508	0.524	0.265	0.505	0.257

As reported in Table 2, the HTMT ratios of correlations between the first-order factors were less than 0.85. Thus, the first-order factors’ measurement model also provides adequate evidence of discriminant validity.

**Table 3: Results of the second-order factors**

Second-order factor	Dimension	Outer loading	p-value (two-tailed)	Cronbach’s alpha	CR	AVE
Spiritual leadership	AL	0.824	0.000	0.837	0.879	0.516
	FH	0.768	0.000			
	MC	0.812	0.000			
	MEM	0.784	0.000			
	OC	0.572	0.000			
	PRO	0.511	0.000			
	V	0.694	0.000			
Workplace spirituality	CC	0.840	0.000	0.797	0.868	0.622
	IL	0.751	0.000			
	MW	0.798	0.000			
	OV	0.760	0.000			

Table 3 presents the measurement model assessment of the second-order factors using the latent variable scores as indicators. Spiritual leadership comprises of dimensions such as altruistic love, faith/hope, meaning and calling, membership, organisational commitment, productivity, and vision. Workplace spirituality comprises of dimensions such as connectedness/community, inner life, meaning at work, and organisational values. The outer loading of vision, productivity, and organisation commitment was less

than 0.708, but it did not threaten the reliability and validity of the spiritual leadership higher-order construct. As seen in Table 3, the measurement of the second-order factors shows adequate internal consistency and convergent validity. The Cronbach's Alpha and CR values for each second-order factor were higher than 0.7, and the AVE was higher than 0.5.

The second-order factors along with ethical behaviour were also tested for discriminant validity using the HTMT procedure.

**Table 4: HTMT ratios of correlations between the second-order factors and ethical conduct**

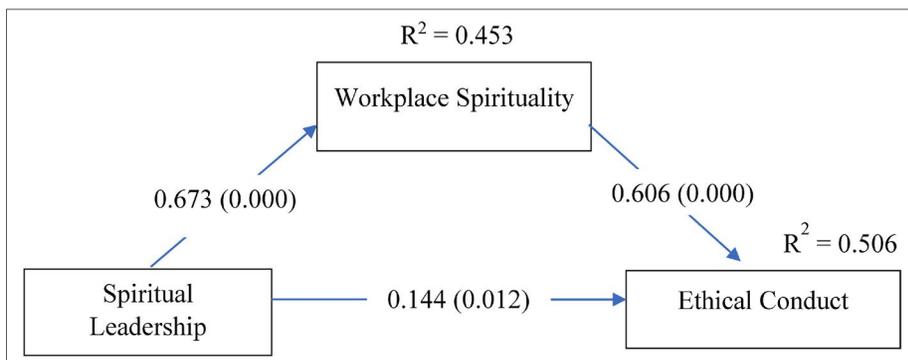
	EB	SL
SL	0.598	
WS	0.784	0.823

The results reported in Table 4 show that the HTMT ratios of correlations between the second-order factors and ethical behaviour were lower than 0.85, which implies adequate evidence of discriminant validity.

After confirming adequate item reliability, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity of the first-order factors measurement model and the second-order factors measurement model, the structural model was assessed.

#### 4.2 Assessment of the structural model

The structural model comprises two factors influencing ethical conduct. The VIF of the two factors was 1.829. Thus, collinearity did not threaten the validity of the results. Moreover, it can be argued that common-method bias did not influence the reliability and validity of the measurement model as the VIFs did not exceed 3.3 (Kock, 2015). The structural model results are presented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Structural model results**

The in-sample predictive accuracy is moderate. From the results presented in Figure 2, it is evident that the model explained 45.3% of the variance in workplace spirituality and 50.6% of the variance in ethical behaviour. Spiritual leadership had a moderate to strong

influence on workplace spirituality (0.673;  $p=0.000$ ) and workplace spirituality exerted a moderate to strong influence on ethical behaviour (0.606;  $p=0.000$ ). Controlling for the influence of workplace spirituality, the influence of spiritual leadership on ethical behaviour was significant but weak (0.144;  $p=0.015$ ).

In Table 5, the mediation results of the study are presented.

**Table 5: Mediation results of the study**

Relationship	Original sample (O)	p-value (two-tailed)	95% percentile	
SL -> EB (total effect)	0.552	0.000	0.475	0.627
SL -> EB (direct effect)	0.144	0.012	0.032	0.259
SL -> WS -> EB (indirect effect)	0.408	0.000	0.329	0.489

Table 5 shows the test of the mediating effect of workplace spirituality that was conducted. The results of the test established that workplace spirituality partially mediated the influence of spiritual leadership on ethical behaviour.

## 5. Discussion

The first research objective was to establish whether there is a relationship between spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality. The results presented in Figure 2 indicate that spiritual leadership has a positive statistically significant influence on workplace spirituality. Therefore,  $H_1$  is accepted. This finding is consistent with the findings of Hejazi et al. (2021) and Afrianty and Prasetya (2024), namely that there is a positive statistically significant relationship between spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality. These studies suggest that leaders who exhibit spiritual leadership behaviour, values, and attitudes should be able to create a work environment that encourages spirituality. Similarly, a study by Adelusi et al. (2021) found a positive statistically significant relationship between spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality for an African sample. The study suggests that spiritual leadership can be an effective means of promoting workplace spirituality among employees in Nigerian organisations. The study also highlights the need for organisations to develop spiritual leadership practices to foster a spiritual work environment that promotes workplace spirituality among employees. It is evident from the findings that it is possible to promote workplace spirituality by developing spiritual leadership practices among leaders, irrespective of the context.

The second research objective was to establish whether there is a relationship between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour. The results presented in Figure 2 indicate that spiritual leadership has a positive statistically significant influence on ethical behaviour. Therefore,  $H_2$  is accepted. This finding is aligned with the findings of Pio and Lengkong (2020), namely that spiritual leadership has a significant influence on ethical behaviour. Similarly, a study by Kim and Yoon (2021) found that spiritual leadership has a significant influence on ethical behaviour in small businesses in South Korea. The study suggests

that leaders who exhibit spiritual leadership practices can create a work environment that promotes ethical behaviour among employees.

Thus, through the creation of an ethical, caring climate, employees' behavioural decisions could be positively influenced, which is aligned with the notion of spiritual leadership which makes employees more receptive to their leaders' management and guidance. Small business owners or managers should, therefore, focus on developing their spiritual leadership and spiritual leadership practices, which may promote the ethical behaviour of employees, which is much needed in the small business environment.

The third research objective was to establish whether there is a relationship between workplace spirituality and ethical behaviour. The findings of the study indicate that workplace spirituality has a positive and statistically significant influence on ethical behaviour. Therefore,  $H_3$  is accepted. This finding is supportive of Sharma and Singh's (2020) argument that workplace spirituality positively affects the ethical behaviour of employees by promoting a sense of purpose, values, and empathy towards others. Furthermore, this study also found that employees who perceive their workplace as spiritual are more likely to behave ethically in their work activities. Petchsawang and Duchon (2012) also found that workplace spirituality influences ethical behaviour by providing a framework for employees to integrate their personal values and beliefs with their work activities. In other words, employees who perceive their workplace as spiritual may be more inclined to view their work as meaningful and a means of serving others. As a result, these employees are more likely to exhibit ethical behaviour. Therefore, it is possible that small business owners or managers could improve the ethical behaviour of employees by developing spiritual workplaces. The findings show that the relationship between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour was statistically significant, but weak. Therefore, in the South African small business context, creating an organisational culture that is spiritually infused is likely to exert a more significant influence on ethical behaviour than focusing only on spiritual leadership.

The fourth research objective was to establish whether workplace spirituality mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour. The findings showed that workplace spirituality partially mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour. Therefore,  $H_4$  is accepted. This finding emphasises that the application of spiritual leadership requires the development of workplace spirituality, which is also suggested by Sapta et al. (2021), to bring about positive outcomes such as ethical behaviour. Small businesses should, therefore, focus on developing spiritual workplaces through spiritual leadership to enhance ethical behaviour among their employees. This could involve the creation of a spiritually conducive environment, leadership development opportunities, and the promotion of spiritual values and beliefs in the workplace. By doing so, small businesses can enhance ethical behaviour among their employees, which may potentially increase profitability, reduce employee turnover, and improve organisational performance.

## 6. Conclusion and implications

The study extended the limited body of business ethics research in developing countries and SMMEs (Van Wyk & Venter, 2022). The study found that workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership have a significant impact on ethical behaviour in SMMEs. By incorporating spiritual values and principles such as compassion, honesty, and integrity into the organisational culture, business leaders may possibly foster a sense of purpose and meaning among employees, leading to improved ethical behaviour in their respective businesses. However, it is important to note that the implementation of spirituality in the workplace must be done in a thoughtful and inclusive manner, taking into account the diverse beliefs and values of employees.

Overall, the evidence suggests that spirituality can be a valuable tool for promoting ethical behaviour in the workplace, contributing to a more just and harmonious business environment. Spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality may emerge as a potential solution for ethical behavioural challenges faced by SMMEs, as they encourage and focus on empowering and inspiring employees by promoting spiritual values and integrating spiritual practices and values into the workplace. By embracing spiritual values and cultivating a positive work environment, small businesses can promote organisational success in challenging conditions (Van der Walt, 2024). It is therefore imperative that SMMEs focus on developing spiritual workplaces and spiritual leaders to enhance ethical behaviour among their employees.

## 7. Limitations and recommendations

Despite the notable findings of the study, it has a few limitations that need to be noted. Due to the time horizon for this study, cross-sectional data was collected which provides a narrow view of the relationship between spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour as mediated by workplace spirituality because data was collected once-off. Thus, in the future, researchers can conduct longitudinal research to confirm the causality between the variables in the study. Furthermore, the measurement instrument was found to be valid and reliable in the context of this study. However, because of the lack of consensus in defining workplace spirituality, researchers and participants might be left to their own interpretation, leaving them to assume spirituality is inclusive of religion. However, researchers should keep on operationalising the construct for their studies until more consensus is reached.

The current study has demonstrated the significance of encouraging workplace spirituality in the small business context. Unfortunately, previous research studies on workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership have not been extensive in this area of interest, and thus more empirical studies are required to confirm the importance of promoting workplace spirituality in a small business environment. More research is also recommended to confirm the relationship between spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, and ethical behaviour as this will assist organisations in dealing with unethical behaviour. It is also vital to explore whether spiritual leadership, workplace

spirituality, and ethical behaviour are conceptualised differently in the African context. Given that the concept of workplace spirituality originated in Westernised countries, it is possible that it has different dimensions and a different meaning for Africans and those living in nations that are less developed. A qualitative approach is also recommended to gain a thorough grasp of the effect of workplace spirituality and spiritual leadership on ethical behaviour.

## References

- Adelusi, O.O., Akinlabi, B.H. & Oladele, P.O. (2021). Spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality: Evidence from Nigerian employees. *Journal of Business and Management Research*, 6(1):1-10.
- Afrianty, T.W. & Prasetya, A. (2024). The effect of spiritual leadership on organizational commitment through workplace spirituality and intrinsic motivation. In: R.I. Robbie, A. Roziqin, S.M. Deniar, A. Praharjo & K. Roz (eds.), *Environmental Issues and Social Inclusion in a Sustainable Era* (pp. 208-219). London: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003360483-24>
- Afsar, B. & Rehman, M. (2015). The relationship between workplace spirituality and innovative work behaviour: The mediating role of perceived person–organisation fit. *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*, 12:329-353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2015.1060515>
- Agbim, K.C., Ayatse, F.A. & Oriarewo, G.O. (2013). Spirituality, ethical behaviour and ethical business: The impact of relatedness. *Journal of Business Management and Social Sciences Research*, 2(9):76-86.
- Anane, A. (2015). A study of the influence of spiritual leadership, engaged leadership and extrinsic motivation and continuance commitment in Ghanaian banks. Master's dissertation, University of Ghana, Ghana.
- Antunez, M., Ramalho, N. & Marques, T.M. (2024). Context matters less than leadership in preventing unethical behaviour in international business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 192(2):307-322. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05520-y>
- Arif, S., Zainudin, A. & Hamid, K. (2019). Influence of leadership, organizational culture, work motivation, and job satisfaction of performance principles of senior high school in Medan City. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)*, 2(4):239-254. <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v2i4.619>
- Ashmos, D.P. & Duchon, D. (2000). Spirituality at work: A conceptualization and measure. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 9(2):134-145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105649260092008>
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2016). *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Belle, N. & Cantarelli, P. (2017). What causes unethical behaviour? A meta-analysis to set an agenda for public administration research. *Public Administration Review*, May/June:327-339. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12714>
- Bester, J., Stander, M.W. & Van Zyl, L.E. (2015). Leadership empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment, organisational citizenship behaviours and turnover intention in a manufacturing division. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 41(1):1215. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v41i1.1215>
- Binu Raj, A., Ambreesh, P., Tripathi, N.N. & Ambreesh Kumar, A. (2023). Workplace spirituality and job satisfaction among teachers: influence of well-being and spiritual leadership. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 37(6/7):1303-1322. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-03-2023-0110>
- Boshoff, E., Kotzé, M. & Nel, P. (2014). The development and initial validation of the work convictions questionnaire (WCQ) to measure approaches to ethical decision making in the workplace: Part 2. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 8(2):15-30. <https://doi.org/10.15249/8-2-83>
- Coltman, T., Devinney, T.M., Midgley, D.F. & Venaik, S. (2008). Formative versus reflective measurement models: Two applications of formative measurement. *Journal of Business Research*, 61(12):1250-1262. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.01.013>
- Dhanah, D. (2016). Small businesses and job creation in South Africa. Master's dissertation, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

- Donaldson, S.I. & Ko, I. (2010). Positive organizational psychology, behavior, and scholarship: A review of the emerging literature and evidence base. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 5:177-191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439761003790930>
- Donaldson, S.I., Lee, J.Y. & Donaldson, S.I. (2019). Evaluating positive psychology interventions at work: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, 4:113-134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41042-019-00021-8>
- Dutta, S. & Banerjee, S. (2011). Ethical practices towards employees in small enterprises: A quantitative index. *International Journal of Business Management and Economic Research*, 2(3):205-221.
- Ferrell, O.C., Crittenden, V., Ferrell, L. & Crittenden, W. (2013). Theoretical development in ethical marketing decision making. *AMS Review*, 3(2):51-60. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13162-013-0047-8>
- Ferrell, O.C., Harrison, D.E., Ferrell, L. & Hair, J.F. (2019). Business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and brand attitudes: An exploratory study. *Journal of Business Research*, 95:491-501. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.039>
- Fry, L.W. (2003). Toward a theory of spiritual leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14(6):693-727. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2003.09.001>
- Fry, L.W. (2005). Toward a paradigm of spiritual leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(4):619-622. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.07.001>
- Fry, L.W. & Cohen, M.P. (2009). Spiritual leadership as a paradigm for organisational transformation and recovery from extended work hours cultures. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 84:265-278. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9695-2>
- Fry, L.W. & Matherly, L. (2006). *Spiritual leadership and organizational performance: An exploratory study*. Atlanta, GE: Academy of Management.
- Fry, L.W., Vitucci, S. & Cedillo, M. (2005). Spiritual leadership and army transformation: Theory, measurement, and establishing a baseline. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 16(5):835-862. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.07.012>
- Furnham, A. (1995). *The Protestant Work Ethic*. London: Routledge.
- Garg, N. (2018). Workplace spirituality and organizational commitment: An empirical exploration. *Purshartha*, X(2):8-24.
- Geeta, M., Pooja, J., Mishra, P.N. & Park, K. (2016). Ethical behaviour in organizations: A literature review. *Journal of Research in Business and Management*, 4(1):1-6.
- Guenther, P., Guenther, M., Ringle, C.M., Zaefarian, G. & Cartwright, S. (2023). Improving PLS-SEM use for business marketing research. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 111:127-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2023.03.010>
- Guillen, M., Ferrero, I. & Hoffman, W. (2015). The neglected ethical and spiritual motivations in the workplace. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 128:803-816.
- Gull, G. & Doh, J.P. (2004). The role of religiosity and spirituality in ethical decision-making in business. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 52(2):125-141.
- Gunther, M. (2001). God and business. *Fortune*, 144(1):60-80.
- Hair Jr, J.F., Celsi, M.W., Money, A.H., Samouel, P. & Page, M.J. (2016). *Essentials of Business Research Methods*. 2nd Edition. New York, NY: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315704562>
- Hair Jr, J.F., Hult, G.T.M., Ringle, C.M. & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)*. 2nd Edition. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Hair, J.F., Risher, J.J., Sarstedt, M. & Ringle, C.M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*, 31(1):2-24. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EBR-11-2018-0203>
- Halis, M., Akova, O. & Tagraf, H. (2007). The relationship between ethics and quality: Conflicts and common grounds. *Serbian Journal of Management*, 2(2):127-145.
- Hassan, M., Nadeem, A.B. & Akhter, A. (2016). Impact of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction: Mediating effect of trust. *Cogent Business and Management*, 3:1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2016.1189808>

- Hejazi, A.F., Rezaei, F. & Gholipour, A. (2021). The relationship between spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality: A case study of Iranian employees. *Journal of Management and Development Process*, 4(2):77-88.
- Jufrizen, S.M., Nasution M.I. & Radiman, D.S.F. (2019). The strategy of spiritual leadership: The role of spiritual survival, workplace spirituality and organizational commitment at private universities. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science*, 8(1):64-72. <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v8i1.194>
- Kaptein, M. & Wempe, J.F. (2011). *Three general theories of ethics and the integrative role of integrity theory*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1940393>
- Karakas, F. (2010). Spirituality and performance in organisations: A literature review. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 94(1):89-106. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0251-5>
- Kim, J. & Yoon, S.W. (2021). The impact of spiritual leadership on ethical behaviour in small businesses: The mediating role of employee well-being. *Journal of Business Research*, 126:227-236.
- Kline, R.B. (2015). *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modelling*. 4th Edition. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Kock, N. (2015). Common method bias in PLS-SEM: A full collinearity assessment approach. *International Journal of e-Collaboration*, 11(4):1-10. <https://www.igi-global.com/gateway/article/132843>
- Koys, D.J. & DeCotiis, T.A. (1991). Inductive measures of psychological climate. *Human Relations*, 44(3):265-285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872679104400304>
- Kumar, R. (2014). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. 4th Edition. London: Sage.
- Liedtke, S. (2019). SME sector “critical” to growing South Africa’s economy – Pityana. *Creamer Media’s Engineering News*. <https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/print-version/sme-sector-critical-to-growing-south-africas-economy-pityana-2019-04-11> [Accessed 2024-11-18].
- Malik, R., Yadav, J. & Yadav, D. (2017). Role of spiritual leadership in enhancing employees’ job performance: A study of organised retail sector in India. *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research*, 15:183-192.
- Manara, M.U., Van Gils, S., Nübold, A. & Zijlstra, F.R. (2020). Corruption, fast or slow? Ethical leadership interacts with Machiavellianism to influence intuitive thinking and corruption. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.578419>
- Mattews, L., Hair, J. & Matthews, R. (2018). PLS-SEM: The holy grail for advanced analysis. *Marketing Management Journal*, 28(1):1-13.
- McGhee, P. & Grant, P. (2008). Spirituality and ethical behaviour in the workplace: Wishful thinking or authentic reality. *EJBO Electronic Journal of Business Ethics and Organisation Studies*, 13(2):61-69.
- Mhatre, S.G. & Mehta, N.K. (2023). A review of workplace spirituality: Identifying present development and future research agenda. *Management Research Review*, 46(9):1185-1206. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MRR-11-2021-0800>
- Morris, M.H., Schindehutte, M., Walton, J. & Allen, J. (2002). The ethical context of entrepreneurship: Proposing and testing a developmental framework. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 40(4):331-361. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1020822329030>
- Naidoo, M. (2014). The potential of spiritual leadership in workplace spirituality. *Koers – Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*, 79(2). <https://doi.org/10.4102/koers.v79i2.2124>
- Nkwinika, M.K.K. & Munzhedzi, P.H. (2016). The role of small medium enterprises in the implementation of local economic development in South Africa. SAAPAM Limpopo Chapter 5th Annual Conference Proceedings, 75-81.
- Oakley, J. & Cocking, D. (2001). *Virtue ethics and professional roles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511487118>

- Oh, J. & Wang, J. (2020). Spiritual leadership: Current status and agenda for future research and practice. *Journal of Management, Spirituality & Religion*, 17(3):223-248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2020.1728568>
- Pawar, B.S. (2009). Workplace spirituality facilitation: A comprehensive model. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 90(3):375-386. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0047-7>
- Petchsawang, P. & Duchon, D. (2012). Workplace spirituality, meditation, and work performance. *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*, 9(2):189-208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14766086.2012.688623>
- Pio, R.J. & Lengkong, F.D.J. (2020). The relationship between spiritual leadership to quality of work life and ethical behavior and its implication to increasing the organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Management Development*, 39(3):293-305. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-07-2018-0186>
- Rambe, P. & Ndofirepi, T.M. (2017). Ethical perceptions of employees in small retailing firms: A case of indigenous-owned fast-food outlets in Zimbabwe. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 20(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajems.v20i1.1574>
- Ringle, C.M., Wende, S. & Becker, J.-M. (2024). *SmartPLS 4*. Bönningstedt: SmartPLS.
- Saleh, A. & Bista, K. (2017). Examining factors impacting online survey response rates in educational research: Perceptions of graduate students. *Journal of MultiDisciplinary Evaluation*, 13(29):63-74. <https://doi.org/10.56645/jmde.v13i29.487>
- Sapta, I.K.S., Rustiarini, N.W., Kusuma, I.G.A.E.T. & Astakoni, I.M.P. (2021). Spiritual leadership and organizational commitment: The mediation role of workplace spirituality. *Cogent Business and Management*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2021.1966865>
- Sarstedt, M., Hair Jr, J.F., Cheah, J.H., Becker, J.M. & Ringle, C.M. (2019). How to specify, estimate, and validate higher-order constructs in PLS-SEM. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 27(3):197-211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2019.05.003>
- Saunders, M.N.K., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2016). *Research methods for business students*. 7th Edition. Harlow: Pearson.
- Scherrer, R. (2019). *The psychology of ethical behaviour*. <https://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/511/188412.html> [Accessed 2024-11-18].
- Scott, P.H. & Tweed, S. (2016). Implications of spiritual leadership on organisations. *Journal of Education and A Social Policy*, 3(6):66-69.
- Sharma, S. & Singh, S. (2020). Organisational commitment as a mediator between workplace spirituality and work-family enrichment: A study of nurses. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 163(4):743-761.
- Smith, H.J. & Hasnas, J. (1999). Ethics and information systems: The Corporate Domain. *MIS Quarterly*, 23(1):109-127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/249412>
- Tecchio, E.L., Cunha, C.J.C. & Santos, F.B. (2016). Spirituality in organisations. *Organizações and Sociedade*, 23(79):590-606. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1984-9230794>
- Trevino II, R. (2018). A few disgruntled employees can destroy your company culture. *Entrepreneur*. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/319065> [Accessed 2024-11-18].
- Turyakira, P.K. (2018). Ethical practices of small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries: Literature analysis. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 21(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajems.v21i1.1756>
- Van der Walt, F. (2018). Workplace spirituality, work engagement and thriving at work. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 44. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v44i0.1457>
- Van der Walt, F. (2019). The impact of workplace spirituality on the ethical behaviour and decision-making of project managers. Master's dissertation, Cranefield College of Project and Programme Management, South Africa. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajip.v45i0.1687>
- Van der Walt, F. (2024). Organisational spirituality and work engagement: The mediating role of thriving at work. *African Journal of Business & Economic Research*, 19(2):457-480. <https://doi.org/10.31920/1750-4562/2024/v19n2a20>

- Van der Walt, F. & De Klerk, J.J. (2014). Workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 26(3):379-389. <https://doi.org/10.3109/09540261.2014.908826>
- Van Wyk, I. & Venter, P. (2022). Perspectives on business ethics in South African small and medium enterprises. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 16(1):81-104. <https://doi.org/10.15249/16-1-285>
- Vedula, S.B. & Agrawal, R.K. (2024). Mapping spiritual leadership: A bibliometric analysis and synthesis of past milestones and future research agenda. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 189(2):301-328. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-023-05346-8>
- Widodo, S. & Suryosukmono, G. (2021). Spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality and their effects on meaningful work: Self-transcendence as mediator role. *Management Science Letters*, 11:2115-2126. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2021.2.016>
- Zhu, Y., Ouyang, C. & Chen, W. (2022). Spiritual leadership, autonomous motivation and employee craftsmanship spirit: The cross level moderating effect of caring ethical climate. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 15:1971-1988. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S358107>