Spiritual leadership and lecturer performance: mediating role of work motivation

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Article Info

ABSTRACT

Spiritual leadership developed from intrinsic motivation is based on ethical and moral values that align with the education system. However, the research is limited in the context of higher education institutions. Therefore, this study aims to provide an understanding of the effect of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance through work motivation. The research design was quantitative, with 120 samples of permanent lecturers in private higher education institutions who have obtained lecturer certificates. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using Smart-PLS. The results showed that spiritual leadership affects lecturer performance and work motivation. In addition, work motivation plays a mediating role with a high effect size. Hence, these findings can serve as a basis for higher education institutions to develop more inclusive and inspiring leadership strategies that integrate spiritual values and create a more motivating work environment for lecturers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is recognized as a determinant of economic growth [1]–[3]. Education improves productivity capabilities and technological advancement [4], [5]. This condition underscores the significance of education in developing self-potential, especially at the higher education level in society's development. Higher education is essential for acquiring the skills to compete in the global economy and adapt to technological advancements [6]. In achieving these purposes, lecturer performance plays a crucial role. Lecturer performance impacts the quality of learning, research, and community service [7], [8], even charged with the responsibility of preparing students' careers through the career development center [9]. Therefore, a deep understanding of the factors influencing lecturer performance is essential for developing an effective and quality education system.

Lecturer performance is a significant and strategic factor that determines student performance and the quality of higher education institutions [10]–[12]. Lecturers' performance is assessed from teaching, research, and community service [7]. On the other hand, performance is not just a matter of what is achieved but how it is achieved according to several studies [13], [14]. Performance should be defined based on conduct rather than outcomes and should only encompass behavior pertinent to organizational purposes. Performance is a multidimensional concept that refers to work outcomes, behavior patterns, and all employee actions following organizational objectives [15], [16].

Previous studies have examined several factors that influence lecturer performance. However, the exciting study is the role of leadership style. It considers that almost all aspects of the organization are influenced and even dependent on the leadership role [17]. Leadership is a critical predictor of followers' positive attitudes and organizational sustainability [18]–[20]. Moreover, unique and labor-intensive higher education institutions require different leadership styles [8]. Several leadership styles have been studied regarding lecturer performance, mainly transactional and transformational leadership [10], [21]–[24]. Meanwhile, studies exploring the impact of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance are limited [17], [25], even though the concept of spiritual leadership aligns with the education system.

Spiritual leadership theory was developed with a focus on aspects of spirituality that are believed to be the most profound dimension of human experience related to harmonization that brings happiness to oneself and others [26]–[28]. Spiritual leadership theory is a leadership paradigm that focuses on internal drive, vision, hope, and selfless love. This leadership style allows leaders to address the fundamental needs of leaders and followers, leading to increased organization, dedication, and productivity [27], [29]. Spiritual leadership fosters integrity, humanism, ethics, and respect within organizations [30]. Spiritual leadership involves the values, attitudes, and behaviors needed to encourage oneself and others to achieve spiritual well-being internally. Previous research has shown that spiritual leadership directly affects employee performance in higher education institutions [31], [32]. However, other findings show different results [33]. Limited studies and inconsistent results require a reassessment of the effect of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance in higher education institutions by considering work motivation as a mediator.

Motivation is the dynamic process through which an individual's endeavors are stimulated, guided, and maintained to attain an objective [13], [34], [35]. Work motivation consists of intrinsic motivation from oneself and extrinsic motivation due to stimuli from outside the individual [36]. Therefore, motivating each individual is essential to aligning individual and organizational interests. Previous research has found that spiritual leadership is related to work motivation [37], [38] and revealed the critical role of work motivation in improving performance [35], [39]. Previous research indicates that motivation improves lecturer performance [40]–[42]. However, no research explicitly investigates work motivation's role in the effect of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance [17].

The study aims to address the research gap by examining the role of work motivation as a mediating variable in the relationship between spiritual leadership and lecturer performance. Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework of this investigation. Based on the theoretical review, relevant research findings, and the framework that has been described, the hypotheses of this study are: i) spiritual leadership has a positive effect on lecturer performance (H1); ii) spiritual leadership has a positive effect on work motivation (H2); iii) work motivation has a positive effect on lecturer performance (H3); and iv) work motivation mediates the effect of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance (H4). The results of the study can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanism of influence of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance in higher education. In addition, the study also makes an essential contribution to the development of educational management theory and practice by encouraging the implementation of spiritual leadership practices that can improve lecturers' work motivation and performance.
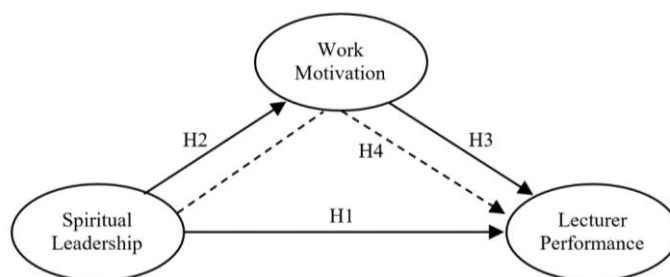

Figure 1. Research's conceptual framework

2. METHOD
2.1. Research design, population, and sampling
The study design is quantitative, involving testing linked ideas on variables that are measured numerically and assessed using statistical processes [43]. The research location was selected in Bali, Indonesia because Bali is recognized as one of the regions in Indonesia that practices spiritual values in their social interactions. The study population consisted of lecturers from various private higher education institutions in cities and Bali regencies with similar characteristics [44]. The lecturers are professional educators with a

national identification number as permanent lecturers and a national lecturer certificate. Research samples are part of the population [45]. The sample number is determined based on the concept of Roscoe [46], where the sample size is minimal 10 times the number of research variables for a multivariate study. Hair *et al.* [47] explained that there is no identification issue when using a small sample, but the larger sample size will increase the precision and consistency of the PLS-SEM estimate. Therefore, this study determined that the sample size was 40 times the number of variables or 120 lecturers, which was selected through a simple random sampling technique. The sample size has met the statistical test power of 80% with a minimum path coefficient level of 0.21-0.3 and a significant level of 5% in multivariate research using PLS-SEM [47].

Characteristics of the 120 samples are presented in Table 1. A total of 60% of the lecturers are female, while 40% are male. Most lecturers were between 30-39 years old (39.2%), and only 13.3% were over 59. The most recent education is at the magister level (72.5%), while lecturers with doctoral education are only 27.5%. The length of service is mostly between 6-10 years (40%) and 34.2% with more than 15 years of work period. About 69.2% of lecturers have the functional position of lector, while only 3.30% are professors. The type of higher education institution as the home base of lecturers is mostly universities (66.7%), followed by colleges (16.7%), and the least is academies and polytechnics, with only 0.8% each. Indonesia's national accreditation board has accredited all higher education institutions. However, most lecturers are at higher education institutions with an accreditation level of B (41.7%) or very good (40.0%). Moreover, higher education institutions still have C (5.80%) or good (12.5%) accreditation levels. None of the lecturers are at the home base of higher education institutions with A or superior accreditation levels.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographics	Classification	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	54	40.0
	Female	66	60.0
Age	20 - 29	2	1.70
	30 - 39	47	39.2
	40 - 49	29	24.2
	50 - 59	26	21.7
	> 59	16	13.3
Education	Master	87	72.5
	Doctor	33	27.5
Years of service	1 - 5	9	7.50
	6 - 10	48	40.0
	11 - 15	22	18.3
	> 15	41	34.2
Functional	Expert Assistant	13	10.8
	Lector	83	69.2
	Head Lector	20	16.7
	Professor	4	3.30
Higher education institutions	Academic	1	0.80
	Polytechnic	1	0.80
	College	20	16.7
	Institute	18	15.0
	University	80	66.7
Accreditation	C	7	5.80
	B	50	41.7
	A	0	0.00
	Good	15	12.5
	Very good	48	40.0
	Superior	0	0.00

2.2. Instruments

This research uses the questionnaire method as the main instrument. The questionnaire is a closed questionnaire consisting of two parts; the first consists of question items to find out the characteristics of the respondents, and the second is used to obtain data from the constructs developed in this study. The questionnaire was designed based on the theoretical study formulated in several parts of the questionnaire variables. The research interval used to score respondents' answers to the question items in the questionnaire adopted a Likert scale, where the score weights followed the opinion of Wang *et al.* [48], with an odd number of scores, 1 for strongly disagree to 5 for strongly agree answers.

The spiritual leadership questionnaire refers to previous studies [49], [50], which consists of the dimensions of vision, cultural love, and faith/hope with 22 item statements that we develop and customize. The work motivation questionnaire was developed referring to the concepts of several studies [13], [51], consisting of the dimensions of need, expectancy, reinforcement, equity, job description, and goal-setting with 36 items of statements. Meanwhile, the lecturer performance questionnaire refers to the other concepts [15], which

consists of task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance, and counterproductive work behavior with 36 item statements. The research questionnaire has passed the content validity test with the Gregory approach [52], involving two experts, and obtained values for the spiritual leadership questionnaire, work motivation, and lecturer performance, respectively 0.917, 0.944 and 0.950 above 0.80, indicating very high content validity. While testing the item validity through the Pearson product-moment test with the results of r-count>r-table (0.159) with a significance value smaller than 0.05 and reliability testing through the calculation of Cronbach's alpha obtained values for the spiritual leadership questionnaire, work motivation, and lecturer performance respectively 0.968, 0.972 and 0.913 higher than 0.80 which indicates very high reliability.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

Data was collected using a Google Form that was distributed online. All participants provided information about the study's objectives and advantages. Respondents in the study were voluntary, and any information provided was guaranteed confidentiality. The 120 data collected were analyzed using partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of Smart-PLS 3.0 software. The study assessed the second-order reflective model by analyzing the measurement and structural models outlined [53]. The first stage in evaluating the measurement model involves testing construct validity, including convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity in the reflective model is evaluated based on the loading value, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). We evaluated discriminant validity through the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) value. These values also confirm the validity and reliability of the questionnaire statement items against their latent variables. The second stage evaluates the measurement model using latent variables and is assessed as in the first stage. Within the structural model, the evaluation is carried out on the significance value of the p-value and the model's goodness in terms of the R-square, f-square, Q-square, statistical value of mediation upsilon (v), and PLSpredict.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
3.1. Results

The analysis was conducted using the second-order method, where spiritual leadership (X), work motivation (M), and lecturer performance (Y) are latent variables that were measured using a two-stage method (second-order constructs). In contrast, vision (X1), altruistic love (X2), faith/hope (X3), need (M1), expectancy (M2), reinforcement (M3), equity (M4), job description (M5), goal-setting (M6), task performance (Y1), contextual performance (Y2), adaptive performance (Y3), and counterproductive work (Y4) were measured using a one-stage method (first-order constructs). The first stage outer model will assess the value of loading, CR, AVE, and HTMT for each item from constructs X1, X2, X3, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, Y1, Y2, Y3, and Y4. The items of the first-order model that meet the outer loading criteria >0.07. While the CR value >0.7 and the AVE value >0.5 are shown in Table 2. Construct reliability and validity have met the criteria. Similarly, the discriminant validity is confirmed through the HTMT approach, according to the recommendation of Hair et al. [54]. Table 3 shows that the multitrait-multimethod (HTMT) value is less than 0.90.

The results of the analysis in the first order produce latent variable values X1, X2, X3, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, Y1, Y2, Y3, and Y4, which are used in the second order measurement model. The outer loading value exceeds 0.7. Likewise, the CR value> 0.7 and the AVE value> 0.5 are shown in Table 4. It shows that the construct is valid and reliable. The analysis continued by assessing discriminant validity. The HTMT value shown in Table 5 is less than 0.9, indicating that the construct exhibits high discriminant validity.

Table 2. Construct reliability and validity (first-order)

Indicator	Item	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Spiritual leadership (X)	X1	0.873	0.877	0.904	0.612
	X2	0.943	0.947	0.953	0.720
	X3	0.882	0.884	0.914	0.680
Work motivation (M)	M1	0.854	0.859	0.896	0.633
	M2	0.865	0.867	0.903	0.651
	M3	0.816	0.818	0.891	0.731
	M4	0.866	0.867	0.909	0.714
	M5	0.876	0.886	0.910	0.671
	M6	0.883	0.892	0.915	0.683
Lecturer performance (Y)	Y1	0.890	0.889	0.916	0.647
	Y2	0.815	0.818	0.871	0.574
	Y3	0.813	0.819	0.878	0.643
	Y4	0.722	0.744	0.841	0.638

Table 3. HTMT value (first-order)

Item	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	X1	X2_	X3	Y1	Y2	Y3
M1												
M2	0.790											
M3	0.879	0.683										
M4	0.840	0.631	0.813									
M5	0.696	0.816	0.612	0.665								
M6	0.672	0.701	0.700	0.605	0.840							
X1	0.541	0.570	0.551	0.625	0.650	0.705						
X2_	0.792	0.545	0.731	0.749	0.613	0.748	0.760					
X3	0.659	0.706	0.583	0.618	0.687	0.751	0.729	0.756				
Y1	0.374	0.455	0.352	0.374	0.496	0.476	0.598	0.408	0.635			
Y2	0.567	0.627	0.448	0.477	0.651	0.617	0.726	0.478	0.632	0.737		
Y3	0.318	0.534	0.446	0.348	0.693	0.663	0.592	0.418	0.607	0.612	0.760	
Y4	0.467	0.469	0.487	0.429	0.532	0.544	0.566	0.499	0.414	0.433	0.678	0.552

Table 4. Construct reliability and validity (second-order)

Indicator	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Lecturer performance (Y)	0.813	0.823	0.878	0.643
Spiritual leadership (X)	0.862	0.863	0.916	0.784
Work motivation (M)	0.912	0.916	0.932	0.694

Table 5. HTMT value (second-order)

Indicator	Lecturer performance (Y)	Spiritual leadership (X)	Work motivation (M)
Lecturer performance (Y)			
Spiritual leadership (X)	0.789		
Work motivation (M)	0.722	0.887	

Furthermore, structural model analysis was conducted. Figure 2 demonstrates the value of t statistics on each relationship between variables. Figure 2 also displays the significant values and outcomes of the research hypothesis test, which are more clearly shown in Table 6.

Table 6 displays the direct and indirect impacts among the variables examined. The direct effect is statistically significant, with a t-statistic of more than 1.97 and a p-value of less than 0.05. Spiritual leadership significantly influences lecturer performance more than work motivation, as indicated by the path coefficient value of 0.441. In addition, the indirect effect shows that work motivation plays a role in mediating the effect of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance (p-value 0.020<0.05). The effect size of the role of work motivation refers to the statistical value of mediation upsilon (v) [55]. The calculation findings indicate that the value of v is 0.112, above 0.075. This value suggests that the function of work motivation in mediating the indirect effect of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance at the structural level is considered medium to high [56].
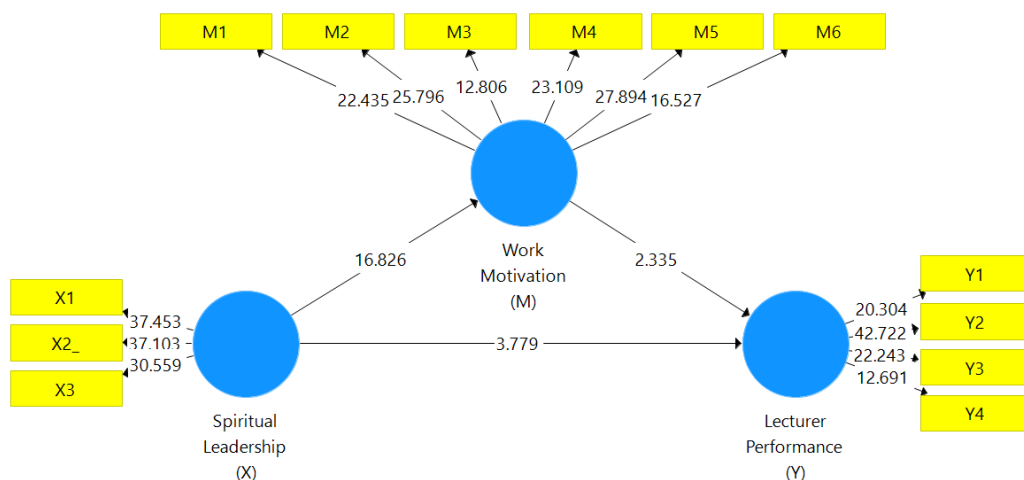

Figure 2. Inner model (second-order)

Table 6. Assessment of path analysis and hypothesis testing

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Decision
Spiritual leadership (X) → Lecturer performance (Y)	0.441	0.444	0.117	3.779	0.000	H1 supported
Spiritual leadership (X) → Work motivation (M)	0.790	0.792	0.047	16.826	0.000	H2 supported
Work motivation (M) → Lecturer performance (Y)	0.281	0.281	0.120	2.335	0.020	H3 supported
Spiritual leadership (X) → Work motivation (M) → Lecturer performance (Y)	0.222	0.222	0.095	2.331	0.020	H4 supported

The results also show the model's goodness regarding the SRMR value of 0.078, which is more diminutive than 0.10 according to Schermelleh-engel and Moosbrugger [57] and even lower than 0.08 according to Hair *et al.* [47]. It suggests that the proposed model fits the empirical data, where the estimated correlation matrix of the model is close to the correlation matrix of the empirical data. According to research by Hair *et al.* [47], work motivation has a low influence on lecturer performance (f-square 0.056). Meanwhile, spiritual leadership moderately affects lecturer performance, and work motivation has a high influence with an f-square value greater than 0.35. It indicates that every implementation of spiritual leadership in higher education institution management will encourage the work motivation of lecturers in higher education institutions.

The variance in lecturer performance that can be explained by spiritual leadership and work motivation is R-square 0.4669 or 46.69% and is included in the medium influence. In contrast, the amount of variance in work motivation variables can be explained by spiritual leadership with an R-square of 0.6223 or 62.23% and can be categorized as having a medium to high effect [58]. The Q^2-predict value of spiritual leadership is 0.427, and work motivation shows a Q^2-predict of 0.609, which identifies the model as having predictive relevance [47]. In addition, most of the measurement items of the endogenous variables of the proposed PLS model have RMSE and MAE values lower than the LM model, so the proposed PLS model has good predictive power.

3.2 Discussion

This study examined how spiritual leadership in higher education institutions affects lecturer performance through work motivation as a mediator. The study confirmed all predictions, highlighting the significance of spiritual leadership in enhancing lecturer performance, with work motivation functioning as the primary mediator. Spiritual leadership is a leadership style that reflects spiritual values, such as integrity, ethics, empathy, and service. This leadership style is proven to impact individual and organizational behavior [17], [25]. This study found that spiritual leadership positively and significantly affects lecturer performance in private higher institutions. The results of the analysis prove the first hypothesis. The study results are consistent with previous research [31]–[33], where spiritual leadership in higher education positively impacts lecturers in performing their teaching, research, and community service responsibilities. Spiritual leaders who practice these values can empower lecturers by creating an inspiring work environment, strengthening their attachment to the institution, and encouraging dedication to making high-quality contributions. Spiritual leadership can tap into the basic needs of human resources in organizations to be more committed and productive [27]. It demonstrates how harmonization can be created, cultivating organizational citizenship behavior [8], [59], [60].

Other findings prove the second hypothesis that spiritual leadership has a positive and significant effect on the work motivation of lecturers. Spiritual leaders who create a trusting and supportive work climate can increase lecturers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Spiritual leadership is a philosophy that is part of an intrinsic motivation paradigm. It involves creating a vision, inspiring hope, and demonstrating selfless love [61]–[64]. This theory motivates leaders to include a component of spiritual values in inclusive behavior [65]. Therefore, the findings prove the high ability of spiritual leadership to influence the work motivation of lecturers. This study's results align with several researches [37], [66]. Spiritual leadership gives lecturers an emotional and inspirational drive, positively impacting their work motivation. Leaders who exhibit a spiritual leadership style ensure the fulfilment of needs, workplace fairness, expectations, and professional development to achieve the goals of the private higher education institution.

Motivating each individual in the organization is essential to aligning the interests of the individual and the organization. Therefore, work motivation is an integral part of performance achievement. The study results prove the third hypothesis that work motivation positively affects lecturer performance at private higher education institutions in Bali. Work motivation is a stimulant for lecturers to achieve optimal results in performing their functions. Highly motivated lecturers will excel by demonstrating dedication, passion, and a

commitment to delivering high-quality education. Prior studies have shown a clear correlation between job motivation and lecturer performance. Several studies [12], [40], [42] suggest that motivation positively impacts enhancing lecturer performance. High work motivation encourages lecturers to work better, contribute more optimally, and improve the quality of education in higher education institutions. Findings indicate that work motivation through the fulfilment of needs, expectations, equity, self-development, job design, and clear goals will impact task performance, adaptive, contextual, and minimize counterproductive behavior of lecturers.

Furthermore, this study answered the fourth hypothesis that work motivation is a mediating variable in the relationship between spiritual leadership and lecturer performance. The analysis demonstrated that work motivation has a high effect size in the indirect effect in the structural model. Although limited research includes work motivation as a mediator in the effect of spiritual leadership on lecturer performance in higher education institutions, several studies confirm it in different contexts. Fry *et al.* [29] explained the critical role of self-related motivation in the effect of spiritual leadership on performance. Likewise, other research [67] provides an understanding of intrinsic motivation as a mediating effect of spiritual leadership on pro-environmental behavior. Overall, this supports the understanding of the critical role of motivation in improving performance [35]. Motivation arises from internal motivation and external motivation [36]. In the context of leaders who practice spiritual leadership, they can create a harmonized work environment that affects the level of work motivation of lecturers. Spiritual leadership that supports and empowers lecturers in achieving academic goals will encourage them to make optimal contributions to achieving institutional objectives.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of spiritual leadership in developing lecturer performance in higher education institutions. Spiritual leadership practicing moral and ethical values can motivate and empower lecturers. Furthermore, this study confirms the critical role of work motivation as a mediator in the relationship by demonstrating how supportive spiritual leaders create a motivating and inspiring environment for lecturers. Implementing spiritual leadership is a relevant strategy for creating a positive and motivating work environment, encouraging better lecturer performance, and improving the quality of education in higher education institutions. Therefore, these findings can serve as a foundation for higher education institutions to develop more inclusive and inspiring leadership strategies that integrate spiritual values and develop a more motivating academic environment for lecturers. Although this study contributes meaningfully to understanding the relationship between spiritual leadership, work motivation, and lecturer performance, it also has some limitations. The study was only conducted at private universities in Bali, Indonesia; therefore, the results must be generalized with caution. Studies involving a more comprehensive sample of private and public higher education institutions in different provinces of Indonesia may increase the external validity of the findings. In addition, using self-report data from lecturers may cause bias in reporting levels of spiritual leadership, work motivation, and performance. More diverse research methods and data triangulation may improve the study's internal validity.

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