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How Spiritual Leader Fuels Internal Whistleblowing and Knowledge Sharing Behavior: The Bridging Role of Employee Empathy

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the dynamic function of spiritual leadership in volatile business environments. The research investigates the systematic expression of employee empathy, which subsequently leads to knowledge sharing behavior and internal whistleblowing. The study details the mechanism by which spiritual leadership influences organizational behavior by invoking employee empathy. The current study utilizes a deductive approach employing a survey method to test the data. The proposed framework was examined using Structural equation modelling on the statistical evidence collected from 258 employees of selected national pharmaceutical companies. A purposive Sampling Strategy was adopted for data collection. The findings demonstrate that spiritual leadership cultivates employees' empathy, facilitating knowledge-sharing behavior and internal whistle-blowing. The paper elucidates the mechanism by which spiritual leadership manifests in positive employee behavior. The present study provides a distinctive perspective on the catalytic role of spiritual leadership in fostering positive cognitions and behaviors in the organization. It utilizes social cognitive theory offering enrichment to the literature. The present study is ground-breaking as it suggests spiritual leadership as a strategic intervention to address the prevalent industry issues facilitating the attainment of coveted employee behaviors in national pharmaceutical companies.

Keywords: Spiritual Leadership, Employee Empathy, Internal Whistleblowing, Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Introduction

In today's turbulent environment, organizations strive to achieve transparency in their business processes, as it is considered a critical factor in establishing a sustainable competitive advantage (Burhan & Khan, 2024). Organizations have established and introduced human-centric business processes, including task-centric, facilitation-centric, and management-centric business processes (Malik et al., 2023). Among all, management-centric business processes have garnered elevated attention owing to their potential effectiveness in motivating extra-role behaviors and ethics, the role of leadership in this regard is inevitable (Malik et al., 2021). To accomplish the intended outcomes, a multitude of businesses are implementing the most suitable leadership style (Jeon & Choi, 2020; Samul, 2024). Spiritual leadership has emerged as an essential

technique because it fosters faith, enables a strong vision, and provides unconditional love (Fry et al., 2003; Gotsis & Grimani, 2017; Pio & Lengkong, 2020; Salehzadeh et al., 2015; Samul, 2024).

Fry et al. (2003) introduced the concept of spiritual leadership, which is based on spiritual values and intrinsic motivation that facilitates advancement in both personal and professional domains through multiple mechanisms. The multitude of existing research has focused on the benefits of spiritual leadership increasing the efficiency, and effectiveness of business processes (Salehzadeh et al., 2015; Samul, 2024; Vedula & Agrawal, 2023) by cultivating communal connections, genuine care entrenched in strong-knit interpersonal relations (Pio & Tampi, 2018) inspiring innovation (Zhang & Yang, 2021), citizenship behavior (Hunsaker, 2016), and discretionary work behaviors (Sholikhah et al., 2019).

Additionally, research has underscored the impact of spiritual leadership on employees' attitudes, thoughts, cognitions and behaviors in workplace (Abualigah & Badar, 2024; Raj et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2021; Aboobaker & KA, 2024). For instance, spiritual leadership theory postulates that numerous constructive work attitudes and behaviors are accomplished by spiritual leadership through spiritual well-being (Hunsaker, 2021), autonomous motivation (Zhang & Yang, 2021), psychological climate (Arthachinda & Charoensukmongkol, 2024), quality of work life (Pio, 2022; Pio & Tampi, 2018), and psychological empowerment (Zhu et al., 2023). However, the existent literature is inadequate to explain the effects of spiritual leadership on employee personal and professional development enabling outcomes favourable work outcomes (Ahmed et al., 2023). Additionally, while the significance of leadership in shaping work behaviors through employee empathy is acknowledged (Elche et al., 2020), the research has yet to investigate the impact of employee empathy on the outcome of the most pertinent notion, spiritual leadership which is also highlighted by Piwowar-Sulej and Iqbal (2024) in their recent review. Employee empathy is entrenched in the cognitive evaluation and awareness of others' emotions and feelings which is an inevitable personal development in the presence of spiritual leaders. Recent research has elaborated that spiritual leadership fosters individual and organizational resources (Yasin et al., 2023) to foster knowledge-sharing inclinations (Usmanova et al., 2023). Furthermore, such soul-

nurturing leadership (Aboobaker & KA, 2024) assumes a value-driven approach which stimulates ethical behaviors at work (Pio & Lengkong, 2020). Additionally, Malik et al. (2023) also emphasized that future research should focus on exploring the role of spiritual leadership in knowledge-sharing behavior and internal whistle-blowing through the different mediator. Therefore, the current paper undertakes the unexplored mediating role of employee empathy to explain the role of spiritual leadership in shaping knowledge-sharing behavior and internal whistle-blowing.

Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector is the tenth largest in South Asia, constituted of 3% MNC, and 97% local companies, with the industry value expected to exceed 1 trillion by 2025 (Pakistan Pharmaceutical Sector Report, 2023). This fast-paced, competitive sector demands relentless work hours to meet strict deadlines (Jannat et al., 2023; Shah & Ali, 2023) from employees, all striving for a single formula to win over the competition (Memon et al., 2023). The consequent burnout and exhaustion (Khan et al., 2021; Sarwar et al., 2020) adversely affect the inclination towards extra-role behaviors like knowledge-sharing behavior, dictating the mechanisms that enable it. To swell the melancholy, despite the institution of the Drug Regulatory Authority Pakistan, risk of impurities, inappropriate labelling (Rasheed et al., 2019) poor quality (Siddiq et al., 2021), and profit-led incentivization (Gul et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2025; Khowaja & Feroz, 2020; Noor et al., 2023) are ubiquitous owing import of 90% of active ingredients, weak infrastructure and lack of law enforcement (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020; Jannat et al., 2023; Pakistan Pharmaceutical Sector Report, 2023). In the presence of such issues, the significance of ethical behaviors like internal whistle-blowing is mounted to cope with ethical mishaps.

Therefore, leadership that induces transformation in both the individual and the external environment through intrinsic motivation that surpasses materialistic benefits is crucial, dictating spiritual leadership (Abou et al., 2023). Despite its significance, as per researchers' knowledge, merely one study investigating the impact of spiritual leadership on employee outcomes i.e., green behavior in the local pharmaceutical sector is found which also circles multinational companies only (Hassan & Pasha, 2023). The main objective of this paper is to develop and test an integrated model of spiritual leadership and its methodical effect on employee behaviors. The other derived objective includes

testing the mediation of employee empathy with spiritual leadership with knowledge-sharing behavior and internal whistle-blowing. Furthermore, the current study utilizes social cognitive theory to explain the effect of spiritual leadership on employee outcomes as such leaders have the potential to shape employees' cognitions and personal aspects ensuring learning and behavioral regulation (Yang et al., 2019). The paper fulfills the theoretical gap in the literature regarding the utilization of social cognitive theory in spiritual leadership literature highlighted by Piwowar-Sulej and Iqbal (2024).

Literature Review

Theoretical Underpinnings

The social cognitive theory asserts that individuals mould their behaviors based on their involvement and understandings which are affected by their surroundings. It explains that individual behavior influences and depends on interaction external, behavioral and cognitive aspects simultaneously (Bandura, 1988). Cognitive factors include an individual's opinions, beliefs, anticipations, and insights. The conception of cognitive factors is central to understanding how they shape our actions and behaviors. Behavioral aspects relate to participation in activities. External factors are environmental and situational factors including social and physical work settings. Environmental drivers undoubtedly alter cognitive processes enabling observational wisdom, self-efficacy and learning. The consequent observational learning outlines employee work behaviors (Bandura, 1988).

In the realm of leadership, the social cognitive theory posits that leaders and followers engage in a dynamic interaction, wherein leader behavior and socio-structural factors influence follower attitudes and behaviors (Fry et al., 2011). The theory postulates that employees internalize and reflect upon work experiences enabled by leadership to gain acumen and insight which shapes their self-concept and self-efficacy inspiring self-confidence and a sense of compatibility (Bandura, 1986). In the presence of spiritual leadership, the provision of unconditional support, clarity in vision and belief organizational capacities, instil feelings of compatibility with the organization which instigates relational aspects (Yang et al., 2019; Zhu et al., 2023). Interpersonal relations at the workplace allow understanding of others' (Samul, 2019) emotions, motives and interest with others rooted in genuine care that invokes cognitive processes to yield

employee empathy. Such cognitive processes facilitate behavioral regulation in alignment with desired outcomes (Sholikhah et al., 2019). Therefore, the empathy facilitated by the compatible milieu fostered by spiritual leadership inspires discretionary and ethical behavior (Pio & Lengkong, 2020; Yasin et al., 2023). The genuine care and concern rooted in employee empathy inspires them to report ethical misconduct to prevent the stakes of the organization and employees resulting in internal whistle-blowing. Furthermore, the unpretentious indulgence entrenched in employee empathy infuses the prospect of knowledge sharing (Miller & Wallis, 2011) as an attempt to reduce others' suffering.

Hypotheses Development

Spiritual Leaders And Employee Empathy

Empathy is a social competence that enable employees to comprehend others motives, values and emotions (Salovey & Meyer, 1990). In organizations, where collaborating with each other is a perquisite, employee empathy emerges as a desirable talent as it allows employees to visualize and understand the situations of others including colleagues (Yu & Kirk, 2008). In organizational context, cognitive empathy is more relatable owing to its role in yielding understanding of emotions and resultant consideration (Elche et al., 2020).

Prior research elaborated on the prospective influence of leadership in shaping employees' cognitions, and attitudes (Lord et al., 1999; Malik et al., 2021). Research also particularized that effective leadership have the potential to reinforce competence and confidence emphasizing the sharing of values and internalization of experiences (Chen et al., 2012). Spiritual leaders are kind, considerate and trustworthy, fulfil promises, diligent despite adversity, show integrity and commitment to the vision, endorsing a sturdy vision, unconditional support, and faith in the organization and individual capacities simultaneously, which consequently inspire the best performance in employees (Abualigah & Badar, 2024; Raj et al., 2024). Spiritual leadership outline followers' perceptions, sensitivity and self-concept (Chen & Li, 2013) about themselves and their environment inspiring cognitive aspects like well-being (Hunsaker, 2021), psychological safety (Chen et al., 2021), goal self-concordance (Chen et al., 2022), passion (Afsar et al., 2016; Ali et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2021), environmental justice orientation (Anser et al.,

2021) and consequently manifest as constructive work behaviors.

Such leaders evoke the feelings of person-organization fit (Farmanesh et al., 2021), thus allowing unrepressed communication. The sense of compatibility with the organization and milieu empowers relational aspects (Gotsis & Grimani, 2017; Wu & Lee, 2020). Spiritual leadership with their unconditional support, clarity in vision and assurance, reinstate genuine care, understanding, consideration, and comprehension with colleagues harvesting the essence of employee empathy. The role of leader characteristics and approach in crafting employee empathy at work is inevitable and has been studied in the past (Elche et al., 2020; Naseer et al., 2020). The influence of spiritual leadership in modelling employee empathy is distinguishable because such leaders facilitate a milieu of mutual trust and compassion (Samul, 2019) which enables connections and rapport building within the organization establishing the groundwork for the manifestation of employee empathy.

In line with social cognitive theory, spiritual leadership inspire observational learning, and internalization of values which instigate understanding and consideration for others in employees' cognitions (Yang et al., 2019) manifesting as employee empathy. Based on the literature, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Spiritual leaders significantly influence employee empathy.

Employee Empathy And Internal Whistle-Blowing

Empathy is the understanding of other's emotions and emotional correspondence encircling cognitive aspects. It enables conservational, social and ethical behaviors at work (Yin & Wang, 2023; Yin et al., 2021). Empathy instils care and consideration for all-encompassing peers, management, customers and subordinates. The empathy towards all stakeholders makes employees extra cautious of others' stakes and reputations (Van Herck et al., 2023). Empathy fosters a sense of attunement and comprehension of the individual or situation (Joliffe & Farrington, 2006). Employee empathy enables individuals to diagnose and care for the feelings of others enhancing the understanding of a situation from another person's perspective (Naseer et al., 2020). It enables an employee to envisage the estimated effect of an action on others involved.

Internal whistle-blowing refers to the reporting of ethical mishaps using organizational channels (Park et al., 2005; Cheng et al., 2019). Identification of violation of others'

stakes, prompts and stimulates the testimony of violations. The consciousness and comprehension of the effect on others evoke the urge to curb unethical behaviors by reporting them to the immediate supervisor. Therefore, the empathy of employees instigates ethical and moral behaviors (Elche et al., 2020; Naseer et al., 2020) as the adversity of ethical delinquency is foreseeable. In line social cognitive theory, employees' cognitions and personal aspects have the potential to influence their behaviors, proposing the role of employee empathy in shaping internal whistleblowing

H2: Employee empathy significantly influences internal whistleblowing

Employee Empathy And Knowledge-Sharing Behavior

Knowledge-sharing behavior is the voluntary exchange of acquired information among colleagues (Mogotsi et al., 2011). It is a deliberate extra-role behavior and its quality is dependent on relational aspects prevalent in the organization. The understanding of emotions, feelings and values, which is core of employee empathy fosters strong interpersonal relationships (Pohl et al., 2015). The resultant unhesitant communication and consideration for others inspire employees to share usable knowledge, insight, information and ideas among colleagues (Krok, 2013; Miller & Wallis, 2011). The constructive role of employee empathy in shaping discretionary behaviors like citizenship behavior (Cuff et al., 2016; Elche et al., 2020) and knowledge-related inclinations (Matoskova et al., 2022) is evident. According to social cognitive theory, employee empathy evokes a proclivity towards information transactions shaping knowledge-sharing behavior as an attempt to regulate behaviors. Based on the discussion it is hypothesized that:

H3: Employee empathy significantly influence knowledge-sharing behavior

Mediation Of Employee Empathy

Spiritual leadership is a far-sighted approach, extending beyond outdated limitations and confinements to enable relentless transformation (Raj et al., 2024). Spiritual leaders epitomize and inspire perseverance despite impediments and obstructions (Aboobaker & KA, 2024). Such leadership practices instills hope and faith for betterment through individual capacities and organizational policies. Ensuring clarity in vision is a distinguishing feature of spiritual leaders which infuses diligence in employees by offering direction for mental resources preventing adrift exhaustion. In the presence of

leaders who are kind, considerate, courageous, and fulfil promises, which is the core of spiritual leaders, employees' mental compatibility with the work milieu is heightened (Farmanesh et al., 2021). Such leadership sanctions the fulfilment of an innate craving for connections by offering an environment of mutual trust, and consideration (Samul, 2019), invoking open communication and rapport building in the organization (Gotsis & Grimani, 2017) which leads to strong-knit interpersonal relationships embedded in understanding and care for others i.e. employee empathy (Elche et al., 2020). The consequent empathy enables employees to indulge in constructive behaviors (Cuff et al., 2016).

In 1987, Eisenberg and Miller established a constructive relationship between empathy with moral and prosocial behaviors in contrast to existing literature setting the foundations for the constructive aspects of empathy in shaping moral behaviors. The resultant empathy cultivates consideration and regard for all stakeholders, such as peers, management, customers, and subordinates heightening the concern for their interests (Van Herck et al., 2023). The comprehension of other's emotions, enabled by empathy (Joliffe & Farrington, 2006) persuades employees to indulge in pro-organizational and citizenship behaviors (Elche et al., 2020). Research has highlighted that the presence of empathy encouraged by leadership instils ethical tendencies in employees (Naseer et al., 2020) which prompts employees to report prevailing misconduct. Furthermore, the voluntary endeavours to shield the stakes of colleagues and organizations are amplified in the presence of employee empathy. Such attempts to protect the organization from the adverse consequences of unethical incidences instigate internal whistle-blowing in employees.

Research has also highlighted the role of spiritual leadership in reducing deviant work behaviors in employees (Mahyarni, 2019). Pio and Lengkong established that spiritual leadership plays a significant role in shaping ethical behaviors of employees (Pio & Lengkong, 2020) through intricate intervening mechanisms. In line with social cognitive theory, spiritual leaders act as exemplars of integrity, kindness, consideration and credibility which enables observational learning, shaping their attitudes, cognitions and behaviors to yield internal whistle-blowing. Based on the literature, it is hypothesized that:

H4: Employee empathy mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and internal whistle-blowing.

The consequent empathy i.e. awareness and consideration for others' emotions enabled by supportive leadership fosters unhesitant communication. Such a milieu inspires the exchange of usable knowledge ideas and insight (Krok, 2013; Miller & Wallis, 2011). Research has highlighted the role of empathy as a determinant of constructive activities (Cuff et al., 2016). Matoskova et al. (2022) demonstrated that empathy is a substantial clairvoyant for predicting knowledge-sharing behavior in employees. Additionally, empathy facilitates the understanding of the sufferings of others, which in turn prompts sincere efforts to assist (Yin & Wang, 2023) in the form of knowledge-sharing behavior.

Literature has also highlighted that spiritual leadership decodes in several constructive attitudes, stances and cognitions leading to knowledge-sharing behavior (Usmanova et al., 2023; Yasin et al., 2023). According to social cognitive theory, spiritual leadership invokes employee empathy as a result of observational learning which is utilized as a tool for behavior regulation by the employee (Bandura, 1986).

H5: Employee empathy mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior

Methodology

Due to the amassed implication of national pharmaceutical companies in the post-COVID era, the underexploited growth potential and their contribution to GDP, the challenges confronted by the local industry have garnered the attention of researchers. However, the role of spiritual leadership in hewing a value-based culture in the hypercompetitive pharmaceutical industry remains understudied. Therefore, the current study intends to delve into the mechanism with which spiritual leadership resolves industry issues through the manifestation of employee empathy. A purposive sampling strategy was used to collect 258 filled questionnaires from employees working in national pharmaceutical companies. Employee perceptions about leadership undoubtedly affect the manifestation of desired results (Gridwichai et al., 2020). Therefore, two years of work experience with the current supervisor was rendered essential for participation in the survey because it is considered appropriate to accurately gauge, perceive and make rational judgments about the spiritual inclinations of leadership. For this purpose, self-administered questionnaires

were used for data collection in compliance with a positivist approach and deductivism. The study utilized three three-wave self-reported surveys in which data regarding spiritual leadership, employee empathy and outcomes (knowledge sharing behavior and internal whistle-blowing) were collected at different time intervals. At T1, demographics and perceptions of spiritual leadership were collected. For this purpose, 350 questionnaires were distributed and 300 were returned yielding a return rate of 85%. 279 attained questionnaires were completed. One month after the initial investigation, at T2, employee empathy was investigated by circulating 320 questionnaires which led to the attainment of 280 responses. 258 responses were complete and finalized. A month after T2, knowledge sharing behavior and internal whistle-blowing of employees were assessed by floating 300 questionnaires leading to the attainment of 260 accurate and complete responses. Therefore, 258 questionnaires were finalized for the final analysis. To mitigate common method bias, procedural remedies of Podsakoff et al. (2024) were used.

Instrumentation

To assess the focal constructs, we implemented scales that had been previously validated in the available literature. These scales assessed the responses of the participants on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 =strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree).

Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership was measured using the 17-item scale developed by Fry et al. (2005), which measured employees' perception regarding vision clarity, hope/faith and altruistic love enabled by leadership. The scale has been used in recent studies (Abualigah & Badar, 2024; Samul, 2024) Sample Items include: *“My immediate supervisor cares about me”* and *“My supervisor is trustworthy and loyal to its employees”*.

Employee Empathy

Employee empathy reflects an individual's understanding of values, feelings, and motives of the other party in a social context. It was measured using an adapted four-item scale developed by Davis (1980). It has been used to measure employee empathy in past studies (Bettencourt et al., 2001; Elche et al., 2020). Sample items include: *“I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective”*

Internal Whistleblowing

Internal whistle-blowing measures employees' inclination and willingness to indulge in internal reporting of prevalent ethical misconduct. The scale used to measure internal whistle-blowing comprises four items adapted from Park et al. (2005) used by recent studies (May-Amy et al., 2020; Mkheimer et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2019). Sample item include "I would report it to my immediate supervisor".

Knowledge Sharing Behavior

The five-item scale adapted from past research to measure knowledge-sharing behavior was developed by Van den Hoof and Van Weenen (2004) and is modified to measure knowledge-sharing behavior similar to past studies (Burhan & Khan, 2024; Malik et al., 2023; Mogotsi et al., 2011).

Demographic Analysis

Demographic analysis including gender and employee experience with supervisor is illustrated in Table 1. 212 of the respondents were male while 46 females participated. Most of the respondents-152 out of 258 had experience with supervisors ranging from above 4 up to 6 years.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

Category	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	212	82.2	82.2	82.2
Female	46	17.8	17.8	100.0
<i>Experience</i>				
2-4	68	26.4	26.4	26.4
>4-6	152	58.9	58.9	85.3
Above 6	38	14.7	14.7	100.0

Descriptive Analysis

Before regression, descriptive analysis is done to ensure normality. The values of skewness and kurtosis lie within the acceptable threshold ranging from +2 to -2 indicating the normality of data (Burhan & Khan, 2024) as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (n=258)

Construct	Mean	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Stat.	SE	Stat.	SE
SL	3.556	.8140	-1.307	.160	.868	.320
EE	3.455	.9212	-.529	.160	-.238	.320
KSB	3.719	.8663	-1.129	.160	.630	.320
IntWB	3.536	1.012	-.493	.160	-.245	.320

Note: SL= Spiritual Leadership, EE=Employee Empathy, KSB= Knowledge Sharing Behavior, IntWB= Internal Whistle Blowing.

Results

Discriminant and Convergent Validity

After demographic and descriptive analysis of the main constructs, discriminant and convergent validity are evaluated before producing path model-related outcomes. The table of validity (Table 3) includes values for composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), maximum shared variance, and correlations among independent, mediating and dependent variables. The composite reliability is compliant with Hair et al. (2014) as all values exceed 0.60, demonstrating the reliability of the construct.

To assess convergent validity, an assessment of Average Variance Extracted for all constructs was done which indicated values above 0.50, as recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). It confirms that each construct captures substantial variance within its respective measurement items. For discriminant validity analysis, the square roots of AVE values for each construct with correlation between constructs were inspected. The table indicates that square root of AVE for each variable (along the diagonal line) was higher than corresponding inter-construct correlations, showing the distinctiveness of constructs. Therefore, it is concluded that no validity concerns have been identified in the data

The association of spiritual leadership with all constructs including mediator and dependent variables is assessed which indicate association with knowledge sharing behavior ($r= 0.532$), employee empathy ($r=0.495$) exhibiting a significant relation and internal whistle-blowing remains ($r= 0.679$).

Table 3: Validity (n=258)

Variables	CR	AV E	MS V	MaxR(H)				
					1	2	3	4
Spiritual Leadership	0.954	0.549	0.461	0.955	0.741			
Knowledge Sharing Behavior	0.925	0.714	0.390	0.945	0.532* **	0.845		
Employee Empathy	0.863	0.613	0.390	0.866	0.495* **	0.626* **	0.783	
Internal Whistle-blowing	0.812	0.520	0.461	0.816	0.679	0.589	0.552 2	0.721

***p<0.001

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

To validate the factor structure of the construct, confirmatory factor analysis was done using AMOS in compliance with Hair et al. (2014), reproduced in several recent studies (Aboobaker & KA, 2024; Burhan & Khan, 2024) illustrated in Table 4. The composite reliability for the variables lies between 0.941 and 0.755, which is indicative of good reliability. The estimates of all variables exhibit a value above 0.7 indicating a strong association between items and their constructs. The hypothesized four-factor model indicated adequate fitness indices $\chi^2=693.913$, $DF=318$, χ^2/df 2.182. TLI=.895, CFI=.905, GFI= 0.817, SRMR= 0.069, and RMSEA=.072. Since all the prerequisites of regression are obtained and observed, and no issues related to normality and validity was detected, therefore, structural path hypotheses testing is sanctioned.

Table 4: EFA/CFA, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted outcomes

Constructs & items	Estimates	CR	AVE
<i>Spiritual Leader</i>			
SL1	0.742	-	-
SL2	0.733	-	-
SL3	0.730	-	-
SL4	0.685	-	-

SL5	0.792	-	-
SL6	0.804	-	-
SL7	0.749	0.954	0.549
SL8	0.803	-	-
SL9	0.744	-	-
SL10	0.715	-	-
SL11	0.778	-	-
SL12	0.745	-	-
SL13	0.703	-	-
SL14	0.759	-	-
SL15	0.688	-	-
SL16	0.727	-	-
SL17	0.681	-	-
<i>Knowledge</i>		<i>Sharing</i>	
<i>Behavior</i>			
KSB1	0.904	-	-
KSB2	0.748	-	-
KSB3	0.875	0.925	0.714
KSB4	0.746	-	-
KSB5	0.934	-	-
<i>Employee Empathy</i>			
EE1	0.726	-	-
EE2	0.806	0.863	0.613
EE3	0.799	-	-
EE4	0.798	-	-
<i>Internal Whistleblowing</i>			
IntWB1	0.704	-	-
IntWB2	0.744	0.812	0.520
IntWB3	0.765	-	-
IntWB4	0.768	-	-

Notes: Measurement Model Fit Statistics: CMIN/DF=2.182, RMSEA=.072, SRMR=.069,

CFI=.905

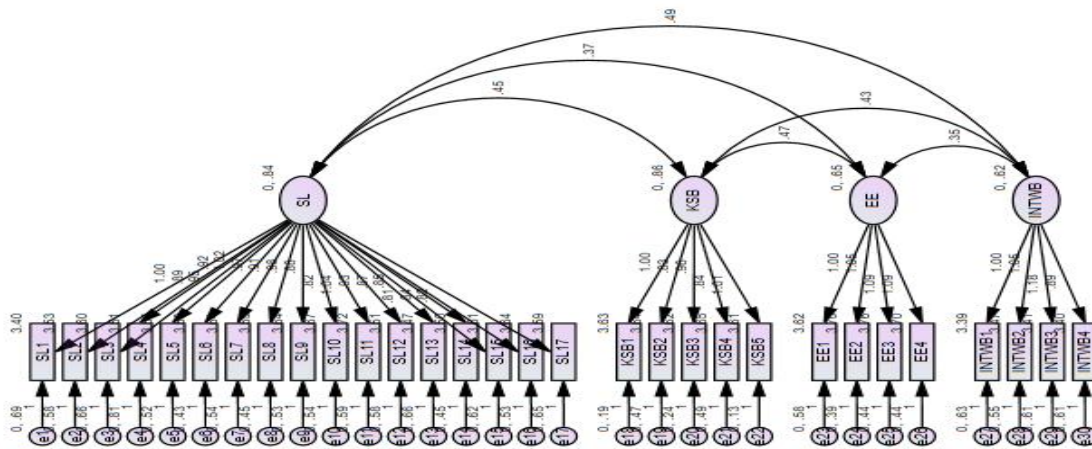


Figure 1

Hypotheses Testing

Table 5 and Figure 2 of path analysis are obtained for formal hypotheses testing done on AMOS 22 in compliance with Hair et al. (2014). The results revealed that spiritual leadership exerts a significant impact on employee empathy ($\beta=0.453$), knowledge sharing ($\beta=0.272$) and internal whistle-blowing ($\beta=0.462$). Employee empathy also influences knowledge-sharing behavior ($\beta =0.637$) and internal whistleblowing ($\beta = 0.307$). All results are significant at $p< 0.001$.

Table 5: Regression analysis for direct relationships

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Employee Empathy	<--- Spiritual Leadership	0.453	0.044	10.251	***
Knowledge Sharing B	<--- Employee Empathy	0.637	0.062	10.325	***
Internal Whistleblowing	<--- Employee Empathy	0.307	0.043	7.139	***
Knowledge Sharing B	<--- Spiritual Leadership	0.272	0.052	5.230	***
Internal Whistleblowing	<--- Spiritual Leadership	0.462	0.036	12.734	***

Source(s): Authors own work

Note: *** $p<0.001$, Knowledge Sharing B= Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Indirect Relationship Analysis

To test the mediation, Hair et al., (2014) guidelines were followed and identified that employee empathy plays a mediating role in the relation of spiritual leadership with

knowledge sharing behavior and internal whistleblowing. Bootstrapping Technique was done using a macro model, established by Hayes et al. (2018) to generate 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals for the indirect effect of spiritual leadership on knowledge sharing behavior and internal whistleblowing through employee empathy as exhibited in Table 6. Total effect of spiritual leadership on knowledge sharing (0.561) and internal whistleblowing (0.601) was estimated. Indirect relationships of spiritual leadership on knowledge sharing behavior through the intervening effect of employee empathy is 0.289 while there is no zero between upper and lower confidence interval indicating mediation. The mediation of employee empathy in the relationship of spiritual leadership with internal whistle-blowing was also approved as indirect effect is 0.139. The absence of zero in the lower and upper confidence interval exhibits the approval of mediation. The approval of both direct and indirect relationship implies the presence of partial mediation in the current study.

Table 6: Regression analysis for the mediated relationships

Relationship	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
				SL → EE → KSB	0.561
SL → EE → IntWB	0.601	0.462	0.139	0.3387	0.6389

Source(s): Author Own work

Note: SL= Spiritual Leadership, EE= Employee Empathy, KS = Knowledge Sharing Behavior, IntWB= Internal Whistleblowing

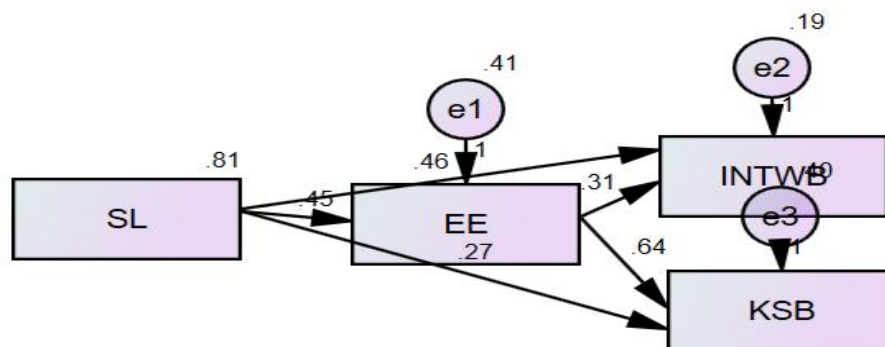


Figure 2. Path Model

Discussion

The study has made a significant contribution by offering spiritual leadership as a panacea for the Pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan. It fulfilled its predetermined objectives of exploring the effect of spiritual leadership on knowledge-sharing behavior and internal whistle-blowing through employee empathy. The results suggest that spiritual leadership enables vision, hope, faith in organizational policies and altruistic love. Such leaders demonstrate care, kindness, honesty, and trustworthiness and instills clarity in terms of vision and mission. Spiritual leaders motivate and enthuse people to give their best effort, inspiring through challenging goals and relentless commitment to organizational members. The presence of a leader, who enables employees to persist passionately despite obstacles, imbues a sense of connectedness and compatibility with the organization and its members. The feeling of alignment with the milieu, and support sanctioned by leadership, enable employees to be their whole selves at the workplace. Such working conditions foster rapport and relational resources, further invoking awareness and emotional alignment with organizational members. The milieu enabled by spiritual leadership motivates sturdy interpersonal relationships entrenched in thoughtfulness for others, which manifests as employee empathy. The ensuing consideration of other's emotions and stakes results in positive work psychology and organizational behavior.

The study validates the results of Abualigah and Badar (2024) endorsing that such leadership practices yield constructive work outcomes transforming employees and organizations simultaneously. The study endorses Samul (2019) that spiritual leaders yield a milieu of compassion and mutual trust which enables employees to interact and build connections. Literature has highlighted the constructive effect of spiritual leadership on employees' extra-role behaviors (Piwovar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2024). The results of the study are in line with Wahid et al. (2019) who suggested spiritual leadership as an antecedent for information and knowledge-based transactions. The role of spiritual leadership in employee ethical behaviors has been studied in the past (Mahyarni, 2019; Pio & Lengkong, 2020). The study divulges deeply into the mechanism with which spiritual leadership manifest as internal whistle-blowing, providing acumen regarding the effects of spiritual leadership in this regard.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

The study offers valuable implications for theory and managers. It unlocks valuable insights for human resource managers to utilize spiritual leadership to apprehend targeted organizational goals by tapping personal values. This research reaffirms the correlation between spiritual leadership and positive organizational outcomes (Abualigah & Badar, 2024). The paper scrupulously explains the intertwined mechanism that shapes internal whistle-blowing and knowledge-sharing behavior in employees in the presence of spiritual leadership in the Pharmaceutical industry in Pakistan. The study offers spiritual leadership as a tool to amicably integrate core organizational values with personal values to foster alignment between the organization and employees. It encourages the managers of the pharmaceutical industry to incorporate spiritual aspects in their leadership styles to encourage the materialization of employee empathy that surpasses the typical self-interest approach. The study successfully offers comprehension to the managers regarding how a spiritual approach to leadership shapes fundamental long-term resources enabling coveted employee behavior in the volatile business milieu. Furthermore, it brings light to the phenomenon that enables direly needed but neglected internal whistle-blowing in the hypercompetitive pharmaceutical industry where ethical compliance remains challenging (Gul et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2025; Khowaja & Feroz, 2020; Noor et al., 2023; Rasheed et al., 2019; Siddiq et al., 2021), owing to ineffective law enforcement (Ahmed & Chandani, 2020; Jannat et al., 2023). The present study allows managers of the pharmaceutical industry to perceive spiritual leadership from a novel perspective due to its undeniable ability to cultivate a deep-down inspiration for ethical compliance that manifests as internal whistleblowing.

Although, Elche et al (2020) and Naseer et al (2020) highlighted the role of servant leadership and leadership humility in shaping employees' cognitions of empathy in the workplace, the literature on the effects of positive leadership on employee empathy remained scarce. The study fills contextual and theoretical gaps simultaneously, as it offers clear-sightedness to the managers of the local pharmaceutical industry to utilize spiritual leadership as a tool to attain employee empathy to resolve prevalent industry issues and enriches the literature of spiritual leadership in the context of employee empathy simultaneously. The study utilized social cognitive theory which has been

narrowly used in the past literature (Piwowar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2024), augmenting the theory with context to spiritual leadership.

Limitations And Future Research Directions

Although the study is conducted rigorously, some limitations have been identified. For example, only the local pharmaceutical industry of Pakistan has been taken into account, ignoring other industries. The telecom industry and healthcare professionals are under substantial pressure and scrutiny in the post-COVID era making the industry hypercompetitive, dictating a leadership that offers constant development. Future research should take other industries to study the effects of spiritual leaders. Although the implication of spiritual leadership and employee empathy is widespread, the study undertakes only a few outcome variables. Future research should enrich the model by undertaking other variables like organisational citizenship behavior, relational capital, and psychological well-being as outcomes of employee empathy.

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