



## The Impact of Spiritual Leadership on Absenteeism through a Serial Mediation of Workplace Spirituality and Job Satisfaction

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**ABSTRACT-** Despite growing interest in spiritual leadership and its impact on organizational outcomes there is a dearth of literature discussing an underlying mechanism of how spiritual leadership help in combating absenteeism from workplace. Under the spiritual leadership theory and social exchange theory, the study aimed to develop and test a comprehensive model that examined the effects of spiritual leadership on absenteeism through serial mediation of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. The data was collected in two phases from 433 employees of banking industry of Pakistan by using multi- stage sampling technique. The findings of the study corroborate proposed hypothesis. The study results reveal that spiritual leadership helps to sustain and maintain workplace spirituality, which will increase job satisfaction of employees. Satisfied employees in turn show less absenteeism. Hence, spiritual leadership minimize absenteeism ratio at workplace through indirect intervention of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. The study has several implications for academicians and practitioners. The study also highlights the significance of spiritual leadership in reducing absenteeism at workplace.

**Key words:** Spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality, job satisfaction, absenteeism, serial mediation.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The topic of leadership has gained scholarly importance over the past few years. Practitioners as well as academicians are in search for conditions of successful leaders. This search for conditions of successful leaders paved the way for emergence of leadership theories. Traditional leadership theories such as the great man theory, contingent theory, and behavioral theory mostly focus on skills, abilities, traits behaviors and contextual factors of leaders (Uslu, 2019). The main purpose of these theories is to find out most effective leadership styles. Thus, an attempt to determine success of a leader is constantly undertaken.

Since 1980s, conventional leadership theories laid emphasis on emotional and authentic aspects of leaders (Seidel et al., 2019). However, in 1990s, with the emergence of the concept of spirituality in management sciences, theorists shifted their focus toward spiritual leadership. The purpose of aligning spirituality with leadership is to find solutions to existing problems at the workplace (Afsar & Badir, 2017). Apparently, capitalism and secularism has imprisoned employees into realm of rationalism and materialism due to which they lost their respect, spirits, values and inner life (Estabrooks, 2017). Moreover, business world in last few decades have witnessed enormous changes ranging from remarkable pace of globalization to rapid technological advancements (Balzer, 2020). These complex changes require frequent behavioral adaptations from employees which eventually will result in turnover intentions, rising unemployment and decrease in employee performance (Chow, 2020). Due to these consequences, employees are in search of such leaders who regenerate their lost spirits and provide meaningful and purposeful environment at workplace. In contrast, many companies are also seeking for such leaders who motivate and inspire employees through newly developed trends in business arena. Many studies has observed that leading employees through values, vision and relationship is better than leading through power, fear and control (Afsar et al., 2016). Hence, there exist a need of such leadership who not only motivate employees through vision, values but also inspire them through their spiritual qualities. The

leaders possessing such qualities are termed as spiritual leaders in the context of organizational behavior literature (Bayighomog & Arasli, 2019).

Some researchers predicted that "Successful corporate leaders of the twenty-first century will be spiritual leaders." (Mahyarni, 2019). Therefore, along with leadership, spirituality has also gained importance in interdisciplinary fields such as health care, social work and business management (Anam et al., 2020). In business management spirituality is affiliated to ethics, performance, job satisfaction, and conscientiousness, effective leadership, whereas for health care and social work it is considered an important rudiment of treating patients with special care and respect.

Additionally, in the past two decades, several scholars have witnessed paradigm shifts in management theories and practices (Bhatia and Arora, 2017; Gupta, 2017). These paradigm shifts seem complicated and comprised of several dimensions such as shifting from bureaucratic organizations to democratic organizations (Ostrogorski, 2018; Tr\`a etteberg, 2018) from simplicity to complexity (Harmon et al., 2018) and from a closed system to adaptive systems (Dooley, 1997; Seth and Seth, 2020). These changes include movement from economic focus to , spirituality, social responsibility, and quality of life concerns (Walsh et al., 2003), a shift from being materialistic to Spiritualistic (Rezapouraghdam, Alipour, and Arasli, 2018). This paradigm shift has been named "the spiritual movement" (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000). The basic premise of this movement was to spare a separate room for employees, where they can practice their spiritual dimensions such as the quest for the meaning of life, interconnectedness to higher authorities, and self- expression (Bhatia and Arora, 2017; Marques et al., 2007; Rezapouraghdam et al., 2018).

Workplace spirituality is valued as one of the most rapidly growing and adopted management practices (Bhatia and Arora, 2017). Recent research also considers human beings as spiritual beings- that they are a composition of mind, body, spirit, and emotions(Corner, 2009; Mackenzie et al., 2018). Inclusively, practitioners and academicians have visualized the impending benefits of spirituality in management and business (Giacalone and Jurkiewicz, 2003). According to a survey published in the USA, 6 out of 10 people reported that having spirit in work environments would have remarkable workplace benefits (Bhatia and Arora, 2017). Many well-reputed organizations like Dupont, Ford, Boeing, and Starbucks have taken the initiative in implementing spiritual practices in organizations (Marques et al., 2007). Hence, it can be stated that spirituality at the workplace is a profound remedial measure for all organizational issues.

Studies of organizational behavior in relation to spirituality and spiritual leadership research, mainly focus on determining ways to improve job satisfaction, reduce employee rotation, improve productivity, reduce burnout and improve performance (Robbins & Judge, 2011). However, based on extensive literature review and according to the limited knowledge of researcher the relationship between spiritual leadership and absenteeism has hardly been observed. The same goes for spirituality and job satisfaction in relation to absenteeism. Spiritual leadership theory Fry et al., (2005) and social exchange theories (Cook et al., 2013; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) explain the enhancing effects of spiritual leadership on organizational outcomes, wherein the social exchange between leaders and followers enhances individuals' sense of purpose, meaning, and belonging within the organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Fry, 2003; Wilensky, 1960). Based on these theories, the current study adds to existing stream of organizational behavior research by determining the relationship of spiritual leadership and workplace spirituality with job satisfaction and absenteeism. The study further extended stream by developing a holistic underlying mechanism between spiritual leadership and absenteeism through serial mediation of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. Moreover, it has been observed that the spirituality at workplace cannot be initiated on its own. It requires some stimulus from leaders. Therefore, spiritual leadership helps to effectively implement spirituality at workplace. Based on above discussion, the objectives of the study are

- To determine the impact of spiritual leadership on workplace spirituality
- To determine the impact of spiritual leadership on job satisfaction
- To determine the impact of workplace spirituality on job satisfaction
- To determine the impact of spiritual leadership on absenteeism
- To develop an underlying mechanism between spiritual leadership and absenteeism through a serial mediation on workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.
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## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

### **Spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality and job satisfaction**

Spiritual leadership as defined by Fry & Nisiewicz, (2013) is a “holistic approach based on an interaction between followers, leaders and coworkers, which facilitate creating and sustaining an organizational culture that positively influences organizational performance and effectiveness.” Some researchers stated that “spiritual leadership operationally consists of values, attitude and behavior required to intrinsically motivate one’s own self and others so that leaders and followers can have a higher collective spiritual welfare. This definition leads us to spiritual leadership studies in terms of vision, hope/faith and altruistic love.” (Afsar et al., 2016). Previous studies observed that spiritual leadership is positively associated with organizational commitment (Baykal, 2019; Jeon & Choi, 2020); organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction (Djaelani et al., 2020), whereas some studies found that spiritual leadership mitigate the negative consequences of burnout (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2020), counter productive work behaviors (Hutahayan, 2020) and turnover intentions (Zakkariya & Aboobaker, 2020).

An organization where spirituality and leadership can grow and sustain simultaneously tends to have productive and effective work environment (Prihandono & Wijayanto, 2020). Implementing spirituality practices at workplace will be difficult if leader does not possess the capabilities of giving a real action as an example. Therefore, spiritual leadership is required for successfully implementation of spirituality practices at workplace. Hence, it can be stated that spiritual leadership acts as an antecedent of workplace spirituality. According to the study findings of Duchon & Plowman, (2005) that leadership will only be influential if its followers encourages and admits spiritual issues at workplaces. Leadership is a crucial element around which system of whole organization revolve (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2020). Leader is responsible for transformation of workplace. He can achieve this if he possess all spiritual qualities such as vision, hope/ faith, and altruistic love(Fry et al., 2007). When a leader has visionary thoughts, become part of community, create meaningful and purposeful environment, show love and affection to their followers, then employees will also align their values with organizational values, become more responsive, value their own beliefs and build social ties with their peers. Based on the above discussion following hypothesis will be formulated:

*H1: Spiritual leadership is positively related to workplace spirituality.*

Although there are many studies that determined the impact of leadership styles on employees’ job satisfaction, studies on the influence of spiritual leadership on job satisfaction have hardly been observed. Leadership is a crucial element around which system of whole organization revolve (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2020). Leader is responsible for transformation of workplace. He can achieve this if he possess all spiritual qualities such as vision, hope/ faith, and altruistic love(Fry et al., 2007). The purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across the strategic, empowered team and individual levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, more the leaders are spiritual more will the team members be satisfied. Hence, it can be proposed that

*H2: Spiritual leadership is positively related to job satisfaction.*

Job satisfaction is a widely researched area in the field of organizational behavior. Earlier, job satisfaction was measured or assessed through a materialistic or extrinsic perspective. i.e., through pay, promotion, culture, relationship with co-workers, etc. (Ahmed et al., 2011); however, over time, it becomes evident that employees regard work as a more meaningful and purposeful place rather than having handsome salaries or promotions (Kessler et al., 2017; Van der Walt, 2007). Therefore, researchers started to assess job satisfaction through intrinsic or intangible factors (such as spirituality, meditation, achievement, trustworthiness) (Cho and Perry, 2012; Malik et al., 2017; Noor and Arif, 2011). When employees who search for meaning, purpose, and fulfillment at the workplace are allowed to express their spiritual side, they become more creative, imaginative, innovative, which will ultimately result in satisfaction (Ayo et al., 2009; Noor and Arif, 2011). Considering this rationale, we propose that employees who want to practice their spiritual values at the workplace and their organizations permit them to do so will lead to increased job satisfaction (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone 2004; Noor and Arif 2011; Danish et al. 2019; Walt 2007). Therefore, it can be proposed that

*H3: Workplace spirituality is positively related to job satisfaction*

### **Spiritual leadership and absenteeism**

Although many studies have observed the association between spiritual leadership and negative workplace outcomes such as burnout, turnover intentions, counterproductive behaviors (Hutahayan,

2020; Mahyarni, 2019; Prihandono & Wijayanto, 2020; Zakkariya & Aboobaker, 2020), yet hardly none of these studied its impact on absenteeism. Absenteeism is behavioral outcome which means behavioral evasion of work or without any reason taking off from a job (Ribeiro et al., 2019; Sagie, 1998). Employees always take off from job if they have some financial (less remuneration, promotional opportunities), personal (boredom, illness, discontent, low morale) or managerial issues (insufficient leadership, poor management) with their organization (Duncombe, 2019; ŞENAY, 2019).

Review of previous studies depicts that all leadership styles (transformational, transactional, supportive, authentic) help to mitigate the negative organizational outcomes (Abasilim et al., 2019; Alamir et al., 2019; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). In contrast spiritual leadership theory designed by Fry et al., (2007), states that spiritual leadership is a fusion of existing value laden leadership and motivation based theories. Transformational leadership is related to intrinsic motivation and employee's intrinsic need satisfaction; similarly spiritual leadership theory is based on intrinsic motivation (Alamir et al., 2019). In contrast, transformational leadership includes love, affection, personal growth, wholeness, self-transcendence, meaning and purpose of the jobs (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019). The spiritual leadership is also related to these values of transactional leadership style. Similarly, empirical findings of previous studies depict that spiritual leadership negatively influences burnout, turnover intentions, deviant behaviors, emotional exhaustion (Hutahayan, 2020; Prihandono & Wijayanto, 2020; Zakkariya & Aboobaker, 2020). Based on the above mentioned empirical findings and similarity of values among all leadership styles (transformational, transactional, autocratic, spiritual leadership), it can be inferred that increase in spiritual leadership will reduce absenteeism in workplace. Hence, it is proposed

*H4: Spiritual leadership is negatively related to absenteeism.*

### **Spiritual leadership and absenteeism: serial mediation of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction**

While theory development is important, what (Fry et al., (2007) stated that workplace spirituality needs to be studied with various job-related outcomes in order to be recognized as a legitimate discipline in the field of organizational sciences. Although numerous researchers have investigated the impact of spiritual leadership on negative organizational outcomes (Abasilim et al., 2019; Alamir et al., 2019; Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2019); yet hardly little or no research is available that determines the impact of spiritual leadership on absenteeism. This study addresses this gap in literature by developing a comprehensive model of serial mediation of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.

In previous studies it has been observed that spiritual leadership can decrease negative organizational outcome. Results of previous empirical studies depict that spiritual leadership negatively influences burnout, turnover intentions, deviant behaviors, emotional exhaustion (Hutahayan, 2020; Prihandono & Wijayanto, 2020; Zakkariya & Aboobaker, 2020), whereas none of these studies determine the impact of spiritual leadership on absenteeism. Based on social exchange theory by Cropanzano & Mitchell, (2005) which "studies social interaction between two parties that implement cost benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits" and on the basis of spiritual leadership theory by Fry et al., (2007) which comprised of intrinsic motivation that incorporates hope/ faith, vision, and altruistic love. It can be inferred that a absenteeism is an outcome of insufficient leadership or poor management which results in increased costs of their employees. In order to decrease costs associated with absenteeism, there is a need to minimize absenteeism. Literature reveals that spiritual leadership resulted in decrease of various negative organizational outcome. Absenteeism is also one of the negative organizational outcomes, hence its effects can also be minimised through spiritual leadership. However, this direct relationship can better be explained through an underlying mechanism of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.

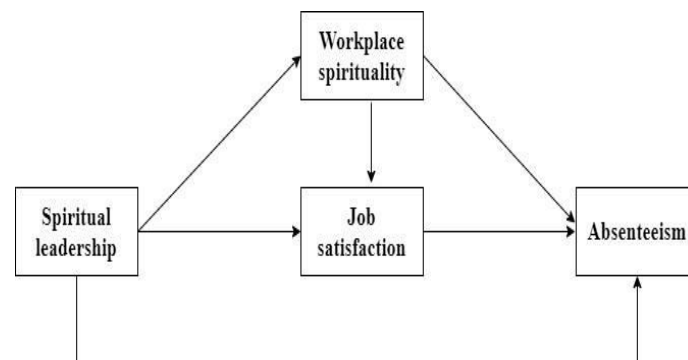
First, we argue that spiritual leadership is positively related to workplace spirituality. Workplace spirituality is widely researched in the field of organizational behaviour. An organization where spirituality and leadership can grow and sustain simultaneously tends to have productive and effective work environment (Prihandono & Wijayanto, 2020). Implementing spirituality practices at workplace will be difficult if leader does not possess the capabilities of giving a real action as an example. Therefore, spiritual leadership is required for successfully implementation of spirituality practices at workplace. Hence, it can be stated that spiritual leadership acts as an antecedent of workplace spirituality. According to the study findings of Duchon & Plowman, (2005) that leadership will only be influential if its followers encourages and admits spiritual issues at workplaces. Leadership is a crucial element around which system of whole organization revolve (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2020). Leader is responsible for transformation of workplace. He can achieve this if he possess all spiritual qualities such as vision, hope/ faith, and altruistic love(Fry et al., 2007). When a leader has visionary thoughts, become part of community, create

meaningful and purposeful environment, show love and affection to their followers, then employees will also align their values with organizational values, become more responsive, value their own beliefs and build social ties with their peers. Considering this rationale, it is assumed that spiritual leadership helps to implement spiritual practices at workplace.

Second, we argue that workplace spirituality is positively related to job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is a widely researched area in the field of organizational behavior. Earlier, job satisfaction was measured or assessed through a materialistic or extrinsic perspective. i.e., through pay, promotion, culture, relationship with co-workers, etc. (Ahmed et al., 2011); however, over time, it becomes evident that employees regard work as a more meaningful and purposeful place rather than having handsome salaries or promotions (Kessler et al., 2017; Van der Walt, 2007). Therefore, researchers started to assess job satisfaction through intrinsic or intangible factors (such as spirituality, meditation, achievement, trustworthiness) (Cho and Perry, 2012; Malik et al., 2017; Noor and Arif, 2011). When employees who search for meaning, purpose, and fulfilment at the workplace are allowed to express their spiritual side, they become more creative, imaginative, innovative, which will ultimately result in satisfaction (Ayo et al., 2009; Noor and Arif, 2011). Considering this rationale, we propose that employees who want to practice their spiritual values at the workplace and their organizations permit them to do so will lead to increased job satisfaction (Jurkiewicz and Giacalone 2004; Noor and Arif 2011; Danish et al. 2019; Walt 2007).

Finally, we propose that job satisfaction is negatively related to absenteeism. Absenteeism at workplace occurs due to less pay, insufficient leadership, low morale, supervisory pressure, burdensome etc. Literature of job satisfaction reveals that employees who have high salaries, more promotional opportunities, have good interaction with their peers, co-workers and colleagues, are satisfied with their managers, tends to satisfied employees (Ahmed et al., 2011; Skalli et al., 2008). therefore, the employees who are satisfied with all personal and financial aspects at workplaces, proves to have less absenteeism rate. Hence more an employee is satisfied less will be his absenteeism. Based on above discussion, it is proposed that

*H5: Spiritual leadership is negatively related to absenteeism through serial mediation of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction.*



**Figure 1: Study Model**

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is analytical, non-experimental and cross sectional in nature. Survey design is used to collect data from banking industry of Pakistan. The target population comprised of employees of banking industry and the sample from target population was selected by using Cochran's formula. As per this formula, sample size of 384 or more can be used for data collection. In Pakistan there are total 55 banks (Pakistan's bank association, 2018). Multi-stage sampling technique was used. In first stage simple random sampling is used to select banks. Out of total 55 banks 6 banks were selected randomly. In second stage stratified random sampling is used to select branches of banks. Each bank has number of branches therefore 2 branches of each bank making 12 in total were selected. In third stage employees were selected by using convenience sampling. Data was collected in two phases to avoid common-method biasness. In first phase total 800 questionnaires (60 at each branch) were distributed among banking staff, out of which 770 (96%) responded back. After a time, interval of 14 days (two weeks), questionnaires were distributed to same respondents (770) of phase 1. The sum of 625 (81%) responses were generated. However, after initial screening we left with 433 usable responses.

## Measures

To resolve validity issues study variables were measured by using already developed questionnaires. All scales except demographic were rated on 5- point likert scale ranging from one = strongly disagree to five= strongly agree. Spiritual leadership was assessed using 26 item scale developed by Fry. (Fry et al., 2007); workplace spirituality was measured by combining scales of Ashmos & Duchon, (2000) and Milliman et al., (2003). Job satisfaction was measured by using five item scale developed by Brayfield (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951). In contrast, absenteeism was measured by Nicholson (Nicholson & Payne, 1987). Cronbach alpha for all scales were above cut-off value i.e. 0.7. Details are highlighted in table 1. we used gender, age, qualification and experience as a control variable. Demographic characteristics of usable responses reveals that 72% were males and 28% were females. On average majority employees were of age 20-30 years (65%) and 60% were graduates from this age bracket. The average experience was up to 2-5 years.

## IV. FINDINGS

The proposed hypotheses were analysed by using Amos 24 and SPSS 22. Two step approach was used to analyse results (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Firstly, confirmatory factor analysis was performed to check model fitness of proposed model. Results found that goodness of fit indices (CMIN=1.2, TLI=0.96, CFI=0.91, RMSEA=0.03) for proposed model are within their cut off values. Hence proposed model is good fit for further data analysis

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics**

Variable	SPLED	WPS	JS	ABST	Mean
<b>SPLED</b>	<i>0.95</i>	<i>3.78</i>	<i>0.827***</i>	<i>0.82</i>	<i>3.57</i>
<b>JS</b>	<i>.416**</i>	<i>0.58**</i>	<i>0.78</i>		<i>2.99</i>
<b>ABST</b>	<i>-.443**</i>	<i>-0.22</i>	<i>.33**</i>	<i>0.81</i>	<i>3.76</i>

However, in second stage relationships among proposed hypothesis were tested using SEM followed by bootstrapping to determine the indirect effect of spiritual leadership on absenteeism. Study results found support for all proposed hypothesis. Details are shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2: SEM results with Mediation Analysis**

Direct/ Indirect effects	Coefficients	P-value	Result
Spiritual leadership → Workplace spirituality ( <b>H1</b> )	0.827	***	Supported
Spiritual leadership → Job satisfaction ( <b>H2</b> )	0.416	**	Supported
Workplace spirituality → Job satisfaction ( <b>H3</b> )	0.526	**	Supported
Job satisfaction → Absenteeism	-0.321	***	
Workplace spirituality → Absenteeism	-0.255	**	
Spiritual leadership → Absenteeism ( <b>H4</b> )	-0.478	***	Supported
<b>Indirect Effects</b>			
Spiritual leadership → workplace spirituality → job satisfaction → Absenteeism ( <b>H5</b> )	-0.318	**	Supported

Note: \*  $P < 0.05$ , \*\*  $P < 0.01$ , italicized values are Cronbach Alpha

## V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Despite growing interest in spiritual leadership and its positive outcomes, the underlying mechanism of how and when spiritual leadership influence employee's outcome is still under-researched. Based on spiritual leadership theory and social exchange theory this study developed a comprehensive model linking spiritual leadership to absenteeism through workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. Results of hypothesis 1 states that spiritual leadership is positively related to workplace spirituality ( $\beta = 0.827, p < 0.001$ ). Based on these findings, it can be assumed that in order to build a spiritual environment at workplace, spiritual leaders are required. Because leadership is an association between leaders and followers. Spiritual leaders must possess spiritual as well as leadership qualities. They must have hope/faith in their employees, possess visionary thinking and show love and affection to their employees. In response to such leaders' actions, employees and staff can find meaning and purpose in their organization, they always try to align their values with organizational values. This attitude of employees and employers build spiritual environment at workplace. The study findings are in consistent to findings of other researchers such as Hendricks & Ludeman, (1996); Kouzes & Posner, (2004); Prihandono & Wijayanto, (2020). Therefore, the study findings revealed that spiritual leaders are responsible for maintaining workplace spirituality by facilitating their followers to find meaning and purpose in their organizations, compelling them to align their values with organizational values.

The findings of study support hypothesis 2 which states the existence of positive association between spiritual leadership and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.416, p < 0.01$ ). Leadership is a crucial element around which system of whole organization revolve (Hunsaker & Jeong, 2020). Leader is responsible for transformation of workplace. He can achieve this if he possess all spiritual qualities such as vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love (Fry et al., 2007). The purpose of spiritual leadership is to create vision and value congruence across the strategic, empowered team and individual levels and, ultimately, to foster higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity. The results of study found support for hypothesis 3 which states that workplace spirituality is positively related to job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.526, p < 0.01$ ). The study findings corroborate with empirical results of various scholars who found existence of positive and significant relationship between workplace spirituality and employee outcomes (Belwalkar & Vohra, 2016; Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Milliman et al., 2003; Rego & Pina e Cunha, 2008). It has been observed that people who feel meaning and purpose in their organizations, have inner life proves to be satisfied than those who are low on their spiritual values. Thus, the study makes an attempt to improve job satisfaction of employees by implementing spirituality practices at workplace.

The next hypothesis of the study found that spiritual leadership is negatively and significantly related to absenteeism ( $\beta = -0.478, p < 0.001$ ). It has been observed in spirituality literature that spirituality-based organizations are more productive, flexible and creative compared to those who are has less spirituality at workplaces. empirical findings of previous studies depict that spiritual leadership negatively influences burnout, turnover intentions, deviant behaviors, emotional exhaustion (Hutahayan, 2020; Prihandono & Wijayanto, 2020; Zakkariya & Aboobaker, 2020). Study findings are also consistent to above mentioned findings that more a leader is spiritual less will absenteeism rate in organizations. It can be inferred followers are in search of such leaders who are visionary, have faith in their employees and value their beliefs. The leaders who properly manage organizational task and direct employees with love and care results in decreasing absenteeism at workplaces. Thus, study gives an insight to methods of combating absenteeism at workplace. The last hypothesis of study found existence of partial mediation between spiritual leadership and absenteeism at workplace. Although, the direct effect of spiritual leadership on absenteeism is significant, which indicates the importance of workplace spirituality for employees; however, it remain significant after serial mediation of workplace spirituality and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.318, p < 0.01$ ). The findings indicate that spiritual leadership positively influences workplace spirituality, workplace spirituality in turns have positive association with job satisfaction and job satisfaction in turn negatively correlates with absenteeism.

## VI. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The results of this study have both theoretical and managerial implications. First, it contributes to the literature of spiritual leadership by considering it as one of the methods of combating absenteeism. Spiritual leaders at banks help to decrease absenteeism at workplaces by (i) clearly directing employees

about their goals and targets (2) developing trust and vision among employees that organizational goals can only be achieved effectively by sincere hard works (3) developing and maintaining workplace spirituality by encouraging subordinates to find meaning and purpose in their workplace, align their values with organizational values and establish sense of connectedness at workplace. All these factors, when implemented simultaneously motivate employees to do their tasks without being pressurized and feeling burdensome. It can only be achieved if leaders possess spiritual qualities. Further, the study contributed to organizational behavior literature by revealing that spiritual leadership helps to improve employees' job satisfaction. It can be observed from employees' ability in doing work with their true spirit, conscience and doing right things at right time and at right place.

The comprehensive attempt to decrease absenteeism can be implemented through direct or indirect interventions. Direct attempt is done by implementing spiritual leadership and inculcating spiritual values such as honesty, self-creation as a trustworthy, love and affection, faith and vision etc. The indirect attempt is done through intervention and maintenance of workplace spirituality and improvement of job satisfaction. Thus, the study contributed in developing a holistic underlying mechanism of reducing absenteeism through spiritual leadership, workplace spirituality and job satisfaction. The formation of spiritual leadership in banking industry of Pakistan helps managers to all costs associated with absenteeism, build spirit friendly environment and improve job satisfaction of their employees. The findings also contribute to the theories developed in this study which can be confirmed by the findings of previous studies.

Besides, contributions and implications, this study is not devoid of limitations. The study is limited to quantitative approach. Future studies can extend this study by using qualitative or mixed approach so that the impact of spiritual leadership on absenteeism can be examined comprehensively. The target population of this study comprised of banking sector only, future researches can extend this study in other chunks of service sector. This study collected data from employees only, future studies can perform multi-level modelling to have clear picture of proposed model. For this study, data is collected at one point in time, future studies can do longitudinal analysis so that data analysis can be enriched and deepened.

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