

# **Conceptualizing and Measuring Spiritual Leadership in Organizations**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper presents the development and validation of a spiritual leadership measure comprising three sequential stages of scale development. Stage 1 built content validity into the measure through content analysis of interview data, extant literature review, and content expert item analysis. Stage 2 established reliability and preliminary construct validity based on the confirmatory factor analysis of pre-test data. Finally, Stage 3 provided further construct validity through cross-validation in a new sample. The resulting four-item spiritual leadership scale demonstrated robust preliminary psychometric properties. The contributions and implications of the present studies, as well as some future research directions, are discussed in the concluding section.

**Key Words:** Spirituality; spiritual leadership; scale development

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The notion of workplace spirituality has been well articulated in the literature (Dale, 1991; Fairholm, 1997, 1998; Fry, 2003; Hawley, 1993; Holland, 1989; Kunde & Cunningham, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999b). It is commonly defined (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003:13) as:

A framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected in a way that provides feelings of compassion and joy.

The increasing interest in the spiritual side of workers, however, is often driven by non-spiritual concerns (Tourish & Pinnington, 2002) although some researchers argue that the non-spiritual concerns are the outcomes, not antecedents, of workplace spirituality (Neal, 2001). Tourish and Pinnington (2002:165) downgraded the emphasis on spirituality in the workplace and claimed that "promoting spirituality in the workplace is to declare that those who

dissent from the ideology no longer belong. It is an attempt to re-engineer the thought processes of employees.” However, this view fails to consider the positive effects that workplace spirituality has on leaders, followers, and organizations. Although maintaining organizational spirituality is a complex task (Konz & Ryan, 1999), it is worth the effort (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005) given the known benefits associated with the construct, such as better leadership (Conger, 1994), improved ethical behavior (Fort, 1995), increased creativity (Biberman & Whittey, 1997), improved productivity (Nash, 1994), higher employee effectiveness and reduced absenteeism and turnover (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003), and increased job performance (Neck & Milliman, 1999). In fact, spirituality has been heralded as the ultimate competitive advantage (Mitroff & Denton, 1999b).

Although blending two vague concepts like spirituality and leadership may result in an even fuzzier concept (Palmer, 1998), spiritual leadership is making a steady entry to the management literature. Research in the areas of workplace spirituality and spirituality and leadership is still in its infancy, as indicated by typical characteristics of paradigm development such as a lack of common understanding of the concept and unclear boundaries between workplace spirituality and leadership (Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005).

This study addressed these concerns by developing validation of a measure of spiritual leadership titled *Transcendental Spirituality*. A carefully constructed and validated scale is useful in examining a phenomenon or construct underlying a set of behaviors that are thought to exist on the basis of our theoretical comprehension of the world (DeVellis, 1991). In fact, without adequate measurement, it would not be possible for researchers to achieve any theoretical progress (Schriesheim, Powers, Scandura, Gardiner, & Lankau, 1993; Schwab, 1980). Concurring with this view, Schoenfeldt (1984:78) remarked that “the legitimacy of organizational research as a scientific endeavour is dependent upon the psychometric properties of the measuring instrument.” Using qualitative and quantitative methods, this study outlines the development of a psychometrically sound measure of spiritual leadership and its application in the organizational setting.

## **2. DIMENSIONS OF SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP**

Using motivation-based and value-laden leadership theories, Fry (2003, p. 694-695) defined spiritual leadership as “comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership.” A comprehensive review of the literature reveals that, as suggested by Fairholm (1997) and Mitroff and Denton (1999a), there exists four primary dimensions of spiritual leadership; namely, religiousness, interconnectedness, sense of mission, and wholeness (holistic mindset).

## **2.1. Religiousness**

Spirituality is often defined in opposition to religion in leadership studies in order to avoid any potential divisive conflicts arising from a vast range of religious beliefs or practices (Hicks, 2002; Korac-Kakabadse, Kouzmin, and Kakabadse, 2002). Hicks (2002:380) argued that religion is often viewed as “institutional, dogmatic, and rigid,” whereas spirituality is “personal, emotional, and adaptable to an individual’s needs,” and concluded that “spirituality unites, but religion divides.”

Although definitions of spirituality in leadership studies often exclude religious beliefs and practices because of their susceptibility to ideological conflicts (Hicks, 2002), spirituality cannot be utterly detached from religiousness (Fairholm, 1997), primarily because spirituality is historically rooted in religion (Cavanagh, 1999). Carter (1993) contended that the detachment of spirituality from religion is attributed to the tendency of people, particularly in the western world, to trivialize religion merely as an unproductive emotional outlet that has no relevance to public life, an attitude that downgrades the real significance of religious beliefs in both public and personal actions. Although Fry (2003) maintained that spiritual leadership may or may not embrace religious theory and practice, he found that most literature on spiritual leadership comes from the field of religious theology (e.g., Banks & Powell, 2000; Blackaby & Blackaby, 2001; Ford, 1991; Sanders, 1994; Wright, 2000).

Religiousness is a belief that there is a higher power outside one’s self whose influence guide one’s actions and with whom one has a relationship (Fairholm, 1997). An increasing number of business leaders have reportedly been relying on their religious beliefs, values, and practices for business solutions and leadership approaches (Delbecq, 1999; Mitroff & Denton, 1999b; Nash, 1994). Allport (1950) operationalized the motivational dimension of religiousness in terms of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness. Intrinsic religiousness is “religion as a meaning-endowing framework in terms of which all of life is understood” (Donahue, 1985:400); hence, it relates to and integrates every aspect of life. In contrast, Extrinsic Religiousness is “the religion of comfort and social convention, a self-serving, instrumental approach shaped to serve oneself” (Donahue, 1985:400), often treated as an escape mechanism that leads to a compartmentalized and immature life. Empirical studies using this measure of two religious sentiments abound, mostly exploring the relationship between religiousness and ethics or ethical climate (Clark & Dawson, 1996; Donahue, 1985; Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989; Kennedy & Lawton, 1998).

## **2.2. Interconnectedness**

The notion of interconnectedness is well integrated within the realm of spirituality. Stamp (1991:80) suggested that spirituality is “an awareness within individuals of a sense of connectedness that exists between inner selves and the world.” This view is shared by Mitroff and Denton (1999b:83), who stated that spirituality is “the basic feeling of being connected with one’s complete self, others, and the entire universe.” Central to human experience is the need to have a sense of alignment, of being aware that the capabilities one has can be a significant contribution to the world (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Interconnectedness, therefore, refers to the inner belief that one’s giftedness fits the work that he or she does.

Interconnectedness signifies “the complex interaction of what is inside of us and what is ‘out there’” (Palmer, 1998:23). The notion of uniting one’s inner and outer world is well articulated in the literature. For example, Fairholm (1997:25) expressed that “our spirituality is a source guide for personal values and meaning-making, a way of understanding the world, an inner awareness. It is a means of integration of the self and our world.” Vaill (1998:218) echoed a similar viewpoint and maintained that spirituality is “the feeling individuals have about the fundamental meaning of who they are, what they are doing, and the contributions they are making.” This longing to express the inner self in ways that fit the external world was advocated by Aristotle, who argued that one’s vocation is found at the point where one’s talents and the needs of the world cross. Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975; 1990; 1997; 2003) research revealed that such a sense of alignment makes work intrinsically meaningful and motivating, and therefore transcendental in nature. This optimal experience is described as ‘flow experience’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975:36):

A unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which he is in control of his actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment, between stimulus and response, or between past, present, and future.

## **2.3. Sense of Mission**

The third element of spirituality, sense of mission, is basic to the human condition. Berger (1967:22) asserted that humans are “congenitally compelled to impose a meaningful order upon reality.” The intrinsic drive to find meaning and purpose is evident in the workplace, particularly since work occupies an increasing portion of waking hours for most people and is increasingly becoming a central part of their existence (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). People seek ways to express their spirituality at work by engaging in work that is meaningful and gives them a sense of purpose (Pfeffer, 2003). The antithesis of this state is meaninglessness, which exists when “workers feel they contribute little to the overall production process and hence do not see the significance of their role in it” (Mottaz, 1981:515-516). The role of leadership in ‘meaning-making’ is well documented in the literature (Drath & Palus, 1994). A strategic role of leaders is

to interpret a social reality that gives meaning to shared values in which people deeply believe (Kouzes & Posner, 1993).

Spirituality in the workplace has often been characterized by a sense of mission, or a sense of being called vocationally (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003). Work itself is also considered a calling or vocation (Novak, 1996), which provides a sense of vitality and purpose to business leaders (Delbecq, 1999). The idea of a calling and of meaningful work is best summed up by Buechner (1992:189), who asserted that “the place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” The fulfilment of that calling is manifested in the experience of making a difference in the lives of others through service, from which one derives meaning and purpose in life (Fry, 2003; Maddock & Fulton, 1998). Delbecq (1999) found many senior executives in his study regarded business leadership as a call to service, not merely a job or a career.

#### **2. 4. Wholeness**

The scientific management approach of organizations which created the division of labor and specialization has elicited a sense of isolation and alienation in the workplace (Aktouf, 1992; Bolman & Deal, 1995; Sarros, Tanewski, Winter, Santora, & Densten, 2002). This disconnectedness of self from others in and outside the workplace has evolved into the compartmentalization of life into separate domains (e.g., work, family, religion, and social obligations). This compartmentalization, in turn, inevitably leads to a fragmented life characterized by disparate relationships that clouds personal meaning and purpose in life and causes stress, tension, and dysfunction (Fairholm, 1997; Mitroff & Denton, 1999a).

The fragmentation of life has created a hunger for spirituality that is necessary for people to restore a sense of wholeness (Conger, 1994). In their empirical study, Sarros, Tanewski, Winter, Santora, and Densten (2002) found that leadership positively contributes to meaningful workplaces marked by the absence of work alienation. Fairholm (1997:31) argued that “spiritual leadership provides that holistic, integrated life.” Hicks (2002) concurred with other researchers that there exists a need for people to bring their whole selves to the workplace without any distinctions between public and private lives, spiritual and physical realms, and sacred and secular dimensions.

The purpose of this three-stage study is to develop and validate a measure of spiritual leadership titled *Transcendental Spirituality*, which is part of a larger-scale development and validation study on servant leadership behaviors. In order to develop a sound measure, it is important to demonstrate the construct validity of the measure, which includes evidences of reliability (Emory, 1980), content validity (Nunnally, 1978), and discriminant validity (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Ensuring construct validity of a measure is critical, without which the measure is futile in contributing to any theoretical progress (Schwab, 1990). Hence, this study involves three sequential stages of scale development, each

demonstrating a dimension of construct validity, following the recommendations of Dawis (1987) and Schwab (1980).

The three stages are: (1) scale design, (2) scale development, and (3) scale evaluation. Stage 1 built content validity into the measure through content analysis of interview data, extant literature review, and content expert item analysis. Stage 2 established unidimensionality, reliability and preliminary construct validity based on the confirmatory factor analysis of pretest data. Stage 3 provided discriminant and convergent validity of the measure by subjecting it to a new sample. Overall, these three stages provide sound preliminary evidences of the scale, bearing in mind that establishing the psychometric properties of behavioral measures is a complex and lengthy process (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991).

### **3. STAGE 1: SCALE DESIGN**

The purpose of Stage 1 was to establish the content validity of the *Transcendental Spirituality* measure. Hinkin (1995) argued that measures generally lack content validity in the item development stage and do not have strong and clear linkages with their theoretical domains. These concerns were addressed by building content validity into the measure through the processes of domain identification, item generation, and expert validation (DeVellis, 1991). First, interview data were content analyzed and the extant literature reviewed; both were subsequently used in tandem as a guide to generate the measure's items. Subsequently, judgment-quantification analysis was performed to examine content validity.

#### **3.1. Interview**

This section describes the interview procedure and sample, the analysis, and results.

##### **3.1.1. Procedure and Sample**

Semi-structured interviews with 15 senior executives at for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in Australia were conducted to generate themes and obtain more substantive insights pertinent to the notion of spiritual leadership (see Appendix 1 for the interview questions). Non-probability sampling techniques, purposive and snowball, were used in the selection of interview participants to ensure that they were "appropriate" opinion leaders with well-developed views on the research topic (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell, and Alexander, 1995).

Using the purpose sampling, we contacted seven participants who work as executives in humanitarian/charity organizations and were known to the researcher. All seven respondents agreed to participate in the interview.

The snowball sampling involved asking the initial seven participants to put the researcher in touch with their colleagues or friends who fit the sample criteria of the research project. The snowball technique was repeated until sufficient themes had been accumulated, which in this case occurred on the 15<sup>th</sup> interview, after which additional interviews would merely produce recurring themes.

Overall, all the interview participants were senior executives with an average of 10 years of management experience in either not-for-profit (67%) or for-profit organizations (33%) in various industries. The sample was predominantly male (87%) and 40 years of age and older (80%). Most (80%) had at least one postgraduate degree.

### 3.1.2. Analysis

Content analysis of the transcribed interview data was facilitated by a qualitative analysis software program called NVivo. The interview data were examined using the theoretical framework identified through the literature review for the analyses of the manifest data: *Transcendental Spirituality* incorporating *Religiousness, Interconnectedness, Sense of Mission, and Wholeness*. The quasi-statistical approach (see King, 1994) was used to turn contextual data into quantitative data to allow the calculation of the frequencies and percentage frequencies of comments classified in each thematic category.

### 3.1.3. Results

Table 1 shows the frequencies, percentage frequencies, and the inter-rater reliability for each category.

**Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Frequency Distributions  
Of Interview Data in Analytical Categories**

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>I.R.<sup>b</sup></b>
Religiousness	5	30	.80
Interconnectedness	3	18	1.00
Sense of Mission	3	18	1.00
Wholeness	6	34	.75
Theme Total	17	100	

<sup>a</sup> Percentages have been rounded. <sup>b</sup> Inter-rater Reliability

A random sample of six interview transcripts, which account for 40% of the total transcripts, was recoded independently to check for inter-rater reliability. The statistical coefficients of agreements yielded a mean inter-rater reliability of 0.80 for *Religiousness*, 1.00 for *Interconnectedness*, 1.00 for *Sense of Mission*, and 0.75 for *Wholeness*, all of which exceed the recommended agreement rate of

0.70 (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The following comments illustrate each of the four dimensions of Transcendental Spirituality.

### 3.2. Interview Comments

This section presents interview comments on four topics: religiousness, interconnectedness, sense of mission, and wholeness.

#### 3.2.1. *Religiousness (Inter-rater Reliability: 0.80)*

The following comments of the interview respondents reinforced the view of religiousness that there is a higher power outside one's self whose influence guides one's actions and with whom one has a relationship (Fairholm, 1997), and that a servant leader is above all a servant of God who serves other people out of his or her obedient gratitude to God:

*I'd say that the concept of servant leadership as introduced by Robert Greenleaf . . . goes back hundreds of years . . . into the heart of Christianity, to Christ himself. . . I think that is at the heart of servant leadership. It's a deeper reason why people act as servant leaders. Now that brings us to the moral and spiritual value area. You can teach people in MBA courses that to empower the worker, to have a better bottom line maybe better for the company, unless it really comes from somewhere deeper in the person, I don't think you've really got it. In the end, they'll revert. They'll revert, and they exercise their power themselves. That's what all human beings do. Unless there are some overriding moral spiritual value things that push them in the other direction.*

(Male, director, leadership training)

*The quest for values comes about because of the spirituality. I think we've been gifted with some degree of spirituality. Every society has spirituality: Christians, Buddhists, and so on. The sense of more than ourselves, generally we relate that to a supreme being somewhere or a number of them. We belong to a higher pattern of being. That concept and belief in more than myself is called spirituality, and is manifested in the patterns at home, schools, etc that we've grown up with. And to embrace or embody those principles, those traditional religious values, and to live by those values enhances the capacity to join other people in a trusting relationship.*

(Male, group executive, charity)

The reference to religious beliefs and principles such as the Golden Rule when respondents spoke about servant leadership suggests a strong connection between the two. In particular, the reference to the person of Christ whose principles and actions serve as an exemplar for some respondents suggests that religious beliefs for servant leaders can be a life-changing view.

**3.2.2. Innerconnectedness (Inter-rater Reliability: 1.00)**

The following comments highlighted a sense of connectedness between the internal self and the external world attached to servant leaders:

*Servant leadership is about being aware of yourself and what you think and feel, even why you do that. And that once you know yourself and you're confident with who you are, then I think you'll become a better leader. You're more genuine, you're comfortable with who you are, you're not showing an artificial artifact to feel good about yourself. I mean I'm gonna feel good about myself whether I've got a big office or little office. It's not something which will have an impact on what I think about who I am. That again is aware of who you are and being comfortable with it.*

(Male, CEO, student service)

*I think if you believe that there's a God, who is a creator God, then you actually have come to the point where you realize that you're part of something that is bigger than you. You then question what is the part that you're supposed to be playing. And you look at different people and you see that they all have been given different gifts. And I think that's for a reason.* (Male, group executive, charity)

The importance of self-awareness as a building block for one's engagement with the world which results in positive changes in the lives of others is clearly shown in the above comments. Implicit in these comments is that the sense of alignment between one's self and one's occupation creates an intrinsically stimulating and rewarding career.

**3.2.3. Sense of Mission (Inter-rater Reliability: 1.00)**

The emphasis on the meaning and purpose of life is clearly evident in interview comments below, consistent with the literature review. More important, the meaning and purpose of life is found in the type of organization and the kind of professional career servant leaders have chosen.

*To significantly contribute to the alleviation of poverty among those who suffer throughout the world, especially children. That's what's driven me for the last 20 years, and it's what's driven me within this organization and what keeps me going everyday. I think the servant leadership approach is much more congruent with that particular mission than different styles of leadership.*

(Male, group executive, charity)

*Earlier on in my life, I've got very involved in the computer industry, as a consultant. And I was very outspoken with regards to the world, and reacted to poverty, to disasters, to the social treatment to injustice. And I came to the conclusion that the only way I was going to be able to live with myself and to actually put my money where my mouth was, was to work for an organization that makes a difference. So for the last twenty years, I've been working for two*

*charity organizations. I suppose that's sort of like who I am. And I couldn't work for commercial organizations. I have to work in an organization that's gonna make a difference in the world.*  
(Male, group executive, charity)

#### **3.2.4. Wholeness (Inter-rater Reliability: 0.75)**

The importance of an integrated life to servant leaders is captured in these phrases delineated by the interview respondents: *sense of completeness, human element into the workplace, whole of my life, and holistic living.*

*The servant leadership approach helps people to have a sense of completeness in life. And the more we have that sense of completeness within us in the workplace, the more we are likely to contribute to the organization, and hence, the better the organizational performance is. Many workplaces view employees as extensions of their physical assets. They view human beings like computers whom they can turn on at the start of the day and off at the end of the day. They have to acknowledge that people bring into the workplace their own self, their dreams and hopes.*

(Male, general manager, student service)

*Our mission is a big one, and it is to alleviate global poverty. We would like to be successful in doing that, and our success is seen in the benchmark we've spoken about. Are our clients becoming a peer group in the community from the holistic perspective? I'm not interested in our clients becoming rich. But are they to multiply holistic living? Are they able to take the lesson that they have learned and multiply it among their families and community? And that I think is all aspects of life: spiritual, economic, and physical. And I think that's what God wants for us.*

(Male, director, charity)

Based on the interview data and literature review, the definition of and items pertinent to Transcendental Spirituality were generated. Transcendental Spirituality is defined as behaviors that manifest an inner conviction that something or someone beyond self and the material world exists and makes life complete and meaningful. Table 2 shows the seven items generated to operationalize the construct.

### **3.3. Content Validation**

The seven items were subjected to content expert validation, which is a sorting process used to identify and delete theoretically incoherent items, thus ensuring that the items in a scale demonstrate content adequacy (Hinkin, 1995).

**Table 2. Transcendental Spirituality Items**


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1.	Is driven by a sense of a higher calling
2.	Instills a strong sense of mission within me
3.	Encourages me to express my whole self in the workplace
4.	Helps me to find a clarity of purpose and direction
5.	Is conscious of how his or her behaviors impact me
6.	Promotes values that transcend self-interest and material success
7.	Helps me to generate a sense of meaning out of everyday life at work

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### 3.3.1. Sample and Procedure

The content experts in this study were sourced from the mailing list of the International Leadership Association (ILA-Exchange Listserv). Fifteen individuals who teach or research in servant leadership responded to the initial global e-mail invitation and stated their willingness to participate. The number of subject matter experts in content validation studies generally varies from two to twenty panel members (e.g., DuBois & DuBois, 2000; Moscoso & Salgado, 2001; Schmitt, Hunter, Croll, & McKenzie, 1983). All of the panel members had extensive experience in research, teaching, or consulting in servant/spiritual leadership and other closely related leadership fields (e.g., relational leadership and ethical leadership). More than half of the 20 respondents were university academics (55%); the rest were consultants (30%) and Ph.D. students (15%). Most of the panel members held doctorates (80%), and a few were either pursuing a Ph.D. (10%) or held a master's degree by research (10%). A majority of respondents were from America (85%); the rest were from the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Australia (5% each).

Following the suggestions of Grant and Davis (1997), the content experts were instructed to indicate the extent to which they perceived each individual item to be representative of the *a priori* domain with which it was associated, by circling the most appropriate number on the 4-point Likert rating scale (1 = not representative, 2 = minimally representative, 3 = moderately representative, and 4 = strongly representative). Items that were considered by the expert panel as theoretically incoherent or not representative of the Transcendental Spirituality construct were excluded in the subsequent pool of items.

### 3.3.2. Analyses and Results

The content validity of the items was quantified by applying Lawshe's (1975) Content Validity Ratio (CVR). The CVR is a quasi-quantitative approach to content validity commonly used to facilitate "the rejection or retention of specific items" (Lawshe, 1975:568). This methodological approach measures the extent to which members of an expert panel agree on the contributions of each scale item to the overall content intended to be measured by the instrument. In this study, following the approach of Grant and Davis (1997), an item was

considered ‘essential’ if it was rated by the panel experts as “moderately representative” or “strongly representative” on the four-point rating scale mentioned above. The CVR formula is as follows:

$$\text{CVR} = (n_e - N/2) / N/2,$$

where  $n_e$  is the number of panelists indicating an item as “essential” and  $N$  is the total number of content experts in the panel. Lawshe (1975) established that the CVR value ranges from -1.0 (where none of the panelists think that a particular measurement item is ‘essential’) and +1.0 (where all of the panel members agree that a particular measurement item is ‘essential’). The CVR value of 0.00 means that half of the experts in the panel believe that a particular measurement item is ‘essential.’ Applying the CVR formula to the data obtained from the 15 content experts generated four different minimum CVR values ranging from -0.07 to 0.87, as shown in Table 2, for the seven items under examination. The distribution of these minimum CVR values and the number of retained items associated with each value range are also provided in Table 3.

**Table 3. CVR Results**

<i>Items</i>	<i>Ne</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N/2</i>	<i>CVR</i>	<i>Result</i> <i>&gt;0.49</i>	<i>Result</i> <i>&gt;.6</i>	<i>Result</i> <i>&gt;.73</i>
Is driven by a sense of a higher calling	13	15	7.5	0.73	Retain	Retain	Retain
Instills a strong sense of mission within me	12	15	7.5	0.60	Retain	Retain	No
Encourages me to express my whole self in the workplace	12	15	7.5	0.60	Retain	Retain	No
Helps me to find a clarity of purpose and direction	14	15	7.5	0.87	Retain	Retain	Retain
Is conscious of how his or her behaviors impact me	7	15	7.5	-0.07	No	No	No
Promotes values that transcend self-interest and material success	13	15	7.5	0.73	Retain	Retain	Retain
Helps me to generate a sense of meaning out of everyday life at work	14	15	7.5	0.87	Retain	Retain	Retain

Content validity is achieved when an item is considered “essential” by more than 50% of the content experts in the panel (e.g., a  $\text{CVR} > 0$ ), and the more panelists agree on the inclusion of that item, the higher the degree of content validity (Lawshe, 1975). Lawshe (1975) also established that a minimum CVR is required for different panel sizes to correct for chance agreement among raters

(the smaller the size of the panel, the greater the risk of error). A panel of 15 content experts requires a minimum CVR of 0.49 to be statistically reliable (Lawshe, 1975:568). Applying the CVR of 0.49 to the data resulted in the exclusion of Item 5 (*Is conscious of how his or her behaviors impact me*). The CVR of 0.49, however, corresponds to the 73% agreement rate (cut-off point), which is below the minimum 80% agreement rule prescribed by Hinkin (1995).

Therefore, a more stringent CVR value was sought. The next higher CVR value that resulted in deletion of items was 0.73 (applying the CVR formula to the data reveals that the CVR of 0.60 did not result in deletion of items), which corresponds to an 87% cut-off point, which exceeds Hinkin's (1995) minimum agreement rate. Two more items were dropped when the CVR of 0.73 was applied: Item 2 (*Instills a strong sense of mission within me*) and Item 3 (*Encourages me to express my whole self in the workplace*). As a result, four items were retained in the process of content validity process. A minimum of three items or indicators per factor would be required to adequately reflect the content domain of a scale and ensure the internal consistency reliabilities (Hinkin, 1995; Kline, 1998). Overall, the four-item cluster of Transcendental Spirituality represented the best possible pool of items to retain at this stage as they were content valid, conceptually fit, and parsimonious.

#### **4. STAGE 2: SCALE DEVELOPMENT**

Stage 2 used structural equation modeling to model the factor structure, allowing independent analyses of both the measurement component and structural component (Anderson & Gerbing, 1982; Fassinger, 1987), and to demonstrate the unidimensionality, reliability, and preliminary construct validity of the model.

##### **4.1. Method**

This section describes the sample and procedure and the results.

##### **4.1.1. Sample and Procedure**

The pre-test of the four-item cluster of the Transcendental Spirituality measure was conducted among 277 graduate students in a large Australian university. The respondents were instructed to evaluate the leadership behaviors of their current supervisor or direct leader, using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). All respondents were enrolled in master's (65%), MBA (27%) or graduate diploma courses (8%). A majority of the sample was either professionals (48%) or managers (31%). More than half of the sample was female (62%). Respondents were asked to evaluate their direct leader or supervisor with regard to their leadership behaviors using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The supervisors/direct leaders whom these respondents evaluated were mostly in senior management (47%) or middle management positions (45%). Confirmatory factor analysis and maximum likelihood estimation method were employed using the AMOS

software package to fit measurement models to covariance matrices (Anderson & Gerbing, 1982, 1988). To deal with missing data, the two-stage expectation maximization method was used (Graham & Donaldson, 1993; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Malhotra, 1987). Statistical tests of Goodness-of-Fit for the proposed confirmatory factor solution were also performed.

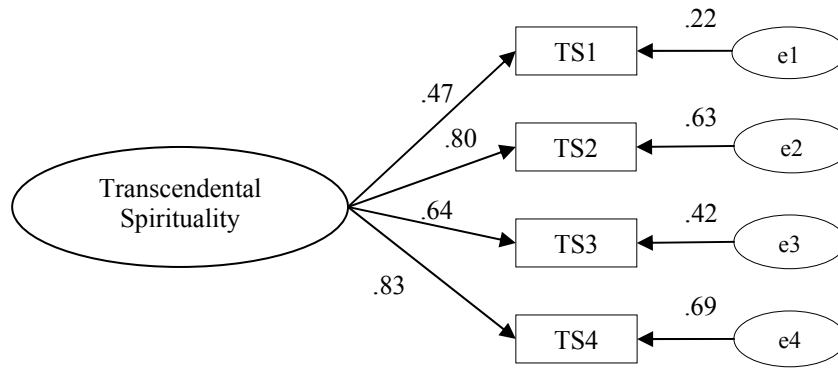
#### 4.1.2. Results

The mean, standard deviation, and reliability of the Transcendental Spirituality factor were 3.23, 0.76, and 0.72, respectively. The calculations of the goodness-of-fit indices for the four items of the scale produced a good fit ( $\chi^2 = 2.80$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p = 0.25$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 1.40$ ;  $GFI = 0.99$ ;  $AGFI = 0.94$ ;  $CFI = 0.99$ ;  $RMR = 0.03$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ;  $AIC = 18.80$ ). No modifications of the model were considered necessary since all indices were within the right parameters. Analysis of modification indices revealed that there were no significant correlations among items which warranted alterations of items. Therefore, the model indicated a good fit to the data. The standardized factor loadings for the model ranged from 0.68 to 0.81. Table 4 presents the goodness-of-fit indices, and Figure 1 shows the graphical representation of the confirmatory factor analysis for the Transcendental Spirituality scale.

**Table 4. Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Final One-Factor Congeneric Models of Transcendental Spirituality**

<i>Model</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	$\chi^2/df$	<i>GFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>RMR</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>	<i>AIC</i>
4-item model	2.80	2	0.25	1.40	0.99	0.94	0.99	0.03	0.06	18.80

In summary, Study 2 performed confirmatory factor analyses of the Transcendental Spirituality, resulting in no deletion of items. This suggests that it was a good-fitting and parsimonious model. The unidimensionality of the factor where “the indicators of a construct have acceptable fit on a single-factor (one-dimensional) model” (Hair et al., 1998:611), was also established at this stage.



TS1	Is driven by a sense of a higher calling
TS2	Helps me to find a clarity of purpose and direction
TS3	Promotes values that transcend self-interest and material success
TS4	Helps me to generate a sense of meaning out of everyday life at work

**Figure 1. One-Actor Congeneric Model for Transcendental Spirituality**

### 5. STAGE 3: SCALE EVALUATION

Stage 3 had two objectives. The first was to cross-validate the one-congeneric model in the Transcendental Spirituality scale on an independent sample in order to demonstrate the stability of the final model. The second was to establish discriminant validity of the scale through competing model analyses. Churchill (1979) recommended that a minimum of two studies is necessary as a basis for developing a scale in order to establish good psychometric properties, noting that the second study should be considered as further scale refinement, and not to test hypotheses. It is commonly agreed that, after the re-specification of an initial model, the resulting model must be cross-validated on an independent sample (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Belsky, Hsieh, & Crnic, 1996; Cudeck & Browne, 1983; MacCallum & Austin, 2000). This stage was a cross-validation of the resulting model using an independent sample (i.e., survey data), thereby adding to the robustness and rigor of the overall study. The cross-validation of the model is presented below by comparing the descriptive/fit statistics of the model using both the pre-test data and survey data.

#### 5.1. Method

This section discusses the sample and procedure, and the analysis and results.

### **5.1.1. Sample and Procedure**

An online survey involving employees of two for-profit organizations and two not-for-profit organizations was conducted to evaluate the leadership behaviors of their current supervisor or direct leader, using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A total of 206 responses out of 648 possible responses in the population was received, with 14 unusable responses because of excessive missing data. Hence, the survey generated 192 usable responses, which represented a response rate of approximately 30%. Researchers concur that a sample size of 150-300 cases is sufficient for factor analysis (Gorsuch, 1983; Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988; Guilford, 1954; Hutcheson & Sofroniou, 1999).

The respondents were predominantly male (57%). A majority of the sample was in the 30-49 age group (60%); the next largest age group was under 30 (28%). Nearly 86% of the respondents held tertiary degrees. More than one-third of the respondents were professionals from various organization functions at the time of the survey. The rest of the respondents were made up of non-management (27%), middle managers (26%), and senior managers (12%). Most of the respondents had been in their current position for one to five years (76%). The length of time respondents had been working together with their direct leaders varied, but mostly for 6-12 months (35%), 1-2 years (43%), and 2-5 years (40%).

The demographics of the supervisors and direct leaders evaluated by the respondents are slightly different. Direct leaders/supervisors were predominantly male (75%), 30-49 years of age (75%), and had bachelor's (39%) or master's (25%) degrees. More than half of the supervisors were professionals with direct reports (53%); the rest of the respondents for the most part were senior executives (14%) and middle managers (27%). A majority of the direct leaders had been in their current position for 1-2 years (38%), 2-5 years (24%), or 5-10 years (15%). The model specified in Stage 2 was cross-validated in Stage 3 through a subsequent survey on an independent sample.

### **5.1.2. Analyses and Results**

The cross-validation of the model is presented below by comparing the descriptive and fit statistics of the models obtained from pre-test data and survey data. The goodness-of-fit comparison of the two models was conducted. The means, standard deviations, reliabilities, skewness and kurtosis, as well as the fit statistics of the one-factor congeneric model of Transcendental Spirituality using pretest data (Sample A, N = 277) and survey data (Sample B, N = 192), are shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, Kurtosis, and Fit Indices of The One-Factor Congeneric Model of Transcendental Spirituality Using Pre-Test Data (Sample A) and Survey Data (Sample B)**

	Sample A	Sample B
Mean	3.23	3.39
SD	0.76	0.93
A	0.72	0.84
Skewness	-0.37	-0.48
Kurtosis	0.04	-0.65
$\chi^2$	2.80	3.81
Df	2.00	2.00
P	0.25	0.15
$\chi^2/df$	1.40	1.90
GFI	0.99	0.99
AGFI	0.94	0.95
CFI	0.99	0.99
RMR	0.03	0.02
RMSEA	0.06	0.07

Data from Sample B generally generated a slightly higher score on all descriptive statistics. However, the differences between the descriptive statistics of Sample A and those of Sample B were insignificant, which established the stability of the final model. The fit statistics for both samples were largely similar, generating good or acceptable fit across all measures of fit. This finding indicates that the models fit both data sets for Sample A and Sample B reasonably well. In summary, cross-validation of the Transcendental Spirituality scale on an independent sample established the stability of the final model. Consistent with the *a priori* conceptual framework, the four-item model fits both the pre-test and survey data. Hence, evidence of preliminary construct validity of the scale is established.

## 6. THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This paper discusses the construction and validation of a new scale measuring spiritual leadership titled *Transcendental Spirituality*, as part of a larger research on servant leadership behaviors. Three sequential stages in this study examined the psychometric properties of the measure.

Stage 1 provided built content validity of the scale through literature review, content analysis of interview data, and content expert validation.

Stage 2 refined the scale by way of structural equation modeling to examine the factor structure and unidimensionality of the measure.

Stage 3 provided further validation of the one-congeneric model using a new sample. Evidence of reliability and preliminary construct validity were

demonstrated in Stage 2 and Stage 3. The results of Stage 2 and Stage 3 also supported the theoretical framework developed *a priori* in Stage 1.

The present investigations make two valuable contributions to the study of spiritual dimensions of leadership. First, the development and validation of the Transcendental Spirituality scale represent a significant contribution to the literature. The construction of an empirically validated measure designed specifically to focus on behaviors that are spiritual constitutes a major step toward empirical investigation in the field. Second, the four-item Transcendental Spirituality scale is an accessible and easily administered measure with potential applications for assessment, selection, training, and performance evaluation purposes in organizations.

## 7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study has demonstrated evidences of psychometric properties of a new measure of spiritual leadership, which addresses the need for empirical supports for the construct of spiritual leadership that are currently lacking in the field. The study has some notable strengths.

First, the conceptualization and operational definition of Transcendental Spirituality have explicit theoretical grounding. The items for the scale were developed on the basis of the extant literature triangulated by individuals' descriptions of behavior attributed to spiritual leadership. Confirmatory factor analyses revealed that model re-specifications were not necessary to improve the goodness-of-fit statistics, suggesting that the initial conceptualization of the scale was comprehensive.

Another major strength of the study is its methodological rigor. The inclusion of interview data from 15 executives, content validation data from 15 expert panel, pre-test data from 277 students, and cross-validation (survey) data from 192 employees provide multiple tests for the newly developed measure in terms of its internal consistency reliability, factor structure, content validity, and discriminant validity, all of which are critical to establish construct validity (DeVellis, 1991; Hinkin, 1995).

It is relevant to note that the validation studies were based on relatively small samples of 277 students and 192 employees. However, both samples reflected a broad cross-section of workers who varied in terms of age, organization functions, organization level, and length of time working with their direct leaders/supervisors. Although the former sample comprised students, they represented the target population for which the scale is intended (DeVellis, 1991), as most of them were either professionals or managers undertaking a post-graduate degree, have had work experiences and direct leaders/supervisors in their workplace.

There is a need for the continued refinement and validation of the scale since establishing the psychometric properties of behavioral measures is a complex and lengthy process (Schmitt & Klimoski, 1991). Further validation

studies in various settings and across different sample are needed to provide more evidence of construct validity, in particular discriminant and convergent validity, and to refine the results of the current studies. In order to ascertain the usefulness of the scale in different populations, cross-cultural studies would also be appropriate and relevant.

### **APPENDIX: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What are the qualities or characteristics you admire most, or that you think are most important, in a leader?
2. Does the term 'spiritual leadership' or 'servant leadership' mean anything to you?
3. Can you think of its unique characteristics?
4. How would spiritual/servant leadership be different from other leadership approaches or styles?
5. Do you think the concept and practice of spiritual/servant leadership in organizations can contribute to better organizational performance? How?
6. If you could create the perfect, utopian workplace, how would it look?
7. What is your own personal purpose and passion in pursuing the professional life you've chosen?

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