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Hakim Lahmar, Farid Chaouki, Florence Rodhain. Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Commitment: A 21-year Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Human Values*, In press, 10.1177/09716858231154401 . hal-04087961

**HAL Id: hal-04087961**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04087961>**

Submitted on 12 May 2023

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# Spiritual Leadership and Organizational Commitment: A 21-year Systematic Literature

Hakim Lahmar <sup>1</sup> ✉ , Farid Chaouki <sup>1</sup>, Florence Rodhain <sup>2</sup>

## VERSION AUTEURS

*Article paru dans “Journal of Human Values”, April 2023*

### ABSTRACT

In this article, we present the results of a systematic literature review (SLR) on spiritual leadership (SL) as it relates to organizational commitment (OC). In other words, we will attempt to answer the following question: *What is the state of 21 years of scientific production regarding SL in its relationship with OC?* To accomplish this objective, we used a rigorous bibliometric approach employing two scientific databases: Scopus and Web of Science. In this sense, 82 articles were identified for the period between 2000 and 2021, but only 52 articles have been appropriate for the analysis. Two software were used for the data analysis: IRAMUTEQ and VOSviewer. This SLR was performed to shed more light on our current understanding of SL and OC and to identify patterns and gaps in previous studies of SL as it relates to OC.

The results of this SLR assert that the literature on the relationship between SL and OC has an important role for individuals and organizations. Theoretically, it highlights grey areas that need to be exploited to enrich the scientific literature, including constructs that will moderate or mediate the relationship between SL and OC. Practically, the research perspectives indicate the significant role that the SL can play in paying attention to the spiritual needs of employees and its positive effects on the organization. The findings have implications for both the employees (commitment, intrinsic motivation, well-being, etc.) and the organization (performance, social climate, reputation, etc.).

**Keywords:** Spiritual leadership, Organizational commitment, Systematic Literature Review.

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## INTRODUCTION

The corporate and human resources context is marked by a series of events that encourage the emergence of workplace spirituality. These events include social and economic upheaval accompanied by a profound shift in values, a structural decay marked by the decline of the relational tissue based on neighborhood, extended family, civic or religious communities, while the workplace is perceived as the primary source of community for many (**Voynet-Fourboul, 2014**). Thus, managers are looking for meaningful work and job satisfaction rather than remuneration and time (**Fry, 2003**), raising the question of the human business model. Indeed, the need of individuals is more and more to express their inner self, not to take away a part of themselves at work, and to be recognized as whole persons (**Voynet-Fourboul, 2014**). In fact, the relationship between SL and OC is little explored by academic research, especially in a Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity (VUCA) context that has led to a loss of bearings and humanity for managers.

The aim of this article is to justify the importance of promoting SL to ensure OC by analyzing the textual corpus of articles and identifying the topics, the most distinguished and high-impact publications, the countries with the best research productivity, as well as the methodological contributions of these studies. We looked in the scientific databases Scopus and Web of Science for articles in which we identified publications following the selected search criteria.

This study was performed to shed more light on our current understanding of SL and OC and to identify patterns and gaps in previous studies of SL as it relates to OC. It follows other research that succeed in constructing research problems and identifying important concerns for organizations from the analysis of relevant scientific studies related to SL and OC (**Sapta et al., 2021; Çimen et Karadag,2019; Sanusi et Trianmanto, 2020; Fry, 2003; Zhang & Yang, 2021; Zou et al., 2020; Riana, 2021**).

This article is divided into five parts. The first section is devoted to the literature review, followed by a description of the research methodology in the second section. The third section presents the results and their discussion. In the last section, we will deduce the main conclusions, limitations, as well as suggestions for further research.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1. Spiritual Leadership in the Workplace

Because businesses have been undergoing profound transformations since the 2008 crisis, accentuated by the 2020 Covid 19 pandemic, leaders are facing challenges that require increasingly multiple and varied complex capabilities (**Voynnet Fourboul, 2021**). Of course, one might expect that state leaders would be in the best position to support citizens in this area. But leaders have disinvested the field of the common good, which is precisely what spirituality is all about, in favor of a social order with solely economic interests (**Maffesoli & Strohl, 2019**). And they are unfortunately relayed with a certain contempt by the media establishment in the name of an arrogant self-righteousness and an ideology that wants to be without equal.

In many organizations, the role of a leader expands as organizations move from a vertical to a flattened structure. The fewer levels in the hierarchy, the more important a leader's role becomes, and the leader can delegate more responsibility to followers (**Emery & Barker, 2007**). In fact, employees seek something more than economic rewards in their work: meaningful work, social community, work-life balance, and the existence of something beyond themselves (**Lowe & Gardner, 2000**).

The spirituality movement, in the sense of **Garcia-Zamor (2003)**, is a reaction to the corporate greed of the 1980s. By spirituality we mean “*the recognition that employees have an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community*” (**Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 137**). In the United States of America, for example, the September 11, 2001, events led most Americans to re-examine their work style, which calls for both a moral and a generalized spirituality. Also, the increasing demands of globalization have raised serious issues for leaders and their leadership styles. These concerns have prompted researchers to redefine traditional leadership styles and to develop new models of leadership styles that can help address the challenges. Thus, the concept of SL was born.

Compared to other forms of leadership (classical, transformational, and transactional), spirituality is probably a kind of moderation towards the effects of transformation on others. The advantage of transformational leadership is that it provides transformative influence in the name of a vision, but the disadvantage is that the transformation is well-founded, the quality of the vision is high, and the dignity of the people is respected. Through SL, transformational leadership is posed in a virtuous framework (**Voynnet-Fourboul, 2014**). In SL, the leader

values people by listening to them and putting the needs of others before his or her own, and builds a community by facilitating teams, by building a relational universe that brings people together rather than separating them. The spiritual orientation of a leader is defined by the questions asked (**Beazley, 2002**).

As defined by **Fry (2003)**, SL is “*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*” (p. 711).

SL requires a high level of trust, especially in the ability of members to solve problems collectively and make decisions in the interest of the organization. What is crucial is communication, which helps members make sense of what is happening and share information. This is how information flows freely and decisions are made as a team. In this case, the responsibility is carried by a team.

According to **Korac-Kakabadse & al. (2002)** the spiritual leader approaches situations with an attitude of hindsight and discernment rather than direct intervention. He or she adopts a posture of openness and acceptance rather than control; of humility rather than strong expression of expertise; the spiritual leader prefers to let go rather than hold back, to enlighten rather than do.

The model of the development of human consciousness developed by **Wilber (2008)** provides a different kind of insight into SL, no doubt with a strong emphasis on the spiritual axis. He proposed an integral model that includes four orientations for a spiritual leader: a personal orientation that corresponds to personal leadership, a relational orientation (relational leadership), a cultural orientation (cultural leadership) and a societal orientation that corresponds to societal leadership.

The concept of SL focuses on the humanistic aspect of employees. For this reason, it is often confused with religiosity. The reason many organizations still do not feel comfortable embracing spirituality in the workplace is that they see spirituality as promoting religion, which is an obstacle to their reputation and growth. However, spirituality in the workplace is not about promoting religion or conversion, nor is it about having people perform religious acts in the workplace (**Singh, 2021**). Rather, it is about nurturing employees who see their workplace as a source of connection and a sense of belonging to human beings (**Hackman & Oldham, 1975**).

It is about creating a work environment where employees can bring their full potential and work in harmony with their colleagues to achieve a common goal.

As a result, the need to create a stimulating work environment has become increasingly important as employees spend a great deal of time in the workplace. SL aims to provide meaningful work and an environment where employees can work in the way they feel is most productive.

## **1.2. Organizational Commitment**

The concept of commitment seems to be part of everyday language. This concept was initially used to describe and analyze some types of human actions. It refers to a social mechanism by which individuals engage in and maintain consistent and coherent behavior (**Becker, 1960**).

Thus, as the philosophical dictionary **Lalande (1997)** states, it may have a different meaning each time it appears, but nevertheless concerns a thought which takes seriously the moral and social consequences it implies. Commitment necessarily has a prospective and normative aspect (**Lalande, 1997**). Commitment implies the idea of loyalty (**Lalande, 1997**). It manifests itself mainly when it is a question of a relationship whose terms are negotiated between the parties concerned, for example at the time of a marriage, in a nation (civic or military commitment) or in a company within the framework of an employment contract. Otherwise, the value of this relationship lies in its durability, which implies, if necessary, the overcoming of self and personal interests (**Frankl, 2013**) to preserve the sense of community. **Frankl (2013)** defends the thesis that the unconscious is mainly of spiritual essence, because when one finds meaning in the events of one's life, suffering decreases and mental health improves. Beyond the pleasure instinct, the deep nature of the human being leads him to moral realization. In this way, **Frankl (2013)** identifies three paths that allow us to give meaning to our existence: fulfillment, love, and transcendence. As **Meyer & Herscovitch (2001)** defined it, commitment is a psychological power that links people to actions that are relevant to a variety of targets. This strength can be felt through various mental states reflecting the various elements of the commitment concept.

In a professional context, commitment is an important topic in many areas of contemporary management research. In the words of **McNeese-Smith (1996)**, OC can be defined as a measurement of employee connectedness to the goals and values of the organization. **Mowday & al. (1982)** suggest that OC is an important behavioral indicator which can be used to estimate

employees' tendency to remain members of the organization. Commitment is the involvement of an individual that is relatively strong in favor of the organization. Additionally, OC refers to the desire of organizational members to maintain their membership in the organization and to work hard to achieve the organization's goals. This reflects the employees' attitude regarding their goals, values, and willingness to continue working for the organization (**Lok & Crawford, 2003**). In the interest of the organization, employees are willing to make personal efforts. This attitude has implications for behavior, but the principle remains focused on how employees view the relationship between their job in the organization and the development of the underlying attitudes.

The ongoing interest for OC mainly results from its beneficial impacts on organizational performance and other aspects of organizational behavior, such as absenteeism, turnover, and motivation (**Meyer & al. 2002**). For **Mowday & al. (1982)**, the interest in the employee-organization relationship, then, is the basis of the concept of OC, for three reasons. Firstly, as a reliable antecedent of the organizational behavior of employees, in particular turnover. Secondly, because of its direct relationship with employee loyalty, which is a key expectation of the company. Finally, because it is an important lever for understanding attachment and identification with the company in relation to the environmental context.

Furthermore, **Meyer & Allen (1991)** introduced the concept of OC by including three dimensions: affective commitment, which corresponds to identification with and involvement in the organization; normative commitment, which translates into loyalty stemming from a sense of obligation to the organization; and continuous commitment, which represents attachment to the organization based on the perceived cost of leaving the organization.

Over the past decade, OC has been an emerging research topic in the field of management. In this sense, **Ashmos & Duchon (2000)** define OC as the acknowledgement that workers have an inner life that feeds and is fed by significant work performed in the context of the community. There are three main components that are emphasized in this definition: inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community (**Duchon & Plowman, 2005**).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The papers used for this review have been selected through two databases. Scopus and Web of science were the databases mobilized for this systematic literature review (SLR). We employed

the key terms “spiritual leadership” and “commitment” to find the targeted articles. The initial comprehensive search generated 82 articles on SL and OC. We refined our search based on several criteria: Only articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals between 2000-2021, articles in English, article titles that include both "Spiritual Leadership" and "commitment". Books, book chapters, papers, and other types of publications were not included.

The choice of databases (Scopus and Web of Science) is motivated by the fact that they cover the most indexed journals in the world. For the Scopus database, owned by Elsevier, it provides an integrated view of the world's scientific production, covering the areas of social, biological, health, and physical sciences, and it indexes the most various academic titles, conferences, and books, among other publications. As for the choice of Web of Science, it's justified by the fact that this database is interdisciplinary and offers access to all fields of knowledge.

To refine this work, a search string was created and adapted for both databases, leading to the textual corpus of this SLR (**Table 1**). Considering the volume of papers found in both databases, a flowchart was created, as shown in **figure 1**, covering the criteria for selecting papers and based on the recommendations of **Obregon et al. (2021)**.

**Table 1:** Search string and number of articles by scientific database

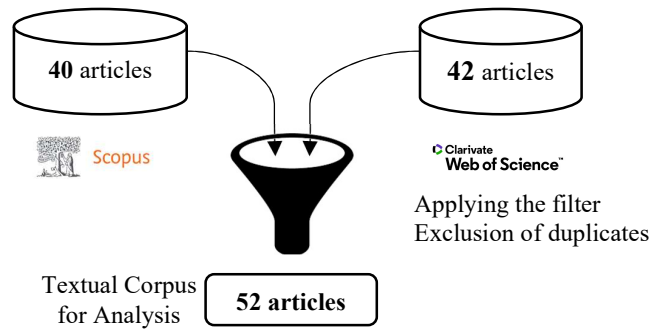
Search string	Number of articles	Database
TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Spiritual Leadership" AND "Commitment") AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, «ar»)) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2022 AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, «English»))	40	Scopus
TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Spiritual Leadership" AND "Commitment") AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, «ar»)) AND PUBYEAR > 1999 AND PUBYEAR < 2022 AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, «English»))	42	Web of Science

Source: The authors based on search results in scientific databases (Scopus and Web of Science)

Our search was performed on the Scopus and Web of Science databases using the search strings shown in **Table 1**, for the period from 2000 to 2021. We found 49 articles on Scopus, applying filtering by document type, i.e., "Article", we got 41 documents. Later, restricting the article language to English, this number was reduced to 40. In the Web of Science database, 49 articles were generated, by filtering by "Article", we got 43 responses. Then, by limiting the language of the article to English, the result was narrowed down to 42. Thus, by merging the outputs from both databases, we identified a total of 52 articles (**Fig. 1**), 25 of them were duplicates, which left 52 articles selected in all.



**Figure 1: Corpus selection process**



Source: The authors

### 3. RESULTS

In this part of work, the outcomes found before proceeding to the analysis of the textual corpus are highlighted, following the recommendations of **Tranfield et al. (2003)**, to establish the research protocol; **Obregon et al. (2021)**, which is used to measure the frequency of words in a text (based on Lotka's law) and to evaluate the productivity of authors and journals (following Bradford's law). In this sense, we will analyze the chosen papers following four perspectives: year of publication, articles distribution by journal, occurrence of words, and authors' co-citation.

#### 3.1. Year of articles' publication

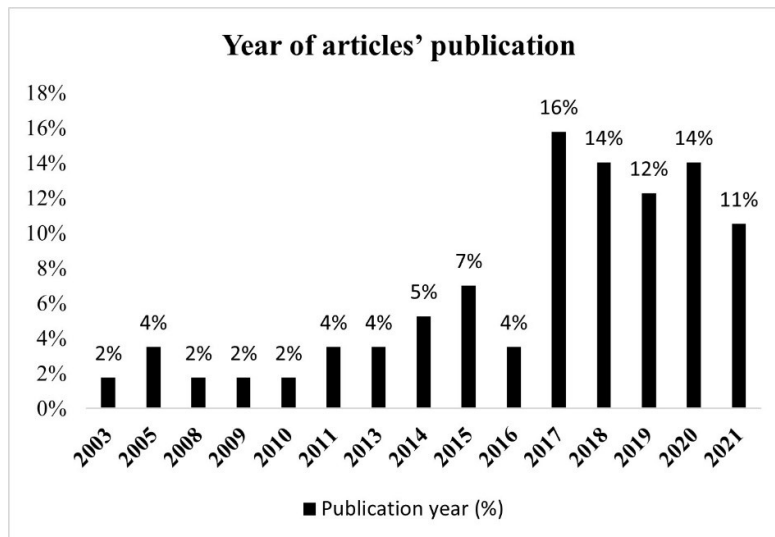
The sample distribution, composed with 52 articles representing the textual corpus, based on their year of publication, obtained from both Scopus and Web of Science scientific databases, included 41 journals and about 146 authors and co-authors.

In **figure 2**, we can see the percentage of articles in the sample that are published between 2000 and 2021. From 2000 to 2010, only six of the 52 articles selected for the analysis were published, which represents 11% of the sample. Nevertheless, the year 2003 and 2004 recorded the highest number of citations. In fact, the highest number of citations was recorded by two articles: the article from **Fry L.W. (2003)**, entitled "*Toward a theory of spiritual leadership*", published in *The Leadership Quarterly Journal*, which received 741 citations; and the article from **Fry L.W., Vitucci S. and Cedillo M. (2005)**, entitled "*Spiritual leadership and army transformation:*

*Theory, measurement, and establishing a baseline*", published in the same journal and which received 283 citations.

Moreover, in the period from 2011 to 2016, the number of publications continued the same rhythm, with a few more articles between 2014 and 2015, which represents 23% of the textual corpus. Since 2017, the number of publications has almost doubled, representing 66% of the sample. During the period selected for this research, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2007 were the least productive and had no publications, whereas 2017 had the merit of being the most productive period for this SLR, with nine publications, which represent 16%, and 119 citations obtained.

**Figure 2: Year of articles' publication**



Source: The authors' calculation

### **3.2. Articles distribution by scientific journal and the author's origin**

The analysis of the distribution of papers based on the journal of publication was carried out using Excel tables and made it possible to determine the distribution of the 52 papers in the sample with their Scimago Journal Rank (SJR), H-Index and quartile. SJR, as the main indicator chosen for the analysis, determines the average number of citations that an article in each journal receives from other articles, each citation being weighted by the reputation of the citing journal.

As we can see in **table 2**, the journal “*The Leadership Quarterly*”, with an SJR equal to 4.9 and an IF (Impact Factor) equal to 10,52, leads with five articles. It was followed by the journal “*Journal of Business Ethics*”, with one article and an SJR equal to 2.21 and an IF equal to 4,14. In third place we simultaneously find the two scientific journals: “*Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*” and “*British Journal of Educational Studies*”, with an SJR equal to 0.97 and an IF equal to 2,33. The other journals are ranked last with an SJR  $\leq$  0.8.

**Table 2:** Articles distribution by scientific journal

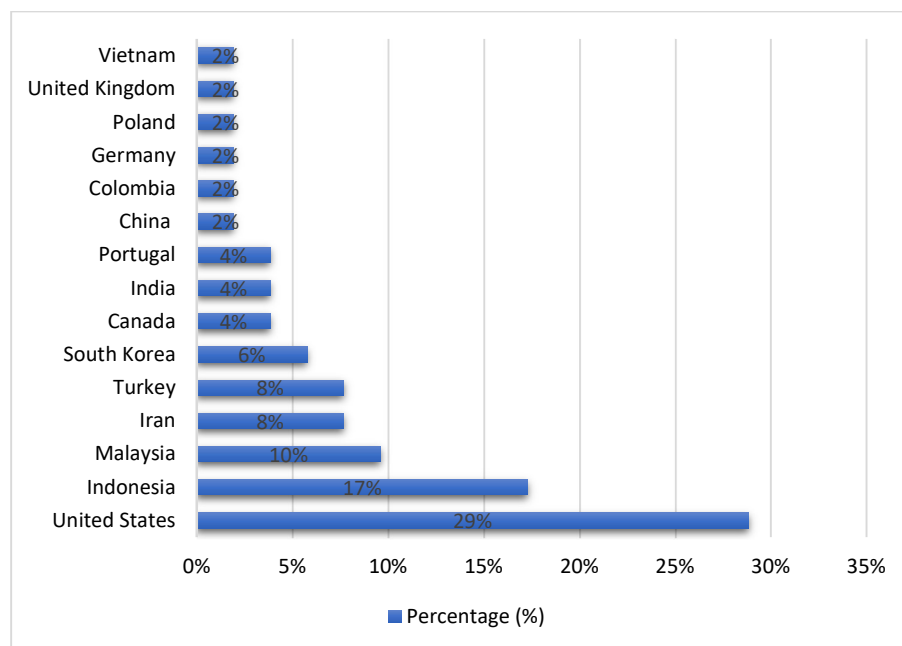
JOURNAL	Number of Articles	H-INDEX	IF 2020	SJR 2020	Quartile 2020
Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion	10	24	2,33	0,97	Q1
Leadership Quarterly	5	151	10,52	4,99	Q1
Journal of Nursing Management	2	74	3,33	0,93	Q1
Journal of Organizational Change Management	2	70	2,04	0,51	Q2
Leadership and Organization Development Journal	2	67	3,24	0,74	Q1
Acta Colombiana de Psicología	1	11	0,52	0,19	Q4
Asian Academy of Management Journal	1	14	1,07	0,23	Q3
British Journal of Educational Studies	1	49	2,65	0,97	Q1
Cogent Business & Management	1	16	2,02	0,35	Q2
Corporate Governance International Journal of Business in Society	1	58	0,92	0,63	Q1
Educational Administration: Theory and Practice	1	1	0,13	0,14	Q4
Eğitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research	1	17	0,98	0,24	Q3
Foresight and STI Governance	1	16	2,22	0,49	Q1
International Journal of Business and Globalisation	1	15	0,38	0,19	Q3
International Journal of Culture, Tourism, and Hospitality Research	1	31	2,26	0,57	Q2
International Journal of Law and Management	1	15	1,22	0,26	Q2
International Journal of Organizational Analysis	1	25	1,89	0,42	Q2
Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business	1	14	4,74	0,37	Q2
Journal of Business Ethics	1	187	4,14	2,21	Q1
Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences	1	32	0,85	0,24	Q3
Journal of Humanistic Psychology	1	34	1,90	0,41	Q1
Journal of Law and Society Management	1	19	1,03	0,39	Q1
Management and Marketing	1	11	1,52	0,25	Q3
Pastoral Psychology	1	27	0,58	0,33	Q1
Personnel Review	1	71	2,91	0,8	Q2
Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities	1	12	0,35	0,17	Q3
Psychology Research and Behavior Management	1	30	2,85	0,7	Q2
SAGE Open	1	32	1,36	0,36	Q2
Asian Social Science	1	30	0,66	-	-
Global Journal of Health Science	1	29	3,3	-	-
International Business Management	1	18	1,06	-	-

International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research	1	19	0,79	-	-
International Journal of Engineering and Advanced Technology	1	18	1,00	-	-
Journal of Economic and Administrative Sciences	1	18	1,27	-	-
Life Science Journal	1	25	2,5	-	-
Management Science Letters	1	17	2,06	-	-

Source: The authors, SCJR and Journal Impact

Moreover, the analysis of **figure 3**, concerning the distribution of articles by the origin of author, highlights that the United States takes the lead with 29% of authors. It was followed by Indonesia in second position with 17%, then Malaysia (10%) in the third position, Iran and Turkey (8%) in the fourth position followed by South of Korea (6%). Concurrently, Canada (4%), India (4%) and Portugal (4%) are in the fifth position. The rest of countries are in last place with 2% of the authors each.

**Figure 3:** Articles distribution by country of origin of the author (s)



Source: Authors' calculation

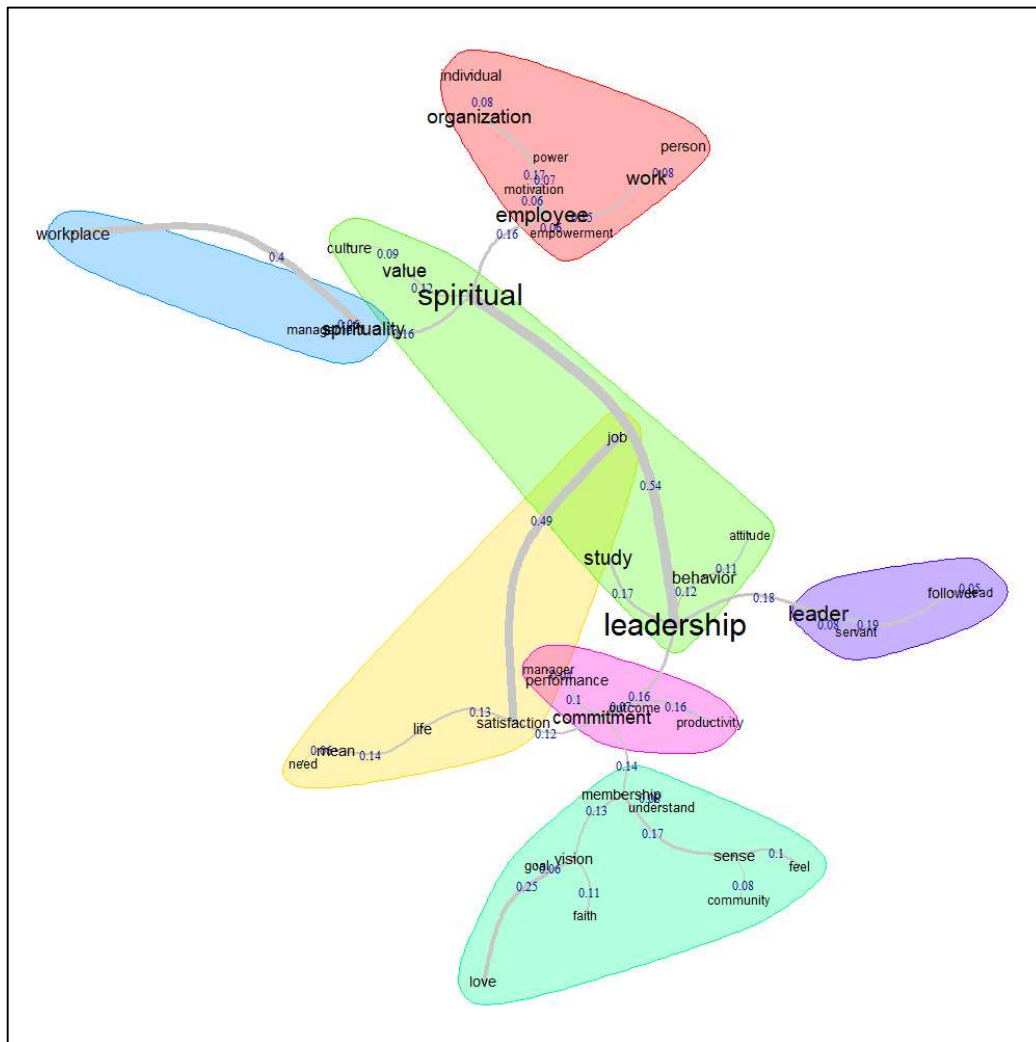
### 3.3. Cloud of Words and Similarities

The textual corpus for all 52 articles selected for analysis was evaluated with the computer program IRAMUTEQ, based on R software (**Ratinaud, 2008**). A preliminary analysis of the textual corpus, based on the IRAMUTEQ software, allowed us to obtain 336636 occurrences



“spiritual”, “leader”, “commitment”, “study”, “spirituality”, “workplace”, “spirituality”, “organization” and “employee”. Following **Kent & Coker (1994)**, it is obvious to point out that the width of the line between words indicates the strength of their connection, whereas the Jaccard index indicates the proportion between two words in comparison with the total sample. The same authors state that a high degree of similarity can be considered when the Jaccard index  $> 0.5$ . Based on this hypothesis, the similarity shown in **figure 5** can be qualified as relatively low, except for one case. This one concerns the two words "leadership" and "spiritual" which show a Jaccard index equal to 0.54. The reason for this similarity is that these words are presented jointly in most articles as a compound noun, namely "spiritual leadership".

**Figure 5:** Words similarity analysis of the textual corpus



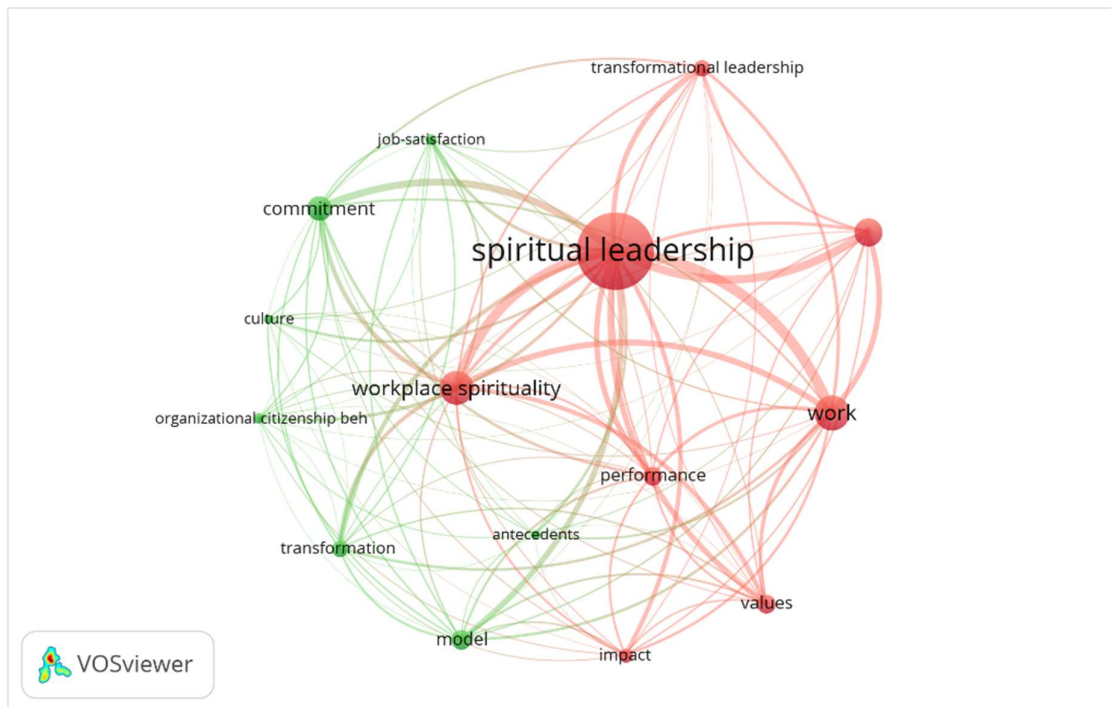
Source: VOSviewer calculation

### 3.4. Occurrence of keywords in abstracts

From 243 keywords identified in abstracts, 15 keywords constituted the threshold based on 5 occurrences, as recommended by the VOSviewer software calculation. We present the keywords as reported in the 52 articles forming the textual corpus. These keywords were structured around the theme "spiritual leadership and organizational commitment". Consequently, the results of this analysis allow us to obtain 15 items distributed on two clusters (one dominant in red, the other in green). These two groups establish 102 links between the items out of a total link strength with 407 (Fig. 6).

Following the guidance of Camargo and Justo (2013), the keywords that emerge most significantly are "spiritual leadership" with 41 occurrences, "work" with 19 occurrences, "workplace spirituality" with 18 occurrences, "organizational commitment" with 15 occurrences, and "commitment" with 13 occurrences (Fig. 6). These results confirm the occurrence of words observed in the exhaustive textual corpus.

**Figure 6:** Occurrence of keywords in abstracts



Source: VOSviewer calculation

In the same way, the analysis of the abstracts allowed us to obtain the occurrence of words by always using VOSviewer. To do this, we chose the abstract as the field from which terms will

be extracted. Subsequently, we selected full counting as the method of counting. As a threshold, we have retained a few tens of terms as a minimum number of occurrences. Thus, we have selected ten terms because of the software's configuration, which only retains 60% of the most relevant terms.

As one can see in **figure 7**, the 10 items forming the map are divided into two clusters (the most dominant in green and the other in red). Together, these two clusters make it possible to establish 35 links out of a total link strength of 923. By deepening our analysis, we notice that the term "spiritual leadership" tops the list, with 82 occurrences and 0.68 as a relevance score. It was followed by the term "workplace spirituality", which registers 32 occurrences and a score of 1.48 for relevance. In third place we find the word "effect" which registers 30 occurrences, with a relevancy of 0.99. This position is also shared with the term "organizational commitment", with a score of relevance equal to 0.76. The last position is occupied by the term "OCB: organizational citizenship behaviors", with 11 occurrences and a relevancy of 2.19.

**Figure 7:** Occurrence of words in the abstracts



Source: VOSviewer calculation

### 3.5. Authors' co-citation

Referring to **Small's (1973)** research, the logic of analysis consists of dismantling how two articles or authors are co-cited in prior literature. Other researchers such as **Van Eck and**



**Waltman (2014)**, state that when two authors or two articles are co-cited in the moment, a third author or article co-cites them. This discussion attempts to respond to the following question: "*Which cluster of authors is consistently cited in the recent literature?*" (**Obregon et al., 2021**).

To answer this question, a network of co-citation relationships between the authors of this SLR was generated by using VOSviewer software. We selected the co-citation as the method of analysis, while we opted for the cited author as the unit of analysis, and full counting as a counting method. As a standard analysis method, we used Linlog's modularity, because the parameters had a more accurate representation of the network. For the threshold, 20 terms (Software default value) were chosen as the minimum number of citations of an author. As for the number of authors to be selected, we have kept the default parameters proposed based on the VOSviewer software calculation (14 authors). On a total of 3957 authors in the 52 articles analyzed, the network of co-citation relationships allowed us to identify 14 nodes (authors) With a repeating author (Fry L.), which can be seen in the **figure 8**.

The results obtained through the calculations of the VOSViewer software allow us to constitute 2 clusters (red and green) with a network of co-citation relationships of 14 authors (nodes, one of them repeated), 530 citations and 6996 relational links, which can also be viewed with more details in **Table 3**.

According to **Obregon et al. (2021)**, the size of each node is proportional to the number of citations an author has received, while the rows refer to the co-citation between authors. Also, the closer the nodes are, the greater the co-citation relationship, i.e., the more times a third author jointly mentions two authors (**Lima & Leocádio, 2018**).

In fact, **figure 8** and **table 3** present two clusters (Red and Green). The first one (Red) is composed of 438 citations representing 83% of the citations of the textual corpus and 5497 relational links (i.e., 79% of the Total link strength). This cluster (red) includes 9 authors: Fry, L. W.; Meyer, J. P.; Giacalone, R. A.; Jurkiewicz, C. L.; Vitucci, S.; Cedillo, M.; Duchon, D.; Allen, N. J.; Brown, P. Of these, Fry, L. W. (Node 1) which has been highlighted because he alone has 196 citations, representing 45% of the citations received in the first cluster and 37% in relation to the total number of citations in the textual corpus, as well as 1963 relational links which correspond to 28% of the Total link strength. In this sense, the research studies of **Fry, L. W. (2003; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2010; 2017)** focused more on the concept

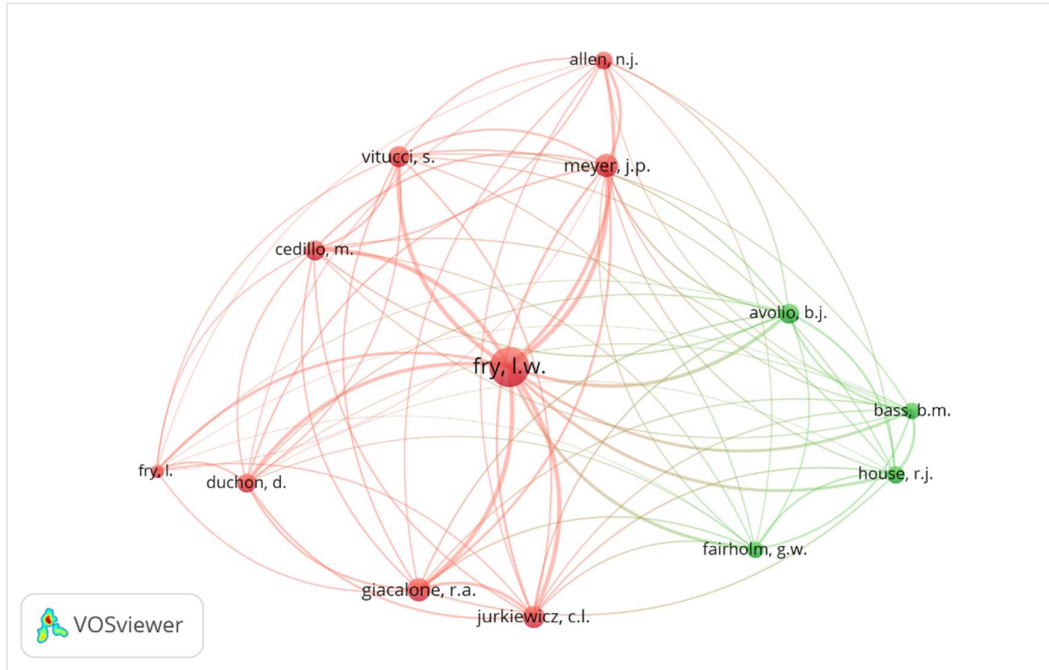
of SL and its implications on individual and organizational behavior by developing, therefore, a measurement scale for SL.

The second highest number of citations within the red cluster is attributed to Meyer, J. P. (Node 2), who has 42 citations, or 10% of this cluster and 8% of the textual corpus, as well as 620 relational links, representing 11% of this cluster (red) and 9% of the total link strength. Indeed, Meyer's research was mainly interested in the concept of OC with its three components (affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment). Meyer has the merit of developing a scale for measuring OC which is now a reference in the academic sphere.

The third node is occupied by Giacalone, R. A. with 34 citations, representing 8% of the red cluster and 6% of the total textual corpus and 598 relational links which represent 11% of the red cluster and 9% of the total link strength. One of the main contributions of Giacalone is to demonstrate the impact of workplace spirituality on organizational performance.

The second cluster (Green one) includes 92 citations, representing 17% of all citations in the textual corpus and 1499 relational links, involving four authors: Avolio, B. J.; House, R. J.; Bass, B. M.; Fairholm, G. W. Leading the list is Fairholm (Node 14) with 24 citations accounting for 26% of the second cluster and 5% of the entire textual corpus. Also, Fairholm has 322 relational links (i. e. 21% of the green cluster and 5% of the total textual corpus). For the remaining authors within the second cluster (Avolio, B. J.; House, R. J.; Bass, B. M.) we see that there is no great disparity in the number of citations. Fairholm's publications have focused on SL and its perspectives.

**Figure 8:** Authors co-citation network



Source: VOSviewer calculation

**Table 3: The most co-cited authors**

Author	Citations	Total link strength	Cluster (Red "R"/Green "G")	% Citations	% Total Link strength
Fry, L. W.	196	1963	<b>R</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>79%</b>
Meyer, J. P.	42	620	<b>R</b>		
Giacalone, R. A.	34	598	<b>R</b>		
Jurkiewicz, C. L.	33	581	<b>R</b>		
Vitucci, S.	31	493	<b>R</b>		
Cedillo, M.	30	475	<b>R</b>		
Duchon, D.	28	391	<b>R</b>		
Allen, N. J.	24	376	<b>R</b>		
Brown, P.	20	0	<b>R</b>		
Avolio, B. J.	23	452	<b>G</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>
House, R. J.	22	381	<b>G</b>		
Bass, B. M.	23	344	<b>G</b>		
Fairholm, G. W.	24	322	<b>G</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>6996</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

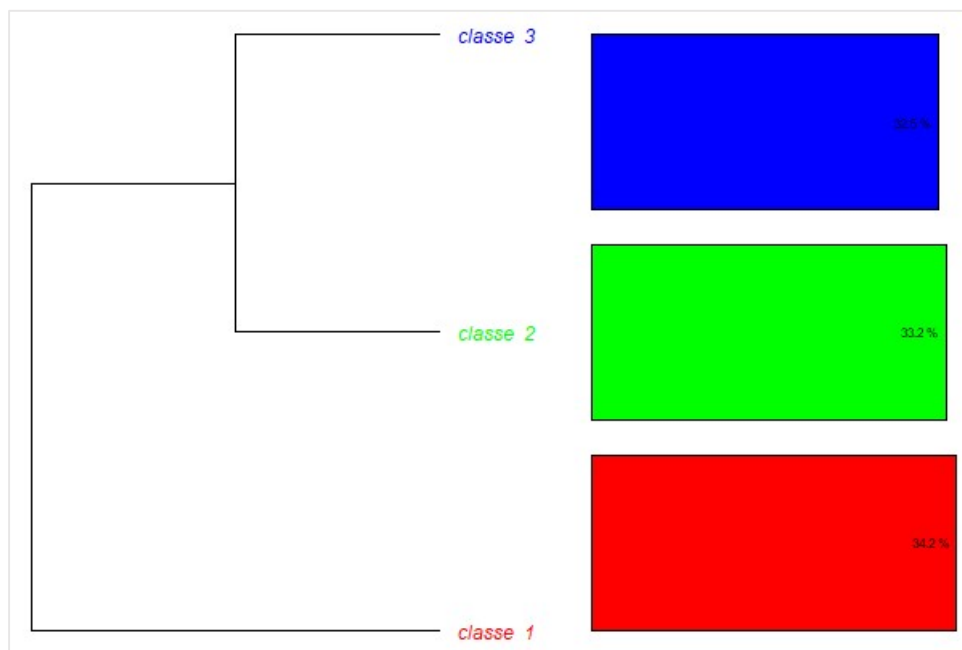
Source: The authors based on VOSviewer calculation

### 3.6. Analysis of Word Clustering

For the grouping of keywords into clusters, we used the Reinert method. This approach uses descending hierarchical clustering (DHC), which is calculated using the IRAMUTEQ software. In this framework, the DHC analysis was done by exploiting the textual corpus of the 52 articles selected for evaluation. Out of a total of 8281 text segments, forming the textual corpus, 7290 segments were classified, which represents 88.03%. In the meaning of **Camargo & Justo (2013)**, to accept the DHC analysis, the proportion of classified text segments must be greater than 70%. Thus, we conclude that our DHC analysis is representative.

The Reinert method brought out 336636 occurrences out of the 52 texts analyzed, 8281 text segments and 13779 forms including 4756 active forms. From the 7290 classified segments we obtained three classes (**Fig. 9**). The first one, is composed of 2495 text segments, representing 34,22%. The second one, represents 33,24% with 2423 text segments. And the third, includes 2372 segments of text, accounting for 32.54%.

Figure 9: **Dendrogram of descending hierarchical classification.**



Source: IRAMUTEQ calculation

For better apprehension of the DHC dendrogram, a flowchart was designed following the Reinert method (**Fig. 10**) and which allows to clearly see the words, upon their insertions, in the textual corpus. **Figure 10** represents, respectively, the three classes and the words that compose them that are generated through the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test. According to **Reinert (1990)**, this test only considers words with a frequency of at least 10 and where  $\chi^2 > 3.80$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). The rest, which do not satisfy this condition, are automatically rejected. In this sense, it should be remembered that the  $p < 0.05$  identifies the level of significance of the association of words with class.

**Figure 10:** Organogram of word classes.

Textual Corpus											
Text Segments: 8281				Acceptance: 88,03%							
<b>Class 1</b>				<b>Class 2</b>				<b>Class 3</b>			
<b>Measurement scales</b>				<b>SL &amp; OC</b>				<b>Research perspectives</b>			
Text Segments: 2495 (34,22%)				Text Segments: 2423 (33,24%)				Text Segments: 2372 (32,54%)			
Word	Frequency	( $\chi^2$ )	P	Word	Frequency	( $\chi^2$ )	P	Word	Frequency	( $\chi^2$ )	P
variable	600	860,82	<0,0001	Sense	574	768,1	<0,0001	Management	282	267,83	<0,0001
study	1387	611,82	<0,0001	leader	1370	416,47	<0,0001	Human	195	155,75	<0,0001
test	347	491,59	<0,0001	Vision	597	347,46	<0,0001	Leaders	178	132,56	<0,0001
significant	458	461,85	<0,0001	Feel	305	318,1	<0,0001	Resource	107	122,23	<0,0001
correlation	259	434,75	<0,0001	Work	1185	300,26	<0,0001	Balance	87	120,54	<0,0001
sample	289	425,72	<0,0001	employee	1361	239,69	<0,0001	Religion	143	118,83	<0,0001
table	362	414,21	<0,0001	person	402	225,39	<0,0001	New	183	112,77	<0,0001
coefficient	206	407,41	<0,0001	Life	528	219,7	<0,0001	Business	174	111,19	<0,0001
hypothesis	338	399,78	<0,0001	organization	1100	212,93	<0,0001	Practice	248	110,73	<0,0001
analysis	325	397,88	<0,0001	motivate	175	194,44	<0,0001	Development	330	106,01	<0,0001
scale	209	366,79	<0,0001	Create	290	187,59	<0,0001	Issue	110	101,82	<0,0001
item	274	365,12	<0,0001	community	183	183,49	<0,0001	Spirituality	979	100,09	<0,0001
datum	278	363,17	<0,0001	Fry	695	175,53	<0,0001	Education	189	99,79	<0,0001
result	765	334,83	<0,0001	individual	632	172,34	<0,0001	Cynicism	63	97,18	<0,0001
measure	339	313,26	<0,0001	Value	1022	167,63	<0,0001	System	146	94,56	<0,0001
model	821	308,72	<0,0001	follower	459	157,08	<0,0001	Approach	216	93,87	<0,0001
validity	143	234,67	<0,0001	Goal	241	156,29	<0,0001	Paradigm	50	86,64	<0,0001
Leadership	5500	133,72	<0,0001	Call	673	153,64	<0,0001	Religious	127	82,99	<0,0001
Spiritual	134	110,26	<0,0001	Spiritual	4135	86,78	<0,0001	Theory	411	81,45	<0,0001
Commitment	1073	78,01	<0,0001	Engagement	30	25,6	<0,0001	Scholar	59	69,14	<0,0001
Spirituality	645	18,33	<0,0001	Commitment	1348	23,05	<0,0001	Perspective	118	20,05	<0,0001

Source: IRAMUTEQ calculation

#### 4. DISCUSSION

To establish the themes that will be discussed, we used the output of organigram of words classes (**Fig. 10**). Since the objective is to identify the entire body of literature that deals jointly

with SL and OC. The approach adopted ensures an overview of existing literature sources on the two databases used: Scopus and Web of Science. Thus, the analysis of the results identified three main themes: SL and OC, measurement scales and research perspectives.

#### **4.1. Spiritual leadership and organizational commitment**

This literature review highlights a cluster of publications (class 2 in **Fig. 10**) that have studied, directly, the relationship between SL and OC. By examining the dimensions of SL, **Samul & Wangmo (2021)** identified significant and positive relationships between SL and OC in the Asian and European context. These scholars assert that the degree of influence of each dimension depends on how it is perceived by managers due to the changing cultural context. **Sapta et al. (2021)** finds that workplace spirituality has a mediating effect on the relationship between SL and OC. Furthermore, **Riana (2021)** states that there is a positively significant relationship between: first, SL and calling; second, between calling and OC; and third, between calling and organizational performance.

According to **Terzi et al. (2020)**, the dimensions of SL have varying relationships with organizational trust, which is significantly predicted by altruistic love, hope/faith, and OC. For **Tabor et al. (2020)**, OC is boosted by SL but decreased by work-family conflict. So, SL has positive effects for family workers and negative effects for non-family workers experiencing high work-family conflict.

From another perspective, **Djaelani et al. (2020)** find that there is a direct effect between SL and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and an indirect effect of OC on the relationship between SL and job satisfaction with OCB. In the sense of **Jeon & Choi (2020)**, vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love, as dimensions of SL, were positively correlated with employees' creativity, while their OC (emotional commitment as a component) mediated these connections. This study also validated the multidimensional structure of SL in the South Korean context. Additionally, **Yang & Fry (2018)** claims that SL reduces burnout and has a positive effect on OC, workplace productivity and job satisfaction. Also, as stated by **Pio & Tampi (2018)**, there is a significant effect of SL on ethical behavior, work-life quality, job satisfaction, OC and employee performance.

From the same perspective, **Akbar et al. (2018)** affirms that SL has a direct and significant positive effect on both employee performance and OC. Thus, the relationship between SL and

employee performance is mediated by OC while the latter has no direct significant effect on employee performance. In the same context, **Phuong et al. (2018)** states that SL has a significant effect on OC through membership, empowerment and individual characteristics regarding meaning and calling. Based on the SL theory developed by **Fry (2003)**, that establishes vision and value alignment at strategic levels and promotes higher levels of OC and productivity, **Espinosa et al. (2017)** demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between SL and OC. On another note, **Malik et al. (2017)** affirms that there is a positive correlation between SL and employee job performance and that SL is very effective in promoting employee OCB and OC. In a Malaysian oil and gas industry study, **Mansor et al. (2013)** inferred that SL has significant effects on OC. As well, **Vandenberghe's (2011)** study considers sense of calling and sense of community as mediating variables of the effects of SL on four components of OC (affective, normative, continuity-sacrifice, and continuity-alternative). **Vandenberghe (2011)** Suggests three moderating variables of SL which are: climate for spirituality, personal spirituality, and materialism. As a result of the study of **Fry et al. (2010)**, a balanced scorecard business model was proposed that considers SL as a catalyst for employee well-being, OC and productivity, corporate social responsibility, and ultimately financial performance. Also, using longitudinal data and basing on causal model of SL theory (**Fry, 2003**), **Fry et al. (2005)** confirms the existence of positive and significant relationships between SL qualities, spiritual survival, and organizational productivity and commitment. Finally, **Markow & Klenke's (2005)** research found significant positive correlations between transcendent personal meaning and vocation. Moreover, vocation was also positively correlated with OC and contrasted with work as a job as a predictor of commitment.

#### 4.2. Measurement scales

This second cluster (class 1 in **Fig. 10**) involves identifying the various measurement scales that have been mobilized to measure both SL and OC. **Table 4** summarizes the main measurement scales used in this sample of articles.

**Table 4:** The measurement scales used in the sample of articles

Variables	Measurement scales	Authors
SL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SL Scale</li> <li>- SL Scale</li> <li>- SL Scale (<u>confirmed by Chen &amp; Yang, 2012</u>)</li> <li>- SL Questionnaire</li> <li>- SL Questionnaire</li> <li>- SL Measurement Scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fry (2003) &amp; Fry et al. (2005, 2007)</li> <li>- Fry (2005)</li> <li>- Fry et al. (2005)</li> <li>- Fry &amp; Matherly (2006)</li> <li>- Fry (2003) &amp; Fry &amp; Cohen (2009)</li> <li>Fry &amp; Nisieiwcz (2013)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SL Scale (not validated by subsequent studies)</li> <li>- SL Scale (adapted from Fry, 2008)</li> <li>- SL Survey</li> <li>- SL Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Karaoğ E. (2019)</li> <li>- Fry et al. (2017)</li> <li>- Fry et al. (2010)</li> <li>- Fry (2008)</li> </ul>
<b>OC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OC Scale</li> <li>- OC Questionnaire</li> <li>- OC Questionnaire (OCQ)</li> <li>- OC Scale (confirmed by Fry et al., 2005)</li> <li>- OC Scale (confirmed by Fry et al., 2017)</li> <li>- OC Scale</li> <li>- OC Scale</li> <li>- OC Scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meyer et al. (1997)</li> <li>- Fry &amp; Matherly (2006)</li> <li>- Mowday et al. (1979)</li> <li>- Nyhan (2000)</li> <li>- Meyer &amp; Allen (1990)</li> <li>- Fry et al. (2010); Fry &amp; Altman (2013)</li> <li>- Meyer &amp; Allen (1991)</li> <li>- Meyer &amp; Allen (1991); Meyer et al. (2004); Vandenberghe (2011)</li> </ul>

Source: The authors

As can be seen in **Table 4**, the most used scales for measuring SL refer to **Fry's (2003)** scale. This survey covers three dimensions, namely: vision (4 statements), hope/faith (4 statements) and altruistic love (5 statements).

Concerning OC, the first measurement scale developed is the one of **Mowday et al. (1979)**. This questionnaire consists of 15 items. Each item is measured on a 7 points scale: (1) strongly disagree; (2) moderately disagree; (3) slightly disagree; (4) neither disagree nor agree; (5) slightly agree; (6) moderately agree; (7) strongly agree.

While the earlier version (**Meyer & Allen, 1990**) of the OC Questionnaire had 24 items (8 items for each dimension), the later version by **Meyer & Allen (1997)** contained only 18 items (6 items for each dimension). Whereas the number of items was reduced, this change primarily affected the normative scale, not the affective and continuity scales. This instrument (**Meyer & Allen, 1997**) is the one most recommended by the scientific community to measure OC.

### 4.3. Research perspectives

While the objective of this article is to clarify our understanding of the SL in its relationship to the OC, our results highlighted the profound impact of Fry's research on SL and **Meyer & Allen's (1990; 1991; 1997)** research on OC. In fact, **Fry's (2003)** causal model was widely used to drive most of empirical research that we examined. Similarly, **Meyer & Allen's** studies have largely dominated the literature on OC.

Methodologically, the quantitative approach has been prevalent in research on SL as it relates to OC. This can be well understood given the significant influence and popularity of **Fry's** research on SL and **Meyer & Allen's** research on OC.



As a result of this SLR, we acknowledge that SL is rooted in part in religious beliefs and concepts (**Fry, 2003**). Nevertheless, it possesses certain attributes that are distinctly different from religiosity, which include ethics, values, and meaning in the workplace.

The findings also demonstrate that the most frequently cited definition of SL is from **Fry (2003)**, who clearly distinguishes spirituality from religiosity. As well, **Meyer & Allen (1990;1991;1997)** provided the definition of OC with its three components (affective, continuance, and normative). This definition is used in practically all the articles studied. Therefore, it is certain that SL is a distinct and researchable construct, and with this conviction, this SLR appeals to expand the field of SL research. Certainly, **Fry's (2003, 2008)** causal models have been considered the most robust conceptual framework for SL. Despite their acceptance, these models have been embraced in a piecemeal manner; therefore, the causal relationship of SL has not been explored in a holistic fashion. A portion of the studies reviewed did not use Fry's model in its entirety, for example, some scholars excluded the spiritual well-being component when examining SL. Also, in the articles we reviewed, researchers paid exclusive attention to followers, which led to a one-sided understanding of SL. To advance research on this topic, we need a more inclusive research approach that considers all relevant constructs and stakeholders (**Fry, 2003**).

In addition, this SLR show that OC, originally included in **Fry's 2003** model, was tested by previous research in some professional settings such as schools and hospitals. Only a handful of studies have examined the relationship between SL and other constructs, such as organizational citizenship behavior, deviant behavior, innovation, etc. This is because SL researchers have simply validated Fry's conceptualization for its applicability in certain contexts, rather than extending it to explore other constructs. Indeed, researchers are encouraged to broaden their research focus by identifying other possible constructs, including moderators and mediators, when examining the relationship of SL to OC.

Not only this article offers new theoretical perspectives, as mentioned above, but also enumerates some practical implications. In this sense, **Zhang & Yang (2021)** suggest that leaders should adopt SL to improve interactions between themselves and their staff to increase innovative behavior of workers. Likewise, **Sapta et al. (2021)** demonstrate how integrating spiritual practices like SL can serve policymakers. In the view of **Zou et al. (2020)**, SL can ensure a spiritual work climate to support subjective well-being in social professions such as

nursing. In fact, organizations should offer training programs to help new leaders adopt SL, which will make employees happier, more fulfilled and valued.

## CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to conduct a systematic review and summarize the existing literature on the correlation between SL and OC from 2000 to 2021. The review identified a total of 82 articles, but only 52 were pertinent to the study objectives. The results revealed significant gaps, with few papers published on the topic before 2017; 67% of relevant articles (**Fig. 2**) were published between 2017 and 2021.

The results also showed that most researchers were concentrated in the United States (29%), Indonesia (17%), and Malaysia (10%) (**Fig. 3**). Except for the United States, the other countries have a high religious profile (Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Turkey, India). This statement raises again the issue of interference between the religious and spiritual spheres. In this sense, the literature seems to give more attention to Muslim countries (43%) (**Fig. 3**). In addition, there have been very few comparative studies with other religions, particularly Christianity, Buddhism, and Judaism.

After an extensive review of the literature, we found that the **Fry (2003)** scale is the most frequently used by the scientific community to measure SL. Similarly, **Meyer & Allen's (1997)** measurement scale remains the most recommended, until now, by researchers to measure OC.

Overall, the study demonstrated that SL positively and significantly impacts OC (**Fry, 2003; Markow & Klenke, 2005; Fry et al., 2005; Fry et al., 2010; Vandenberghe, 2011; Mansor et al., 2013; Espinosa et al., 2017; Malik et al., 2017; Yang & Fry, 2018; Akbar et al., 2018; Phuong et al., 2018; Sapta et al., 2021; Riana, 2021; Samul & Wangmo, 2021; Terzi et al., 2020; Tabor et al., 2020; Djaelani et al., 2020; Jeon & Choi, 2020**). The degree of impact depends largely on each leader's perception of spirituality (**Samul & Wangmo, 2021**).

Theoretically, based on the results of this SLR, this research outlines the areas that need to be exploited to enrich the scientific literature, including the constructs that will moderate or mediate the relationship between SL and OC. Practically, research perspectives indicate the significant role that SL can play in addressing employees' spiritual needs and its positive effects on the organization (**Fry, 2003; Fry, 2005; Fry & Matherly, 2006; Fry & Cohen, 2009; Fry**

et al., 2010; Fry et al., 2017; Garg, 2018; Garg et al. 2019; Sapta et al., 2021). The outcomes have implications for both the employees (engagement, intrinsic motivation, well-being, etc.) and the organization (performance, social climate, reputation, etc.).

This literature review seems to contribute to provide sufficient evidence about the value of incorporating spiritual practices in the workplace, especially for leaders through the adoption of a new leadership style able to ensuring OC. This has to be confirmed by further research.

## **Declarations**

**Conflict of interest:** All authors declare they have no conflicts of interests

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