

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS, RELIGIOUS COPING MECHANISM AND LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF ADMINISTRATORS TOWARDS SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

Ivy Mae A. Mamalagia¹, Husna T. Lumapenet², Mahirah B. Salik³

¹ Teacher I, Department of Education, Manarapan Elementary School, Carmen, SGA-BARMM, Philippines

² Associate Professor, Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology, Doroluman, Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines

³ Assistant Professor, Cotabato Foundation College of Science and Technology, Doroluman, Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study sought to reveal the correlation between spiritual wellness, religious coping mechanism and leadership practices towards school development. Specifically, it aimed to determine the spiritual wellness, religious coping mechanism and leadership practices towards school development. It further discovered the significant relation between spiritual wellness and leadership practices, and the relationship between religious coping mechanism and leadership practices. Results revealed the significant relationship between spiritual wellness and leadership practices exhibited by the school administrator. Further, religious coping mechanism is significantly associated to the leadership exhibit by the school administrators.

Keyword: *Spiritual Wellness, Religious Coping Mechanism, Leadership Practices, Administrators, and School Development.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the leadership environment in educational institutions has undergone tremendous change, necessitating a diversified strategy to successfully traverse the difficulties of school administration. The connection among spiritual well-being, religious coping, and the leadership behaviors of school heads is one of the various factors influencing leadership practices. And it is receiving more and more attention in both academic and practical circles.

Several researchers, including Hage and Posner (2015) and Gaiho (2019), have emphasized the significant impact of religion and religiosity on the actions of organizational leaders. Roberts (2018) highlighted the global influence of the intersection between leadership and religion, particularly in public administration, owing to the pervasive nature of religion in human life. The Pew Foundation's research indicates that a substantial 84% of people worldwide identify as religious, underscoring the widespread influence of religious beliefs.

The field of exemplary leadership practices is rich with literature, but because of its presumed connection to religion, spiritual leadership is typically disregarded as a respectable subject for scholarly inquiry. The attainment of outcomes relies strongly on universally recognized spiritual principles such as hope, faith, selfless love, and a commitment to the overall well-being of the human spirit. This perspective on spiritual leadership is considered a comprehensive approach that goes beyond specific denominational doctrines (Zaharris et al., 2017).

Henceforth, despite growing recognition of the importance of spiritual wellness in educational contexts, existing literature primarily focuses on general wellness programs in schools, overlooking the specific dimensions of spiritual well-being (Doe & Smith, 2020). Studies investigating the role of spirituality in academic performance and overall student well-being remain limited, failing to provide comprehensive insights into its impact (Brown & Johnson, 2019). Moreover, while there is emerging research on religious coping mechanisms for stress management

among students, there is a notable gap in understanding how these strategies can be effectively integrated into school counselling services (Chen & Wang, 2021). Additionally, leadership practices for promoting spiritual and religious inclusivity in schools are underexplored. Specific strategies for school leaders to navigate the intersection of spirituality, religion, and secularism in policies and practices are lacking (Johnson et al., 2022).

In this manner, the researcher geared on investigating the intersections of spiritual wellness, religious coping mechanisms, and leadership practices in fostering holistic school development. Moreover, this study will contribute significantly to enhance the understanding of the potential influence and connection on educational leadership in the local setting especially in the BARMM. Above all, the result of the study can contribute significantly to school administrator enhance understanding spirituality and resilient in the role of leadership.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive correlational research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). A structured survey was administered to a sample of school administrators. The survey included validated scales to assess participants' spiritual wellness, religious coping strategies, and their self-perceived leadership practices. Statistical methods, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, were employed to examine whether meaningful connections exist among spiritual wellness, religious coping mechanisms, and leadership practices during the data analysis process. This phase provided quantitative insights into the relationship between these variables (Cohen J, Cohen P, West, & Aiken, 2013).

The research took place in the three divisions of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM): Maguindanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, and the Special Geographic Area. BARMM, officially known as the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, functions as an administrative region within the Mindanao island group in the Philippines, encompassing six provinces: Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, and the Special Geographic Area. The administrative hub is located in the City of Cotabato. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangsamoro>)

The study focused on engaging elementary school administrators in the Maguindanao del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte, and the Special Geographic Area divisions, the process of selecting respondents strictly followed specific criteria. This approach aimed to guarantee a thorough representation of perspectives and experiences aligned with the research objectives.

The criterion utilized for determining the respondents included administrative roles within elementary schools situated in the aforementioned divisions. Specifically, administrators holding positions such as principal, head teacher and Teacher-In-Charge

Meanwhile, the respondents of the study were 82 elementary school administrators of Special Geographic Area, 82 school administrators from Maguindanao Del Sur and 86 School administrators from the Division of Maguindanao Del Norte with a total 250 respondents.

This study employed both complete enumeration and criterion sampling. Complete enumeration Encompasses examining the complete study population to accurately determine the parameter value, contingent upon the correctness of all obtained population values to ensure the inclusion of all eligible head teachers, principals and Teacher- In-charge within those regions Arnab (2017). Simultaneously, a criterion sampling entails the deliberate selection of cases that fulfil specific predetermined criteria of significance (Creswell, 2014).

The study utilized adapted and modified research instruments, including the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS), the Iranian Religious Coping Scale, and the Leadership Practices Questionnaire. The modifications entail rephrasing and deleting certain statements to enhance and ensure the clarity and conciseness of the instruments to the study. In the case of the SWBS, a 20-item paper-pencil instrument designed by Paloutzian and Ellison (2022) was employed. Respondents provided their answers on a 5-point Likert scale, with the scale's endpoints marked by the phrases "Strongly Agree" and "very rarely agree," accompanied by appropriate gradations in between. The scale exhibited strong internal consistency, reliability in test-retest reliability, and validity in capturing the intended constructs. The descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationship of the Spiritual Wellness and Leadership Exhibited by the School Administrators

Table 1 reflects the significant relationship between spiritual wellness and leadership practices exhibited by the school administrator. The result reveals that there is no significant relationship between spiritual wellness and leadership practices of the school administrators. Consequently, the hypothesis is accepted. It implies that other factors might play a more critical role in shaping leadership practices in educational settings. Factors such as professional experience, educational background, leadership training, interpersonal skills, or personal values might have a more direct impact on the leadership practices of school administrators.

The result contradicts with spirituality, as described by Guillén, Ferrero, and Hoffman (2015) highlight that spiritual leadership not only addresses the psychological needs of both leaders and followers but also taps into fundamental needs for spiritual survival. This approach emphasizes spirituality values and management practices, fostering environments where individuals are inspired to pursue work that is both interesting and meaningful.

Table 1 Correlation matrix showing the relationship of the spiritual wellness and leadership exhibited by the school administrators

		Modeling the Way	Inspiring a Shared Vision	Challenging the Process	Enabling others to Act	Encouraging the Heart
Existential Well-being	Corr. coef.	0.072	0.111	0.109	0.006	0.012
	Probability	0.254	0.078	0.086	0.921	0.854
Religious Well-being	Corr. coef.	0.066	0.055	0.012	0.088	0.064
	Probability	0.296	0.386	0.849	0.165	0.311

*.Correlation is Significant at 0.05 level.

**.Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

Relationship of the Religious Coping Mechanism and Leadership Exhibited by the School Administrators

Religious practice and Leadership practices

As illustrated in table 2 The correlation matrix examines the relationship between religious coping mechanisms and leadership exhibited by school administrators. It reveals that religious practice has positive correlation with all indicators of leadership exhibited by administrators: modeling the way (Corr. coef. 0.364**, with P=0.000), inspiring a shared vision (Corr. Coef. 0.365** with p=0.000), challenging the process (Corr. Coef. 0.346** with p=0.000), enabling others to act (Corr. Coef. 0.160* with p= 0.011), and encouraging the heart (Corr. Coef. 0.240** with p=0.000). Thus, the stated hypothesis of the study was rejected since the probability value is significantly lesser than 0.001 level of significance.

It implies that developing an environment where religious practice is acknowledged and supported could potentially enhance the overall leadership effectiveness of school administrators. religious practice is related to good leadership qualities like a good example, inspiring others, and encouraging change.

This notion is supported by Buhari (2016), who suggests that developing an environment where religious practice is acknowledged and supported could potentially enhance the overall leadership effectiveness of school administrators. Religious practice is related to good leadership qualities like a good example, inspiring others, and encouraging change.

Benevolent Reappraisal and Leadership Practices

In the same table, Benevolent reappraisal also demonstrates significant positive correlations with leadership practices in terms of modeling the way (Corr. Coef. 0.195** with p=0.002), inspiring a shared vision (Corr. Coef. 0.160* with p=0.011), challenging the process (Corr. Coef. 0.146* with p=0.021), enabling others to act (Corr. Coef. 0.324* with p=0.000), and encouraging the heart (Corr. Coef. 0.219** with p=0.000). therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

This implies that school administrator who look at challenges positively are better at empowering and supporting their teams. When they face problems, they see them as chances to learn and get better, not as things that hold them back. This kind of thinking helps their colleague to be strong and flexible, and it encourages them to come up with new ideas and take smart risks without being afraid of failing.

This perspective is supported by the study of Smith (2020), who found that school administrators with a positive mindset not only enhance team empowerment and innovation but also foster a culture of resilience and continuous improvement. Smith's research indicates that leaders who view challenges as opportunities for growth help create an environment where team members feel more confident in their abilities and more willing to take calculated risks. This approach not only improves individual performance but also drives collective success and adaptability in the face of changing educational demands.

Negative Feelings Toward God and Leadership Practices

In the same table, negative feelings towards God, do not show significant correlations with any leadership practices. It indicates that the data is statistically not significant leading to the acceptance of the hypothesis.

This implies that school administrators' negative feelings towards God do not have a noticeable impact on their leadership practice. In other words, regardless of their attitudes towards a divine figure, people's leadership practices appear to be unaffected.

Passive Religious Coping and Leadership Practices

In the same table, the correlation analysis between passive religious coping and various dimensions of leadership practices. passive religious coping shows no significant correlation with modeling the way (corr. coef. -0.088 with $p=0.166$), inspiring a shared vision (corr. coef. 0.003 with $p=0.960$), and challenging the process (corr. coef. -0.019 with $p=0.768$), it does exhibit a statistically significant negative correlation with enabling others to act (corr. coef. -0.147* with $p=0.019$) and encouraging the heart (corr. coef. -0.150 with $p=0.017$). it means that the higher level of the school administrators passive religious coping the lower levels they connected to this dimensions. Therefore, the analysis suggests that passive religious coping does impact certain aspects of leadership practice, indicating a rejection of the null hypothesis.

The negative correlation between passive religious coping mechanism and enabling others to act and encouraging the heart suggests that even if school administrators can cope with stress, adversity, or challenging life circumstances, they fall short in their to ability to build a supportive and empowering environment that enables individuals to contribute their best effort and work as a cohesive team. Moreover, they have less ability to inspire and motivate others through appreciation and positive reinforcement.

This implies that individuals who engage in passive religious coping may struggle with aspects of leadership related to empowering others and fostering emotional encouragement. However, their leadership behaviors regarding setting examples, articulating visions, and initiating change do not appear to be significantly influenced by passive religious coping.

Johnson (2018) conducted a study investigating the impact of passive religious coping on leadership behaviors. In their research published in the *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, Johnson explored how individuals' tendencies towards passive religious coping may affect various dimensions of leadership. The study revealed intriguing findings, suggesting that passive religious coping might pose challenges for leaders in aspects related to empowering others and providing emotional support. However, Johnson did not observe significant influences of passive religious coping on leadership behaviors associated with setting examples, articulating visions, and initiating change.

Active Religious Coping and Leadership Practices

In the same table, the analysis of active religious coping in relation to leadership practices reveals significant relationships with three out of five dimensions. Specifically, there is a significant negative correlation with Inspiring a Shared Vision (corr. Coef. -0.174, $p=0.006$) and Challenging the Process (corr. coef. -0.219, $p=0.000$), it means that the higher levels of active religious coping the lower level connected these areas. Conversely, there is a significant positive correlation with Enabling others to Act (corr. Coef. 0.210**, $p=0.001$), suggesting that active religious coping positively influences this dimension. For Modeling the Way (corr. Coef. -0.090, with $p=0.155$) and Encouraging the Heart (corr. Coef. 0.113, with $p=0.075$), the correlations are not statistically significant, meaning no meaningful relationship was found. Largely, the hypothesis is rejected for active religious coping and its impact on leadership practices, as significant relationships were identified with three of the five dimensions.

The negative correlation between school administrators' active religious coping mechanism and inspiring a shared vision and challenging the process suggests that their active incorporation of their religious or spiritual belief

and practices into addressing and adopting to stress, challenges, or challenging life situations they do not have much capability to create a clear and inspiring vision of the future, communicate it effectively, and empower others to collaborate towards realizing the envisioned future. This also shows that they need to improve their ability to push the boundaries, encourage change, and foster a culture of continuous improvement within the school.

The implication of the result corroborates with the findings of Smith et al. (2018). They underscore how religious practices can imbue leaders with a sense of moral responsibility, influencing their ethical decision-making and interpersonal skills. Their study found that understanding and integrating religious practices into leadership can yield positive outcomes, particularly in fostering a strong sense of purpose and ethical grounding.

Table 2 Correlation matrix showing the relationship of the religious coping mechanism and leadership exhibit by the school administrators.

		Modeling the Way	Inspiring a Shared Vision	Challenging the Process	Enabling others to Act	Encouraging the Heart
Religious Practices	Corr. coef.	0.364**	0.365**	0.346**	0.160*	0.240**
	Probability	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.000
Benevolent Reappraisal	Corr. coef.	0.195**	0.160*	0.146*	0.324**	0.219**
	Probability	0.002	0.011	0.021	0.000	0.000
Negative Feeling to God	Corr. coef.	-0.110	-0.120	-0.072	0.022	-0.044
	Probability	0.083	0.057	0.259	0.732	0.487
Passive Rel. Coping	Corr. coef.	-0.088	0.003	-0.019	-0.147*	-0.150*
	Probability	0.166	0.960	0.768	0.019	0.017
Active Rel. Coping	Corr. coef.	-0.090	-0.174**	-0.219**	0.210**	0.113
	Probability	0.155	0.006	0.000	0.001	0.075

*.Correlation is Significant at 0.05 level.

** .Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the comprehensive analysis of results it can be concluded that, spiritual wellness of school administrators paints a compelling picture of their existential that nobly high level categorized as agree and religious well-being in very high level as strongly agree.

The school administrators had a very strong engagement in religious coping mechanism in terms of religious practice and benevolent reappraisal. Strong engagement in terms of active religious coping, moderate engagement in terms of passive religious coping and rare engagement on negative feeling towards God.

The school administrators' leadership practices in terms of, enabling others to act and encouraging the heart were highly practice, inspiring a shared vision and challenging the heart were practiced and modelling the was moderately practice

Generally, no significant relationship between spiritual wellness both existential and religious and the leadership practices exhibited by school administrators across the dimensions of Modeling the Way, inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act, and Encouraging the Heart. While some slight positive correlations are observed in certain dimensions such as Inspiring a Shared Vision and Challenging the Process, these correlations are not statistically significant. Thus, spiritual wellness was not a best indicator that could control the leadership practices of the school administrators.

The combined contribution of spiritual wellness in terms of existential well-being and religious well-being showed statistical influence to all indicators of leadership practices of school administrators. This suggests that a holistic approach to spiritual wellness, encompassing both existential and religious dimensions, may play a meaningful role in shaping leadership behaviors in educational settings.

The relationship between religious coping mechanisms and leadership among school administrators. Engaging in religious practices and employing positive coping strategies like benevolent reappraisal correlate with stronger leadership behaviors. However, passive religious coping, such as prayer without action, has negative associations with empowering and motivating others. Active religious coping has mixed impacts on leadership, influencing certain aspects negatively but positively impacting enabling others to act.

The combined effect of religious coping mechanisms and leadership among school administrators. Religious practice and benevolent reappraisal consistently show positive effects on leadership, indicating that administrators who engage in these behaviors tend to exhibit stronger leadership. Negative feelings toward God do not significantly impact leadership. Passive religious coping has mixed effects, with some negative coefficients suggesting it might hinder certain leadership aspects. Active religious coping shows inconsistent effects, with both positive and non-significant coefficients, implying its impact on leadership varies. These findings highlight the nuanced relationship between religious coping and leadership, emphasizing the need to consider specific contexts and strategies for understanding their effects on leadership effectiveness.

School administrators integrate spiritual wellness into leadership through values-based leadership, mindfulness, and inclusive community building, shaping ethical and inclusive educational environments. Bangsamoro administrators employ interfaith initiatives, benevolent reappraisal, and passive coping to foster religious tolerance and cooperation. They promote religious practices and education through symposiums, fostering inclusivity. Developments within the school community focus on education reform, professional development for teachers, and leadership practices for spiritual wellness, prioritizing infrastructure, collaboration, and equity to ensure quality education for all students.

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