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THE ROLE OF SPIRITUALITY AND CREATIVE PROCESS ENGAGEMENT FOR SERVICE EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of field workers as professional service employees in the family planning decision-making sector in Indonesia. The Indonesian family planning programme has focused on community empowerment since 1994 International Conference of Population and Development Programme of Action. Deriving from theories of spirituality, creative process engagement and service employee performance, this research analyzed a conceptual model linking workplace spirituality and creative process engagement with service employee performance. Using survey data from 84 professional service employee field workers, spiritual leadership has positively influenced spiritual well-being, which finally affected service employee performance. Creative process engagement also supported the creation of spiritual well-being and in turn affected service employee performance. Spiritual well-being mediated the link between spiritual leadership and service employee performance and also mediated the relationship between creative process engagement and service employee performance. Leaders who demonstrate spiritual leadership will create spiritual well-being which then leads to improved service employee performance in terms of influencing the community to participate in a family planning programme.

Keywords: Spiritual Leadership, Spiritual Well-being, Creative Process Engagement, Service Employee Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

The family planning programme in Indonesia evolved from a private endeavour in the 1950s to become a government programme in 1970. One of the determinants of this succestul program is the role of field workers as service employees implementing the family programme. These employees have a role mediators between goverment office and community. They serve as government officers who are required to communicate effectively with the community regardingthe programme. As their role involves influencing community members to participate inthe programme, these service employees need to perform in an appropriate and creative manner.We argue that the office needs to support theirwell-being to make them engage with the community to ensurethe success of a programme. Therefore, service employees have to be creative in theirrole so that supply matches the demand; in other words, that what they offer (supply) meets the requirements of the community (demand).

With community participation concept, each community member has a freedom to make a decision to involve in family planning programme or not. Previous researches (e.g. Arnstein, 1969; Chambers, 1995; Oakley and Marsden, 1984) argue that the concept of 'participation' includes community member's opinion in decision making process. It starts from giving choices, opinion, supporting the programmes and monitoring such result. Researches also suggest that it is part of empowering process, which make community to anaylise several choices and make the decision based on their opinion. For example, community member are free to make decisions regarding the number, time distance between one child to another child, and age for giving birth. However, an institutional regulation or formal approach will

make accessible information about safe and effective methods for the welfare of our future generation (Population and Development Review, 1995).

The decision, by community members, to participate in a family planning programme is influenced by many factors (Islam et al., 2001). The couple's perceptions, evaluations, norms and attitudes towards contraception choices are formed and shaped by social interaction within the community setting. In this line of thinking, the decision to have children might not be influenced only by individual families, but by other individuals and groups including relatives, neighbours, colleagues, community leaders, professionals, and state authorities. Additionally, a couple's decision-making could be influenced by a field worker acting as an education agent in the community. Moreover, there are government programmes which not only make modern contraceptives available, but also actively encourage couples to limit their number of children (Easterlin, 1978; Freedman, 1979; Lesthaeghe, 1980; Simmons and Phillips, 1992; Watkins, 1987). Since the government endorses and encourages participation in these programmes, this affects the social climate within which individual contraceptive decisions are made (McNicoll, 1975; Watkins, 1987). The family planning programmes emphasise 'accessibility' and a 'community-based distribution system' in order to encourage couples' participation. Although mass media facilitate awareness and provide basic information about contraception, acceptance itself is more likely to be encouraged or discouraged by the opinion of leaders 'closer to home' who share many of the same characteristics as the couples (Retherford and Palmore, 1983).

Given the above, the goverment is coming to realize that field workers have to be creative if they are to create community engagement and ensure the success of the programme. It is also clear from the discussion above that a field worker as service employee needs to be creative and engage with the community to increase the number of participants in the family planning programme. Considerable evidence indicates that employee spirit can fundamentally contribute to organizational innovation, effectiveness, and survival (Fry, 2003). Spirit refers to the production of intrinsic motivation as an energy to be totally involved in an organization's vision and mission (Fry, 2003). In order to present spirit motivation in work setting, organizational support has to derive directly from the manager. This is because manager is person who hold information about his/her employee performance. He will come to know which part of employee motiviation that should be endorsed and encourage. (Shalley& Gilson, 2004). Hence, we argue that spiritual leadership needs to exist in an organization. Spiritual leadership is defined as the quality of a leader with a strong desire for employees to achieve the organization's vision and mission. The spiritual leadership theory is based on intrinsic motivation model that incorporates vision, hope/faith and altruistic love (Fry, 2003). Spirituality in workplace which represented as spiritual wellbeing and spiritual leadership are organized to involved employee in workplace from calling and membership. This is in purpose to create vision and value congruence (Fry et al, 2011).

Therefore, a major purpose of this research is to build and test theory that addresses the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee engagement, including spiritual well-being as an intervening variable. In building a model linking spiritual leadership and creative processe engagement, we further drew on the spiritual well-being and the service employee performance literature to posit mediating mechanisms with high potential to help explain links between creative process engagement and service employee performance.

2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

In this section, we discuss our cenceptual model by first exploring the relationship between spiritual leadership and service employee performance. We then investigate how spiritual leadership influences spiritual well-being as delineated by Fry et al. (2011), including calling and meaning. Secondly, we examine the mediating role of spiritual well-being in the relationship between spiritual leadership and service employee performance and in the relationship between creative process engagement and service employee performance. In this model, we involve leader spirit to encourage creative engagement and to influence employee performance via spiritual well-being. The hypothesized model is depicted in Figure 1.
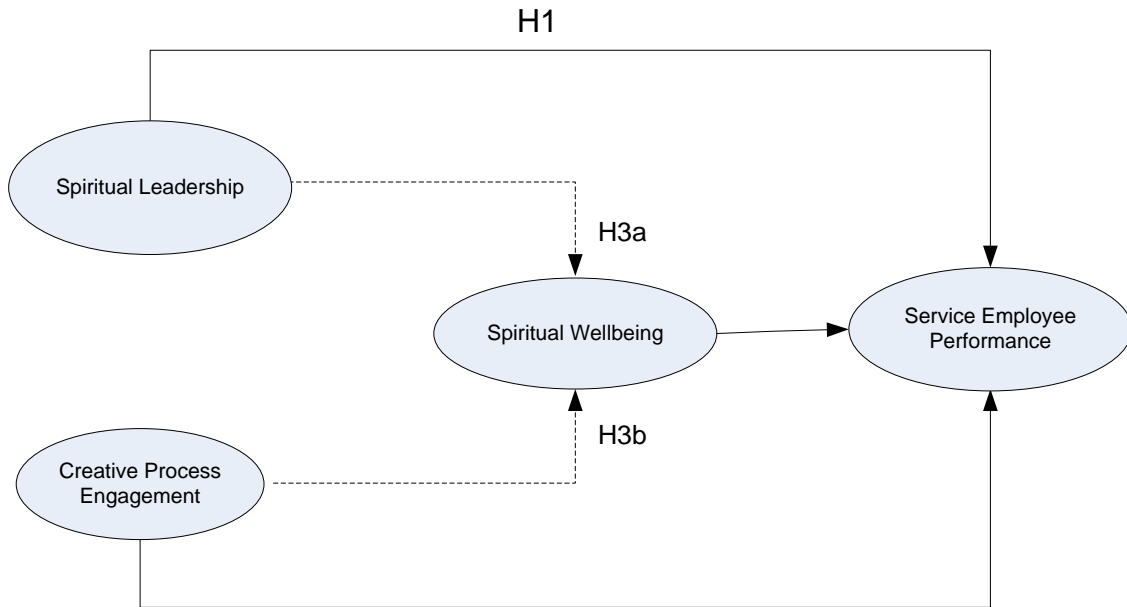

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model

a. Spiritual Leadership and Service Employee Performance

Recent research indicates that different forms of leadership are related to employee performance (Zhang and Bartol, 2010). For instance, Basu and Green (1997) found that transformational leadership is positively associated with employee performance. Studies also have provided evidence for a positive relationship between supportive leadership and employee performance, and a negative relationship between controlling leadership and employee performance (Howell and Avolio, 1993). In considering broader leadership approaches, some studies have shown support for a positive impact of participative leadership on employee performance, but others have produced contrary results (e.g., Basu & Green, 1997; Jaussi & Dionne, 2003; Kahai, Sosik, &Avolio, 2003). Surprisingly, limited research attention has been paid to a leadership approach with considerable promise of influencing employee performance: spiritual leadership. Fry et al. (2011) found that spiritual leadership influences employee OCB and performance;however, there is lack of research to directly test the link between spiritual leadership and employee performance.

In view of evidence that leaders can affectspiritual well-being in workplace, several well-being scholars have argued for a closer look at leadership behaviours or styles that might fundamentally address the well-being in work situation. Employees who do not feel confident or content in the workplace tend to have lower performance. As a result, leaders cannot rely

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on predefined structures that spell out means or even precise ends. Instead, they must encourage employee spirit and well-being to solve these problems and yet provide considerable employee latitude. We propose that one approach to doing so is spirtiual leadership.

According to Fry et al's (2003, 2011) conceptualization, spiritual leadership involves highlighting the significance of the work, providing spiritual well-being, conveying confidence that performance will be high, and removing bureaucratic constraints. For instance, it is clear from the spiritual leadership literature that altruism, vision, calling and meaning and perceptions of spiritual well-being are vital preconditions for employee performance. Inherent in the combination of spiritual leadership behaviours is making vision more clear and delegating authority to an employee, so as to enable the employee to make decisions and implement actions without direct supervision or intervention (Bass, 1985; Jung et al., 2003). Hence, we formally state Hypothesis 1 as follows:

> *H1:   Spiritual Leadership is positively related to Service Employee Performance*

> *b. Creative Process Engagement and Service Employee Performance*

Employee engagement with the leader is a key feature ofsuccesful employee performance. It is defined as a process whereby leader and employee together engage to determine an organization's vision and mission, and together establishtheir mutual goals. Engaging in creative activities plays an equal, if not more important, role in promoting employee creativity which leads to better employee performance (Amabile, 1988, 1996; Amabile et al., 1996). We define creative process engagement as presented by Zhang and Bartol (2010). Zhang and Bartol (2010) describe creative process engagement as degree of employee participation or involvement in creativity-relevant cognitive processes. The activities are including: (1) problem identification, (2) information searching and encoding, (3) idea and alternative generation (Amabile, 1983; Reiter-Palmon & Illies, 2004).   Moreover, engagement in decision making reduces anxiety because employees and supervisors jointly set up goals, monitored and evaluated behavior, and decided on the piece rate per time unit. It is difficult for employees to be intelligent and enthusiastic workers if they do not know the reasons behind orders and instructions that stated in task description. Therefore, goal setting plays an important role in task performance. Most managers are aware of the value of setting goals to accomplish tasks. When goal setting is done correctly, the process is exciting, dynamic and usually successful. When done incorrectly, task becomes a source of stress and dissatisfaction, creating problems rather than promoting progress. A non participative goal setting will turn into simple solution. Moreover, participative goal setting process emphasizes brainstorming and negotiation between supervisor and employee that includes determine objectives and plans of action for each goal. A technique that facilitate trust maintenance is therefore, moving plan into action and follow through while continually evaluate progress of action. It is important to note that feedback of performance in each action should provide. Feedback gives employee able to compare perceptions of expected outcomes with real outcomes and make necessary changes in their accomplishment of goals. Both parties, either employee or manager should be flexible in change of actions, if however, does not necessarily change the goal of its task. Hence, we argue that creative process engagement may have important influences on workplace spirituality.

H2:   Creative Process Engagement is positively related to Service Employee Performance

   c. *Spiritual Well-being as a Mediating Variable*

We believe that the performance of a service employee is important to increase the community's level of participation in a family planning program. As discussed in the previous section, we then draw on spiritual leadership theory that leader-employee spirit is importance factor to change the organizational behavior. Spiritual leadership theory is grounded from understanding vision/mission into work routine, love our work, hold a deep meaning of what is our job (meaning) and being responsible of our work (Fry, 2003). If leader – member have a siginificant portion of this value, it will foster employee wellbeing, organizational commitment and organizational performance. Finally, it will support the creation of high financial performance and social responsibility.

In this research, we argue that although there are conceptual and empirical reasons to expect that spiritual well-beingof an employee will be mediate the relationship between spiritual leadership and service employee performance, spiritual well-being encourages an employee to do well. Nevertheless, leaders can actively encourage engagement by articulating the need for having a higher degree of participation and membership in an oganization by spelling out what the organization values, and calling attention to the effectiveness of engaging in processes likely to determineemployee performance.

Leader encouragement of creative process engagement is defined as the extent to which a leader emphasizes creativity and actively engages in processes that may lead to better performance outcomes. Employee engagement as a part of goal setting negotiation is a significant process to create spiritual workplace. Setting goal together with employees in their task description would support availability of trust and confidence, increase satisfaction, and inspire motivation that yields lasting results and achieves goals (Yui-Tim Wong 2003; London, Mone et al. 2004; Vigoda-Gadot and Angert 2007). Most of employees will accept manager imposed goals if the person assigning them (supervisors) is trusted and well respected. Employees who involve in setting their own goals have a tendency to try harder to accomplish those goals. They have an ownership of this goals which in turn to goal commitment. Participation also increase acceptance of the goal itself as a desirable one to work toward and more likely to accept the responsibility of accomplishing those goals. In the perspective of expectancy theory, participation and rich communication in goal setting may increase volition, which in turn, may increase goal commitment and trust toward people who gives task (managers).

On the other hand, supervisor supportiveness is another variable that also important in goal setting process. Supervisor supportiveness is defined by (Klein, Wesson et al. 1999) as some resources that dedicated by supervisors to their employees as friendliness and listening employee opinion. Difficult goals setting that agreed by supervisor and employee would be perceived as fairer and more realistic, causing goal commitment to be higher. (Medlin and Green Jr 2009) directly showed that a measure of supervisor trust was positively correlated with goal commitment. (Anderson, Dekker et al. 2009) provided indirect evidence in that supportive supervision was positively associated with selected goal level for subjects in participative conditions. As consequence, setting goal in each task description should be done and agreed between supervisor and employee which we termed it as creative process engagement. Perhaps even more important is giving employees the opportunity to contribute

ideas and opinions before the manager-owner makes a decision. This adds dignity and meaning to the task in the eyes of most employees. Thus, we expect spiritual well-being to mediate the relationship between creative process engagement and service employee performance.

Harvey and Kou (2011) define this iterative process known as 'collective engagement', as the behavior of the public in presenting ideas, responding to others' ideas and information, and reflecting on some of the ideas. Quinn (2005) stated that during collective engagement, the group repeatedly reviewsthe program objectives and new ideas. Members of the group evaluate new ideas that correspond to the values, goals and tasks or timeframe. The acceptance and use of new ideas is intended to satisfy and provide a challenge to the objectives of the group. This method will enhance the creativity of the group in two ways. Specifically, this will make the group manage two trade-offs: first, it continuously conducts a review of the group's goals, and second, the group members to obtain direct and indirect feedback on their ideas. Furthermore, this is a collective engagement creative strategy to enhance the spirit of togetherness among the members of the group.

Formally, we propose:

> *H3a: Spiritual Well-being mediates the relationship between Spiritual Leadership and Service Employee Performance*

> *H3b: Spiritual Well-being mediates the relationship between Creative Process Engagement and Service Employee Performance*

3. METHOD

Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted in a government office which is responsible for the implementation of a national family program in a city in Central Java, Indonesia. It started as Bapermas KB (Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Keluarga Berencana) whichheadquartered inDemak region, central java, Indonesia. We used a questionnaire to collect the data. The entire survey was translated from English into Bahasa Indonesia and then back into English. Participants were field workerservice employees at Bapermas KB Demak, the head office and also the office secretary who required substantial creativity in order to be effective in creating a worthwhile community service. The 82 usable employee survey responses received constituted a 94.5 percent response rate. The average age of the participants was 50 years. The average organizational tenure was 26 years. Among the 82 respondents, 44 percent were male; 43 percent female, 13 percent leaves the question blank. 33 percent held high school degrees, 12 percent diploma, 32 percent undergraduate and 9 percent postgraduate. Fifteen percent left the questions unanswered.

Measures

All the variables were measured by participant responses to questions on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The specific measures are described below, along with the results of calculation of Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the various measures. When a measure is described as having dimensions, the dimensions (items averaged) were used as indicators for their construct in structural equation modelling

(described under "Analysis"). Otherwise, items were averaged to produce an overall scale score. Measures were completed by employees.

Spiritual leadership. For spiritual leadership, we used Fry et al.'s (2005) measurement.This 12-item measure has multi-item subscales corresponding to three dimensions: (1) vision, (2) hope/faith, and (3) altruistic love.

Spiritual well-being. These 8 indicators were derived from Fry et al.(2005) as a degree of calling and membership in an organization. Calling is defined as the degree to which they believe that their job is important for the community and country. It is a perceived value that their role in organisation is very important. Calling refers to the experience of transcendence or how one makes a difference through service to others and, in doing so, derives meaning and purpose in life.

Creative process engagement . An 11-item scale was developed for this study on the basis of the conceptual work of Amabile (1983) and Reiter-Palmon and Illies (2004). Creative process engagement is defined as a process whereby leader and employee work together to set their mutual goals or oganizational goals that need to be achieved.

Service employee Performance.We used the field worker official periodic performance rating system. This rating is given to each field workerat the end of eachyear and is given based entirely on performance indicated byquantity, quality and work load achieved as determined by the leader.

Data Analysis

PLS (Partial Least Square) was used to examine and test the hypotheses.PLS has the advantage that it "involves no assumptions about the population or scale of measurement" (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982) and consequently works without distributional assumptions and with nominal, ordinal, and interval scaled variables. However, one has to bear in mind that PLS, like any statistical technique, also requires certain assumptions to be fulfilled. Apart from the standard ones (i.e., Gaussian classical linear ordinary least squares) regression model (see, e.g.,Gujarati, 1995), the most important assumption is predictor specification (Chin &Newsted, 1999).

4. RESULT

Descriptive Statistic

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics, correlations, and scale reliabilities for the variables in the study. Because several of our constructs were conceptually related and could be expected to be associated in a substantive way, we conducted additional analyses to establish the discriminant validity of our measures.

Table 1
Descriptive Statictic, Correlation, Validity and Reliability

	Variables	Mean	S.D	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Age	51-55	0.46								

#	Variable										
2.	Gender	Male									
3.	Education	Bachelor									
4.	Org. Tenure	26-30	0.48								
5.	Spiritual Leadership	3.99	0.55				(0.863)	0.456	0.468	0.337	
6.	Creative Process Engagement	3.86	0.56					(0.886)	0.559	0.528	
7.	Spiritual Well-being	3.93	0.58						(0.841)	0.642	
8.	Service Employee Performance	3.8	0.57							(0.868)	

Prior to testing the measurement and structural models, we averaged items into dimensions for spiritual leadership, spiritual well-being,and creative process engagement and treated the different dimensions as separate indicators of their corresponding construct in our PLS analyses. For all other variables in our model, we averaged the items into single indicators. The favorable indicator is greater than 0.5 and all validity indicators are greater than 0.5 (in parentheses).

Model Measurement and Hypotheses Testing

Table 2 summarizes all the model fit indexes. Hypothesis 1 states that spiritual leadership is positively related to service employee performance. Our results supported this view (β = 0.142, *p< 0.*05). Hypothesis 2, which states that creative process engagement is positively related to service employee performance,was also supported (β = 0.147, *p*<0.05). Similarly, Hypothesis 4, which states that spiritual well-beingis positively related to service employee performance, received support as well (β=0.474, *p*<0.05). We tested the possibility thatspiritual well-being might fully mediate the relationship between creative process engagement and service employee performance as well as spiritual leadership and service employee performance. Hypotheses 3a and 3b state that spiritual well-beingmediates therelationship between spiritual leadership and service employee performance and between spiritual leadership and creative process engagement. Our result showsthat the t-statistic is higher than the t-table, thereby supporting the hypotheses.

Table 2
Hypotheses Testing

	Original Sample Estimate	Mean of Subsamples	Standard Deviation	T-Statistic
Spiritual Leadership → Spiritual Well-being	0.296	0.352	0.106	2.777
Creative Process Engagement → Spiritual Well-being	0.395	0.398	0.115	3.444
Spiritual Leadership →Employee Performance	0.142	0.152	0.114	1.242
Creative Process Engagement →Employee Performance	0.174	0.222	0.158	1.099

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

It is gratifying that this research has been able to make several distinct contributions. First, our overall contribution is that we have built and tested a conceptual model that uniquely

integrates spiritual leadership theory in employee performance. Second, our study contributes to both the leadership and the creativity engangement literatures by examining and confirming spiritual well-being as a mediating mechanism through which creative process engagement ultimately influences spiritual well-being (Zhang & Sims, 2005). Our findings are congruent with past research pointing to a positive association between spiritual leadership and spiritual well-being (Fry et al., 2003, 2010). However, there has been a need to empirically test the specific relationship between spiritual leadership and creative process engagement. We also introduced a promising mediating variable, spiritual well-being. Results of our study support the notion that spiritual well-being is likely to mediate a relationship between spiritual leadership and service employee performance. Future research might determine a means of influencing spiritual well-being, as it appears to be an important boundary condition with respect to the influence of spiritual leadership on service employee performance.

Third, our study is only one of its kind in explain the relationship of creative process engagement with not only service employee performance, but also spiritual well-being. More specifically, our study shows that, as expected, creative process engagement was positively related to service employee performance. It has been suggested the need for research on the process of how individual follows in producing creative outcomes, however, to the best of our knowledge, this is the first research that analyze the relationship between spiritual leadership and emloyee engangement in decision making process. These results not only support previous indications that an employee tends to be more creative when he or she involve in the beginning process until end on how to finish the work (e.g., Carson& Carson, 1993; Speller & Schumacher, 1975), but also demonstrate the important role that leaders can play in directing employee attention to effective processes for achieving targeted performance.

Our recommendation for future research is to examine the extent to which degree of participation may strengthen the impact of spiritual well-being on the propensity to engage in such processes. Yet another area of interest is the extent to which spiritual leadership behaviors over time might strengthen an employee's performance, potentially leading the employee to accelerate the pace of creative idea production as an outcome of creative process engagement. Like any study, this research has several limitations. First, this study had a cross-sectional design. We explained the results in simultaneous manner although it is possible to run simultaneously through PLS. Second, data on many of the major constructs were collected with self-reports questionnaire, which possible to same-source bias problem. Since these constructs (spiritual leadership, creative process engagement, spiritual well-beingand service employee performance) address individuals' internal states, hence we argue that it is logical to collect the data from participants themselves.

Thirdly, all data were collected within a single organization, which may limit the observed variability and decreases external validity. Undoubtedly however, conducting this study in a single organization did provide the advantage of controlling for potential organization-level confounding variables. Future research in multiple organizational settings or another kind of service employee may increase the generalizability of the findings. Finally, the model, derived from Western theories, was tested in an Indonesian organization. Thus, this study provides initial support for the notion that Western spiritual theories can be applied to other cultural contexts (e.g.Indonesia). Future work that includes other cultures can help verify the generalizability of our findings.

This research model also has implications for managers. First of all, in encouraging employee performance, engagement between leader and member is significant. Specifically, our results suggest that spiritual leadership has the capacity to positively influence workplace spirituality which means employee well-being, an important element that affects creative outcomes and performance. However, managers are likely to find differences in the extent to which service employees wish to be influenced in their desire to perform and engage with community. If they are able to engage with the community, it will be easy to disseminate information regading family planning programme. Hence, managers may find that their efforts to influence employees are more successful in engendering cognitions of motivation in those who view spirituality as part of their role identities.

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