

# **The Relationship between Spiritual Leadership, Spiritual Well-Being, Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave. A PLS-SEM Approach**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study was carried out to examine the relationship between leaders' spiritual leadership, employees' spiritual well-being, job satisfaction and intention to leave of 160 employees of the shipping agency companies in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was adopted to address the questions of the study. A numeration of the entire population or census was used for data collection. The study employed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Structural Equation Modelling using PLS-SEM approach to analyse the data. Based on the results of PLS-SEM tests, leaders' spiritual leadership directly influenced employee's spiritual well-being and job satisfaction, but negatively influenced intention to leave. Job satisfaction also found to be negatively related to intention to leave. However, spiritual well-being was not significantly related to intention to leave.*

**Keywords:** *Spiritual leadership, spiritual well-being, Job satisfaction, Intention to Leave*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Spiritual matters are increasingly discussed in leadership and management literature (Fairholm, 2003, p. 4), highlighting tangible benefits of spiritual approaches such as improved morale, the reduction of stress and staff-turnover, improved net earnings and ultimately, a positive impact on share prices (Crossman, 2003). Some researcher and scholars have argued that spirituality, the desire for meaningful work, and employee job satisfaction are critical elements for future organizational life and social change in our society (Giacalone&Jurkiewicz, 2003). Spiritual well-being has been studied in the context of other dimensions of individual's lives, to include emotional, psychological, and physical. Emmons (1999) presented findings that positively linked spiritual well-being to faster recovery from illnesses, coping skills, reduced anxiety, and overall life satisfaction. The development of spirituality in the workplace is believed to be linked with increased morale (Leigh, 1997), increased honesty and trust in the organization, an enhanced sense of personal fulfilment of employees (Krishnakumar& Neck, 2002). Empirical evidence demonstrating a relationship between spirit at work and positive individual and organizational outcomes is beginning to emerge (Kinjerski, 2004). Negative organizational outcomes surely affect the performance of organisations. The productivity of the employees decreased as a result of declined personal well-being, more stress, poorer mental health, increased absences from work, and decreased satisfaction with life and work (Duxbury & Higgins, 2002). Stress is to be one of the strong factors to affect job satisfaction. When negative stress is continuously high, the employees job satisfaction is low (Mullins,1996).

The consequences of negative employees outcomes are detrimental to the survival of the organisations. Besides a decreased of productivity, many dissatisfied employees resort to quit their job and turnover costs further shrink the organization's profit. Kyle (2005) states that turnover rates for the 19th and 20th century exceeded 300% for some organizations. Mehta &Srishti (2010) state that increasing attrition rates, high levels stress and burn-outs are among the major indicators of degrading productivity of employees and believed due to the nature of leadership and disposition of employees such as their levels of spiritual intelligence. The leaders play important roles to bring success to organisations, but neglect the well-being of its employees. Leaders' negative impact results in employees' dissatisfaction, a decrease in commitment, performance, and productivity (Udechukwu, 2009) and finally, seeing the employees leaving the organisations. Employees' turnover is therefore, influenced significantly by the treatment from organizational leaders (Udechukwu, 2009).

Research on the link between spirituality and individuals in organisations are drawing more interests to scholars. Lean (2002) begins to relate the aspect of an individual's spirituality to their work by describing spirituality as "a mental disposition or attitude that embraces spirit as integral to one's work, behavior, thinking, and success." Studies on the link between spirituality and organizational leadership; and the impact of spirituality to employees outcomes such as absenteeism, productivity, turnover, ethicality, stress, and health are growing and have become a central issue in current trend of spirituality studies (Fairholm, 1998; Fry, 2003; Giacalone&Jurkiewicz, 2003).How spirituality impact the organizations and individuals; such as leaders and followers (employees) are the main areas of empirical research which tend to highlight the importance of spirituality in the workplace. This current research study was done with the purpose to investigate the

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relationship between leaders' spiritual leadership and employees' spiritual well-being and to examine its impact to the job satisfaction and turnover intention of the employees.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Spiritual leadership**

The theory of spiritual leadership is developed within an intrinsic motivation model that incorporates vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love, theories of workplace spirituality, and spiritual well-being; where the spiritual well-being variables are meaning/calling and membership (Fry et al., 2005). Fry et al. (2005) defined spiritual leadership as "the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one's self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual well-being through calling and membership". Fry, Matherly and Ouimet (2010) states that spiritual leadership is a predictor of employee commitment, psychological and spiritual well-being and positive human health. Fry (2003) states that the effect of spiritual leadership in establishing this sense of leader and follower spiritual well-being is to create value congruence across the strategic, empowered team, and individual levels to, ultimately, foster higher levels of employee positive human health, psychological and spiritual well-being, organizational commitment, productivity and, ultimately organizational performance. Fehey (2007) explores the issues on how spiritual leadership capacities impact human performance, and found that when organisations focus on soul expressiveness and spiritual leadership capacities, the human capacities are suggestive of a direction that they will positively impact human performance in the workplace. It is believed that the spiritual leadership elements are paramount to enhance the motivational level of the employee. Spiritual leadership fosters spiritual well-being, which then positively influences, employee life satisfaction, corporate responsibility, organizational commitment and productivity, and financial performance (Fry & Slocum, 2008).

### **2.2 Spiritual well-being**

In contemporary world, the term well-being is largely refers to the notions of positive human health and psychological or subjective well-being (Fry et al., 2005). Therefore, spiritual well-being can be explained as the state of spiritual happiness, spiritual health and growth. In the literature, spiritual well-being has been defined as "a sense of relatedness or connectedness to others, a provision for meaning and purpose in life, the fostering of wellbeing (through a stress buffering effect), and having a belief in and a relationship with a power higher than the self" (Hawks, Hull, Thalman, & Richins, 1995). Fry (2005) defined spiritual well-being as a "self perceived state of the degree to which one feels a sense of purpose and direction". Ellison (1983) explained that spiritual well-being is continually developing and evolving and therefore can be manifested differently among individuals. Ellison (1983) argued that for an individual experiencing spiritual well-being, there is a feeling of purpose, meaning, fulfillment, and joy in living (p. 332). The idea of "meaning" suggested by Ellison is supported in a similar context by Klerk (2005), who noted that the concept of "meaning in life" is the central feature of spirituality and spiritual well-being (p. 66). Furthermore, Klerk noted that numerous studies have associated well-being with other domains of life and the relationship appears to be bi-directional, suggesting a "spillover" effect (p. 68). Horizontal spillover theory states that satisfaction with one life domain affects satisfaction with other life domain (Wilensky (1960) cited in Lee, Sirgy, Efraty & Siegel, 2003). Klerk (2005) concluded, "A sense of meaning in their lives should have a direct effect on employees' well-being in organizations" (p. 83). Hence, it appears that an individual's desire for meaningful work, connection to others, and pursuit of the greater good, may influence job satisfaction or work wellness. Evidence indicates that job satisfaction is strongly and consistently related to subjective well-being (Judge & Klinger, 2004).

### **2.3 Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is a critical construct because job dissatisfaction has been acknowledged as the single most important reason people leave their job (Sturges & Guest, 2001). However, the actual aspects of job satisfaction that caused people to leave their job are not specified and vary according to circumstances around the people's experience in the organisation. The level of job satisfaction is affected by a wide range of variables relating to internal (situational) and external factors of the individual. Employee job satisfaction is influenced by the internal organization environment, which includes organizational climate, leadership types and personnel relationships (Seashore & Taber, 1975). Moreover, Armstrong (2003) suggested a classification into extrinsic factors, intrinsic factors, social relationships in work place, individuals' abilities to do their work, and the quality of supervision. Factors such as achievement, recognition, compensation, and promotion, are among the influencers to job satisfaction (Thompson, 2002). Thompson (2002) highlighted that one of the determining factors that encourage high level of organizational commitment is job satisfaction.

Situational factor such as the relationship between the leaders and employees are the most significant determinant of job satisfaction and dedication to an organization (Hamidifar, 2010). The reactions of employees to their leaders will usually depend on the characteristics of the employees as well as on the characteristics of

the leaders (Wexley&Yukl, 1984). Employees are more satisfied with leaders who are considerate or supportive than with those who are either indifferent or critical towards subordinates (Yukl, 1971).The dispositional factors can include demographic aspects of the individual employee and personality such as internal locus of control, hardiness, type A behaviour pattern, negative and positive affectivity and self-efficacy (Spector & O'Connell, 1994). In 1965, Kornhauser have assumed that person variables such as mental health and personality are primarily influenced by satisfaction and not vice versa (Arvey et. al., 1991). Konhauser also established that job satisfaction is significantly associated with general mental health indices. Hammermeister et. al. (2005) conclude that "spiritual well-being happens to have a positive influence on most aspects of health" (p. 80), including mental health. In that sense, it is posited that spiritual well-being is positively associated with mental health of the employees, and also a significant influencer of job satisfaction. Individual spirituality has been empirically found to be positively associated with life satisfaction (Wolf, 1998) and more specifically with job satisfaction (Komala& Ganesh, 2007).

#### **2.4 Turnover intention**

Employee turnover intention has received substantial consideration in industrial and organizational psychology (Campion (1991). Turnover intentions are the thoughts of the employee regarding voluntarily leaving the organization (Whitman, 1999). Price (1997) defined turnover intention as the individual behavior across the membership boundary of an organization. In addition, Matthias and Miriam (2011) indicated that employee turnover intention is also defined as "individuals' own estimated probability (subjective) that they are permanently leaving the organization at some point in the near future. Sut and Chad (2011) indicated that employee turnover is cause of economic losses of organization. It reduces greatly the job efficiency. Similarly, Barak et al., (2001) suggested that employee turnover is terror and costly, it reduces organizational effectiveness and employee productivity to a certain extent, and manager must spend more energy and material to develop a new talent to replace the employees who leave out. Wright and Bonett (2007) indicated that when employee cannot get happiness from their work then the dissatisfaction of job is high, they will look for other opportunities which can give them happiness or satisfaction. Hence job satisfaction is viewed as significant predictors of turnover intention. For instance, Dupre and Day (2007) asserted that factors associated with supportive management of employees were negatively related to turnover intention through the mediating effect of job satisfaction. Similarly, Alexandrov, Babakus and Yavas (2007) argued that employees' perception of management concern for both employees and customers has a significant influence on turnover intention. Kacmar et al., (2006) mention that in a high staff turnover, organization's employees suffer increased of workloads which typically disrupt team cohesion and eventually this contradiction interrupt the organizational valued outcomes such as unit level performance in terms of both sales and profit. Mathieu, et.al (2015) found that person-oriented leadership (as opposed to task-oriented leadership) had a significant effect on employee turnover intentions through its influence on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

#### **2.5 Relationship between Spiritual Leadership, Spiritual Well- Being, Job Satisfaction and Intention to Leave**

Fry et al.(2011) utilised a SLT scale of spiritual well-being to test a dynamic relationship between spiritual leadership and spiritual well-being (i.e., a sense of calling and membership), and key organizational outcomes in a sample of emerging military leaders. The findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between spiritual leadership and spiritual well-being; and spiritual well-being was found to mediate the relationship between spiritual leadership and organization commitment. Similarly, Asrunet. al. (2012) attempted to investigate the influence of spiritual leadership on workplace spirituality, work satisfaction, and deviant behavior of 152 city government officials of Kendari, South-East Sulawesi Province. Fry's (2005) SLT scale was used and results by Structural Equation Model (SEM) showed that workplace spiritual leadership has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction.

Hong (2002) investigates the relationship between five sub-variables (Meaning at Work, Inner Life, Contemplation, Organizational Value, and Individual and Organization) of the Ashmos-Duchon Spiritually Scale (2000) and three work- related variables (job satisfaction, intention to leave, and emotional exhaustion) and identified key factors that can best predict these three variables among mental health professionals working at the Community Mental Health Centers (CHMC) in the State of Kansas. The study confirmed a positive effect of perceived workplace spirituality (which de-bureaucratizes an organization culture) on job satisfaction, and negative effect on turnover intention and emotional exhaustion.

Based on the reviewed literature, the following hypotheses were presented as follows:-

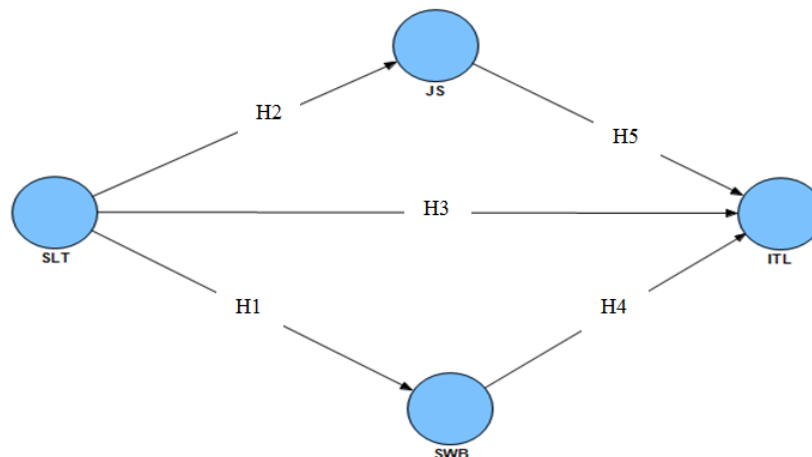
H1: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between spiritual leadership and spiritual well-being.

H2: There is a statistically significant positive relationship between spiritual leadership and job satisfaction

H3: There is a significant negative relationship between spiritual leadership and intention to leave.

H4: There is a significant negative relationship between spiritual well-being and intention to leave.  
 H5: There is a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and intention to leave.

The proposed model of this study conceptualizes the relationship between spiritual leadership, spiritual well-being, job satisfaction and intention to leave as shown in Fig. 1.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Of The Study

### III. METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach was adopted to examine the relationship between spiritual leadership, spiritual well-being, job satisfaction and intention to leave in the shipping agencies in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia as the target population. They are representatives of the ship Owners and Charterers, while their ships calling the ports they are operating. The study conducted a numeration of the entire population (census) to collect data because the target population/sampling frame (160 employees) could not be reduced to select a sample, taking into consideration the low response rate of the questionnaire method (Cooper & Schindler, 1998). Three data collection instruments were utilised for the study: 1) Spiritual Leadership scale (SLT) developed by Fry, et al. (2005) and 2) Abridged Job In General (aJIG) developed by Russel, et al. (2004) and 3) Turnover Intention (Jaramillo et. al. 2009).

Demographic questionnaires were also created to obtain personal information of the respondents. All the instruments were combined to form a single survey instrument for this study. The survey questionnaire consisted of 4 parts i.e. Part 1: Demographic information; Part 2: Spiritual Leadership questionnaires, consists of 5 sections (3 sections for spiritual leadership, 2 sections for spiritual well-being); Part 3: Job In General; Part 4: Intention to leave. 160 questionnaires were distributed to the respective companies, and 106 questionnaires were returned constituted a 66.3% returned rate. On average, the employees were in their mid-thirties (mean 36.32 years), with the majority were between 25 – 35 years old, 36.8% (f = 39); followed by 45 – 55 years old, 26.4%, (f = 28); 35 – 45 years, 17.0% (f = 18); under 25 years old, 17% (f = 18); and over 55 years, 2.8% (f = 3). It showed that majority of respondents have been working with their current organisation for over 10 years, 28.3% (f = 30); followed by less than a year, 25.5% (f = 27); 1 – 3 years, 19.8% (f = 21); 3 -6 years, 18.9% (f = 20); and 6 – 10 years, 7.5% (f = 8). On average, the respondents have been working with current organisation for 6.1 years. The result of the demographic analysis is presented in Table 1 of this study.

**Table 1:** Demographic analysis

Demographics features	Frequency	Percent	Demographics features	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Period with organisation</b>		
Male	78	73.6	Less than a year	27	25.5
Female	28	26.4	1 - 3 years	21	19.8
Total	106	100.0	3 - 6 years	20	18.9
<b>Age</b>			6 -10 years	8	7.5
Below 25	18	17.0	Over 10 years	30	28.3
25 - 35	39	36.8	Total	106	100
35 - 45	18	17.0	<b>Period with leader</b>		
45 - 55	28	26.4	Less than a year	32	30.2
<b>Over 55 years</b>	3	2.8	1 - 3 years	31	29.2
Total	106	100	3 - 6 years	18	17.0
<b>Education</b>			6 -10 years	4	3.8

High school / Certificate	44	41.5		Over 10 years	21	19.8
Diploma	26	24.5		Total	106	100
Bachelor's degree	27	25.5				
Master's degree	9	8.5				
Total	106	100				
<b>Jobtype</b>						
Operation/Shift	49	46.2				
Office administration	42	39.6				
Others (Finance, R&D,	15	14.2				
Total	106	100				

### 3.1 Data Analysis

The Partial Least Square – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) software was used for the analysis of the collected data in this study. In addition, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the descriptive analyses of the respondents. The choice of PLS-SEM in this study is based on the fact that PLS suits complexities of models, due largely to its flexibility in development and validation of models (Aker et al., 2011). The advantage of PLS is that it offers a simultaneous test of an entire system of variables in a hypothesized model and thus enables assessment of the extent to which the model is consistent with the data. PLS has the advantage that it “involves no assumptions about the population or scale of measurement” (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Therefore, PLS was chosen to establish the construct, measurement and structural models of this study. In this study, SmartPLS software package 2.0 was used for data analyses. PLS provides the measurement model, which includes an assessment of the reliability and validity of the measures and an evaluation of the structural model, which describes the relationship between dependent and independent variables by generating the estimates of standardized regression coefficients for the model (Götz, Liehr-Gobbers & Krafft, 2010). Based on the partial nature of the PLS algorithm, PLS requires a relatively small sample size (Marcoulides et al. 2009). For example, Chin (2010) recommended that 20 cases per a dependent variable are suitable to test the statistical model. A well-known standard for PLS sample size developed by Barclay et al. (1995) and Chin (1998) is to consider the number of structural paths and dependent variables. Specifically, Barclay et al. (1995) suggested ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at a particular construct in the inner path model. Chin (1998) suggested ten times the number of predictors for a dependent variable that includes the largest number of indicators. Thus, the number of valid samples in this research, 106, is sufficient to use PLS and in turn, to obtain reliable results.

### 3.2 Results for the measurement model

The measurement model was evaluated by assessing the convergent validity, which is measured by loading, the average variance extracted (AVE) and the composite reliability (CR) result. The result revealed good items loading above the recommended threshold (0.5) by Hair, et al., (2006). The items which showed lower than 0.5 were dropped. The result of the average variance extracted (AVE) indicates a value above 0.5 recommended threshold (Hair, et al., 2006). The summary of the measurement model in this study is presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Summary of Constructs Items Loadings, AVE, CR, and R-Square

Construct	Dimension	Indicator	Loadings	CR	AVE	R <sup>2</sup>
<b>Spiritual Leadership</b>		Vision		0.8676	0.6211	
		Vision_2	0.7675			
		Vision_3	0.7914			
		Vision_4	0.8179			
		Vision_5	0.7746			
	Hope/Faith			0.879	0.6457	
		Hope_1	0.8041			
		Hope_2	0.8717			
		Hope_3	0.7981			
		Hope_5	0.7345			
<b>Altruistic love</b>				0.9117	0.6329	
		Altru_love1	0.7872			
		Altru_love2	0.7666			
		Altru_love3	0.7852			
		Altru_love4	0.8522			
		Altru_love6	0.774			
		Altru_love7	0.8054			
<b>Spiritual</b>	Meaning/			0.9451	0.8516	0.5312

<b>Well-being</b>	Calling	Mean_call1	0.9049			
		Mean_call2	0.9348			
		Mean_call3	0.9285			
	Membership			0.914	0.6803	
		Member_1	0.7854			
		Member_2	0.8414			
		Member_3	0.8277			
		Member_4	0.8125			
		Member_5	0.8552			
<b>Job satisfaction</b>				0.8615	0.6753	0.1552
		JIG5	0.7579			
		JIG6	0.8393			
		JIG7	0.8643			
<b>Intention to Leave</b>				0.901	0.6959	0.3209
		ITL_1	0.7474			
		ITL_2	0.8684			
		ITL_3	0.9056			
		ITL_4	0.8067			

In order to test the constructs' convergent and discriminant validity, additional analyses were run by comparing the AVE and correlation between constructs. A comparison of the correlation with the square root of AVE (as shown in bold in Table 3) indicates that the correlation between two constructs is less than the square root of AVE of both groups. This means that discriminant validity exists (Hulland, 1999). Therefore the results supported adequate convergent and discriminant validity of the constructs in the model.

**Table 3:** Latent variable inter-correlation, and square root of AVE for assessing convergent and discriminant validity

Constructs	AL	HF	ITL	JS	MBR	MC	SWB	VSN
AL	<b>0.7955</b>							
HF	0.5676	<b>0.8035</b>						
ITL	-0.4379	-0.2779	<b>0.8342</b>					
JS	0.3874	0.2524	-0.4824	<b>0.8217</b>				
MBR	0.7617	0.5218	-0.3766	0.4583	<b>0.8248</b>			
MC	0.1087	0.3948	0.0220	0.2569	0.2627	<b>0.9228</b>		
VSN	0.5962	0.6161	-0.3639	0.3211	0.5530	0.3489	0.5909	<b>0.7880</b>

Note: The diagonal elements (in bold) are the square root of Average Variance Extracted. Other non-diagonal elements are latent variable correlations

### 3.3 Results for the structural model and hypotheses

A satisfactory evaluation of the structural model in PLS must consist of three indexes including path coefficients, squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ), and t-value. In order to evaluate predictive strength of the model,  $R^2$  will be calculated for the dependent latent variable. The high values of  $R^2$  verify the good fitness and validity of the built model (Götz et al., 2010). Threshold value of 0.25, 0.5 and 0.7 are often used to describe a weak, moderate, and strong coefficient of determination (Hair et al., 2013). If certain model path inner structure explain an endogenous latent variable by only a few latent exogenous variable (one or two), a moderate  $R^2$  is acceptable (Henseler et al., 2009). As shown in Table 2,  $R^2$  for intention to leave was 0.3209, which meant that spiritual leadership, job satisfaction and spiritual well-being jointly explained about 32% of variance of intention to leave. Another indicator for evaluation is the path coefficients of the constructs. Chin (2010) indicates that to demonstrate meaningful predictive power of a PLS model, standardized paths need to be close to 0.20 (and ideally 0.30 or higher) to indicate that the model has meaningful predictive power. Thus, based on the results of the path coefficient and t-value (Table 4), and  $R^2$ , we concluded that our overall model has excellent predictive power.

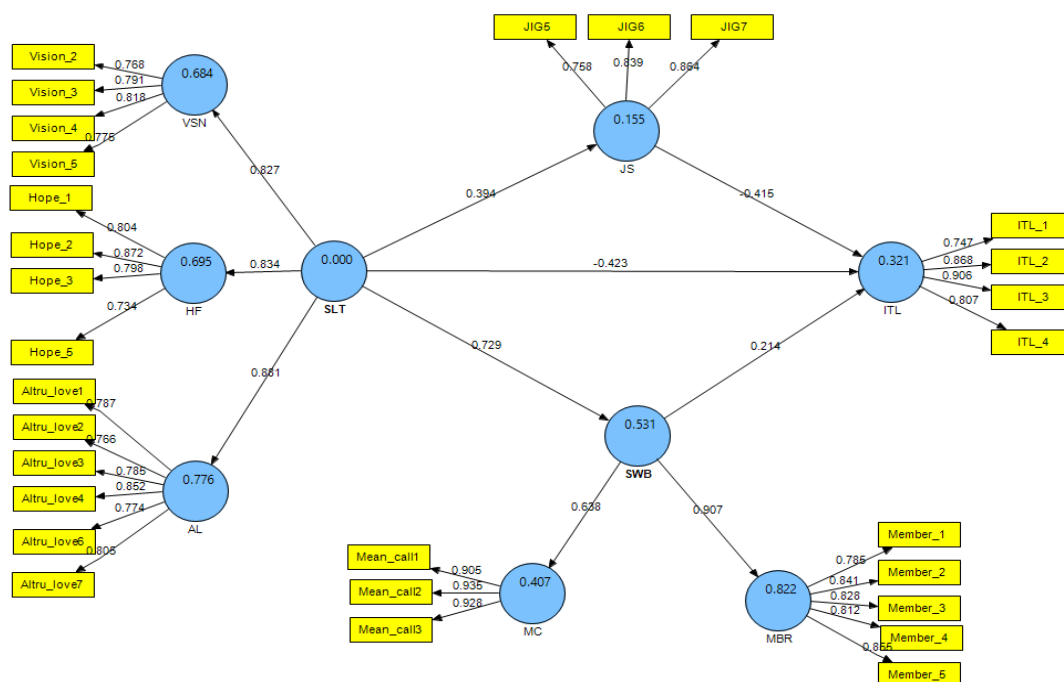
Hypothesis testing is conducted to analyse the cause-effect relationships (causality) among the variables in the model based on the value of the critical ratio (CR). In terms of PLS-SEM, CR is known as the t-stat value. T-values are obtained through the bootstrap routine and must be more than 1.96 (Chin, 1998). If t-stat values higher than 1.96 (sig. 5% two-tailed) and has positive relationship (see hypothesis) means that the hypothesis is supported. The results of hypothesis testing can be observed in Table 4. In this research, the results supported positive impact of spiritual leadership on spiritual well-being. PLS analysis showed that spiritual leadership as a whole construct, accounted for about 53.1% of the variance in spiritual well-being (see Table 2). Therefore, the first hypothesis of this research was supported significantly. Furthermore, this research elaborated the

relationship between spiritual leadership and job satisfaction. Based on the results of the second hypothesis (H2), a significant positive relationship of spiritual leadership and job satisfaction was found in this research. Thus, spiritual leadership had a strong positive impact on job satisfaction. The results showed that spiritual leadership has a negative relationship with intention to leave and the third hypothesis (H3) of this research was supported significantly. Regarding the fourth hypothesis (H4), it has been found that spiritual well-being is not related to intention to leave and does not play a role in effecting intention to leave. Furthermore, the results supported hypothesis five (H5) and confirmed the significant negative influence of job satisfaction on intention to leave. Table 4 presents a summary of results of the hypotheses testing.

**Table 4:** Summary of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis	Path Co-efficient	T- Statistics	Hypothesis Testing
SLT -> SWB (H1)	0.7288	11.4187	Supported
SLT -> JS (H2)	0.3939	5.195	Supported
SLT -> ITL (H3)	-0.423	3.2281	Supported
SWB -> ITL (H4)	0.2144	1.4621	Not Supported
JS -> ITL (H5)	-0.4152	5.878	Supported

t >= 1.96 at P < 0.05 level



**Figure 1:** Structural Path Model

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the growing literature on the influence of leaders' spiritual leadership on employees' outcomes. It provides empirical evidence to support theoretical models that link spiritual leadership with employees' outcomes such as spiritual well-being, job satisfaction and intention to leave. This study also identifies the leaders' spiritual leadership qualities such as vision, hope/faith and altruistic love that are significantly influenced spiritual well-being, job satisfaction and intention to leave. The impact of perceived leaders' spiritual leadership may have a profound impact on the employees' spiritual well-being and job satisfaction and intention to leave. There are two main limitations of this study that should be considered when interpreting its findings. Firstly, although the sample of respondents used in this study was adequate for the purpose of this study, it cannot be considered representative of the general shipping population. It may have a regional limitation which limits the generalisability of the result because the sample was adopted from the shipping agencies that were located in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. Different geographical areas which might have a different leadership approaches could also be considered to explore the topic of spiritual leadership in a different context and scope. Secondly, this study was carried out using a cross-sectional research design, meaning that the data were collected at a given point in time which limits any inferences about causality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Though causality is easy to examine in SEM models, experts warn that any interpretations about causality must be approached with caution because in general, causality can be determined

only through experimental design approaches (Grimm & Yarnold, 2000). To better understand the relationships among the study variables, future research could be carried out using a longitudinal study design approach. In addition to that, this study only focused on individual outcomes. Organizational or interactive outcomes as dependent variables are yet to be explored. By exploring organizational or interactive outcomes as another dependent variables in the spiritual leadership studies, better information about organizational performance or specifically, financial performance in relation to the influence of spiritual leadership can be obtained.

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