Spirituality and performance in public administration: catalyst or inhibitory effect

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to demonstrate that spirituality has a direct positive effect on the performance of a public organization. Our methodological approach is mixed, following a hypothetico-deductive logic based on the theories of servant leadership and spiritual leadership. The data was collected through a questionnaire to 136 randomly selected public agents. The technique of structural equation modeling was used to analyze the relationships. The results indicate that spirituality, through levers such as Ethics, Work Behavior, Empathy, and Beliefs, positively influences organizational performance in terms of job satisfaction, motivation, and quality of service, though its effect on Respect for deadlines is negligible. Spirituality thus acts as a catalyst for performance.

Keywords : Spirituality, Public agents, Public organization, Determinants, Organizational performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

It is recognized that Africans attach great importance to spirituality. This is visible on Fridays and Saturdays for those who practice traditional ancestral animist rites such as bwiti, djembe in Gabon; voodoo in Benin, etc. and, on Fridays and Sundays, for others who practice imported religions. Despite the anchoring of Africans in spirituality, no one doubts today that African society is experiencing a real change where moral and religious values are experiencing some cracks [20], a loss of speed due to the rise of individualism, the excessive search for profits, the lure of gain, corruption, the loss of taste for effort, the decline of religiosity, the loss of moral values and the loss of the value of work. Spirituality seems to be a bulwark to combat this moral crisis. The question of spirituality is addressed today through the models of values and practices [105]. Baum (2001) [9] notes that there are three types of spirituality in management, the spirituality according to Barrett (2003) [6], aiming at the personal transformation of people; the spirituality of good management according to J.-Robert Ouimet (1999) [82] and the spirituality of the great religions. In addition, Voynnet-Fourboul introduces a vertical approach to spirituality that links the individual to a force that surpasses him and ascends; and horizontal that links the individual with his neighbor. Individuals all seek meaning in their. Work is, among other things, an element that gives meaning, especially working in a public organization. Work is a vehicle of spirituality because in the holy scriptures "man will earn by the sweat of his brow. » We will approach this paper in an approach of integrative spirituality considering the three currents of spirituality in the context of a public organization, in order to show the link between spirituality and performance. We use spirituality following Karakas (2010) [57], Tombaugh et al. (2011) [96] and Taki (2018) [92] as a variable in a study of organizational behavior and managerial theories.

Fernando et al. (2009) [40] emphasize, regarding spirituality, that empirical work is necessary to determine how and why it influences organizational effectiveness. In our case, we seek to make the link between spirituality and performance in the public sector. Indeed, it is common to encounter in the civil service in Africa, agents who practice a diversity of beliefs. These beliefs mark the behaviors and practices of workers [1]. Although spirituality is a personal experience, it is important to disseminate it throughout an organization [75] and become more collective in order to impact organizational performance. We thus assume that public agents influenced by their spirituality and belief, driven by a spirit of togetherness and empathy, embody benevolent ethical values and practices that influence their behavior at work. This influence is reflected in organizational performance. The study of the relationship between spirituality and performance is still relevant. Karakas (2010) [57] modeled the link between spirituality and performance in three perspectives, well-being, sense of community and sense of explanation and use; and Vandenberghe (2011) [101] proposes an integrative model of spirituality at work and employee engagement. In addition, the majority of work on spirituality concerns the private sector. To our knowledge, we have not found a model linking spirituality to

organizational performance in the public sector. Thus, in the vein of the two previous authors, our research question is: "What are the levers of spirituality that catalyze performance in a public organization?" This paper attempts to show that spirituality plays a catalytic or inhibitory role on performance in the public sector, that is to say, we attempt to model the influence of spirituality on organizational performance in the public sector. The outline of this paper presents a conceptual approach, a theoretical anchoring followed by the research methodology then the results, their discussions and the contributions of the research before concluding.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Two major concepts will guide our research, the spirituality of an individual, in this case a public agent, and the performance of a public organization.

2.1. Spirituality and its determinants

Spirituality is a characteristic inherent to all human beings, is broadly inclusive and encompasses everyone [25-39].

But what does spirituality mean? Is it about going to worship on Friday or Sunday or practicing animist rites, or even practicing meditation? Is the discourse on spirituality at work just a new fad? The answers to these questions depend largely on the definition and application of spirituality. Before using the concept of spirituality, it is necessary to properly orient the flow of its use. In this paper, we do not share the definition of spirituality according to Askani (2013) [3] for whom: "Spirituality is the exit of man from his own self-sufficiency", because according to Lesch (2018) [66], the man who is interested in the spiritual opens himself to an otherness and renounces the total control of his existence which does not depend only on performances and turnover. We must precisely seek to integrate, in this paper, performance as one of the objectives in the spiritual quest of man. The notion of spirituality is complex to grasp and is not yet stabilized with a consensual definition. "Spirituality is an attitude such as openness or love that you can have at any stage" [102-108]. King (2008) [57] defines spirituality as "an unrelated set of personal drives, behaviors, experiences, values, and attitudes that are based on the search for existential understanding, meaning, purpose, and transcendence." According to Mitroff and Denton (1999) [75], "Spirituality is the deep sense of being part of and connected to everything around us, the entire physical universe, and all of humanity. We are put on earth to increase good, not just to make money." This is true in working to do one's job well by following values, standards, and principles. Dehler and Welsh (1994, p. 19) [23] define spirituality as: "... a subconscious feeling that energizes individual action in relation to a specific task [...] an animating life force, an energy that inspires one toward certain ends or goals beyond oneself. Spirituality means inner life, commitment and vision. » As for Besson (2018) [13], he defines spirituality as "a natural and universal need to search for meaning and connection, religious or not." Spirituality is the basic desire to find meaning

and an ultimate purpose in one's life, and to live a life of integrity [75]. We approach spirituality in an integrative approach combining the previous definitions, the three currents stated above and the partnership model of Eisler (2000, 2002) [33-34], in order to use spirituality at work in the public sector.

This spirituality of the individual at work that connects him to others in the organization and to everything around him to achieve organizational performance. We have circumscribed the framework of this paper. We conceptualize spirituality via the model of partnership relationships which is not only transcendent but immanent. This is a spirituality that infuses everyday life with care and empathy. It does not place man and spirituality above woman and nature – or vice versa. It provides basic teachings on empathy, respect and non-violence as alternatives to the absence of norms and the use of spirituality to incite hatred, scapegoating and violence.

Beyond the factors of spirituality that may appear in the previous definitions, we propose possible determinants of spirituality in the following. One dimension of spirituality is empathy. Indeed, the employee develops an altruism that translates into openness and benevolence towards others or spiritual actors, in the organization, are more inclined to empathy [40]. Embodied spirituality is an empathic connection with the universe via the body [13]. Desrosiers (2012) [26] finds that women develop their faith in terms of strong empathic bonds with others.

As for Barrett (2003) [6], he is convinced that spirituality leads people to love colleagues and neighbors and it leads them to a simple life and self-mastery. The great religions nourish a spirituality of compassion for which the heart must be purified, freed from selfishness and open to the needs of others [9]. Dion (1996) [29] maintains that "Christian managers have their own value system, which combines the values of charity, mutual aid, sharing, love, fraternity, generosity, forgiveness and humility." Eisler and Montuori (2003) [35] maintain that "learning to become fully aware of others and what is happening around us is the second fundamental component of partnership spiritual education." Spirituality develops listening to others, respect for others and serving others as best as possible, by demonstrating "discipline, imagination, determination, intelligence, judgment, wisdom, courage and a taste for risk" [17]. Listening to the spiritual experiences of others at work is an empathic presence that contributes to their well-being as a therapy [79]. Among Ouimet's (1999) [82] spiritual imperatives, there are the responsibilities of the organization towards its employees and their families, towards customers, towards society as a whole [9]. It thus emerges that empathy is a factor in spirituality.

Spirituality at work cultivates ethical values in the individual such as honesty, humility and helpfulness [11]. Ethics refers to the intellectual analysis of what is considered good or bad, moral or immoral in a particular organization or society. It is more about individual or collective ethical behavior. The great religions nourish a spirituality of justice [9]. Ouimet (1999) [82] is convinced of combining a just and holy life with the conduct of a successful organization [9]. The organization must

encourage any activity that increases solidarity, fraternity, human dignity and the development of people, in a climate of justice, equity, freedom and discipline, while maintaining the growth of efficiency and productivity [17].

NandanPrabhu et al. (2017) [80] emphasize that spirituality must include behavioral components in order to make it relevant in the workplace context. Employee behavior can affect spirituality just as employee spirituality affects behavior. Indeed, workplace spirituality has been shown to have positive effects on social involvement and commitment [32-44]. Spiritual life is a place where issues of awareness, decision, and expression intersect [12]. Workplace spirituality has been conceptualized as offering new insights into how individuals experience a deeper level of intrinsic motivation and commitment to work [73].

Astuti et al. (2020) [5] argue that spirituality at work acts on reducing deviant behaviors at work through job satisfaction and its impact on employee performance. From the above literature review, we identify as determinants of spirituality that we categorize into three groups for the purposes of this research, ethics, empathy and behavior at work.

Table 1: literature on items that can explain the selected variables

	Items	Literature
Organizational performance	Quality of service	The integration of the notion of spirituality into the various conquest strategies suggested by marketing involves, among other things, the quality approach [30]. Organizational performance includes two dimensions: objective performance and subjective performance. The latter covers in particular the perceptions of customers and employees, ... and the quality of service [36]. The low quality of public service is considered a dysfunction [8]. However, the performance of the public sector is associated with the strengthening of the values of the State through the improvement of its relations with citizens, by improving the quality of the services provided.
	Motivation	Motivation explains and predicts a particular employee's job performance behavior [50]. Intrinsic motivation acts as an important mediator in the impact of employee spirituality on job performance [77]. Poor performance appraisal is related to one's level of engagement and motivation [88].
	Respect for deadlines	To measure progress in the search for shorter deadlines, each user integrates the overall processing time into their dashboard, and compares the overall performance with the local performance [37]. Failure to meet deadlines is a source of breach and violation of the psychological contract, considered in performance evaluation [89].
	Job satisfaction	Trust has a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction, job performance, and organizational commitment [28]. According to Mayfield (2002) [71], "worker performance, job satisfaction, and retention are all influenced by relationships with the immediate supervisor." A leader's use of motivational language, including, among other things, clear explanations of tasks, rewards, cultural values, and expressions of compassion, has been shown to increase job satisfaction and worker [70].
Empathy	Listening	la précision empathique s'appuie sur l'écoute et l'empathie primaire [48]. Dans l'écoute active, l'objectif est de développer de l'empathie pour les autres en ce qui concerne la façon dont ils voient et vivent leur monde [88]. L'écoute empathique est un autre élément de la position empathique [72].

	Items	Literature
Work behavior (left spanning)	Do-for/ Dedication	"If we cannot exclude that the altruistic individual finds real personal satisfaction in his behaviors of generosity, benevolence, and devotion"[94]. The posture of a spiritual leader is humanistic, open to change, and based on "creative devotion" [85-104]. The spiritual leader draws his resources from his education and the professional values in which he believes, in particular, forgiveness, charity, care of oneself and others, creative devotion, and welcoming others [24].
	User sensitive	I am always sensitive to others, it is always something very important to me to be able to understand others, to show empathy [103]. Clients must be sensitive to others, be aware of how their behavior affects others, and take responsibility for the consequences of their actions [53]. Personal integrity includes a core value related to compassion and sensitivity towards others [53]. Being sensitive to others allows us to live our spirituality outside of ourselves. Without this attention, spirituality is little more than a personal pleasure [35].
	Attentive to Needs	Some clients believe that living a values-based life can be selfish, that they must consider the feelings and needs of others and not just their own [53].
Work behavior	Conscientious	The psychological concepts underlying the behavioral models are increased conscientiousness, self-regulation ability, and agreeableness [69].
	Sociable	Extraversion represents the tendency to be sociable, assertive, active, and to experience positive affects, such as energy and eagerness [55]. Neuroscience has discovered that our brains are designed to be sociable, inexorably drawn to an intimate brain-to-brain connection whenever we engage with another person [48]. In theory, a more sociable and open leadership style facilitates feedback, knowledge sharing, and fosters cooperation within the organization [64].
	Helpful	People who adopt a helpful approach ignore their own needs and instead focus on the needs of the other person [4].
	Engaged/ Committed	There is a strong link between employee attitudes and behaviors and customer satisfaction. In other words, if employees are unhappy and not engaged, the customer experience will be less satisfying. This fact alone should be enough to motivate organizations to take engagement seriously [78]. Giving voice to low-status members of an organization allows them to fully engage in the work of adapting the organization [81]. Engagement is a workplace approach that aims to ensure that employees are committed to their organization's goals and values, are motivated to contribute to the success of the organization, and are able to improve their own sense of well-being at the same time [49].
Ethics	Honesty	Honesty and humility are the cardinal virtues of spiritual [88]. Jewish scriptures devote an entire book to honesty and dedication in life and work, as well as honorable relationships with others [83-111]. Interconnectedness, caring, humanism, integrity, justice, mutuality, responsiveness, respect, trust, ethics, understanding, honesty, kindness, team spirit, a sense of harmony, converge around the relational dimension of spirituality in the workplace [80].
	Probity/ Integrity	Integrity is the degree to which we perceive that the other person adheres to principles and standards that are acceptable to us [54]. Talent and probity are likely to have the most influence at the beginning of a relationship, as information about a person's benevolence takes longer to emerge [54]. Bhatti et al. (2016) [15] find that Islamic spirituality and Islamic social responsibility are essential aspects in reducing organizational deviance. Islamic social responsibility is defined as the actions and behaviors that believers adopt in daily life that result in creating respect, harmony, justice, integrity, and development of individuals and society with the realization of forgiveness and anointing from Allah [14].
	Respect for laws	Obligations mean respect for the law and the rights of others, and for elected officials and politicians, the need to answer for their actions [19]. This is the spiritual symbolism of absolution, doing penance or purgatory to atone for sins.

	Items	Literature
Beliefs	Equity/impartiality	Equity, justice, efficiency and the quality of democracy are highly dependent on the coordination and chains of authority set up for the regulation and provision of public services [18]. Be vigilant in ensuring equity in management actions based on objective criteria common to all members of the team [27].
	Religious	Walach & Kohls (2021) [106] emphasize that the individual frees himself from his ideological and metaphysical constraints and, in its final consequence, that science frees itself from all religious feeling.
	Scientific	Whitehead (1967) [109] emphasizes that "Religion will only regain its former power if it becomes capable of meeting change with the same spirit as science." Science derives this spirit, this spirituality, from its ability to rapidly modify its representations in response to new discoveries [63]. Although rational, science is not free from belief, which can have a positive or negative impact on the acquisition of scientific knowledge and on the idea of human nature [16].
	Mystics	According to Janet (2021) [51], mystics are individuals who are dissatisfied with the current forms of imposed beliefs, and seek to transcend them through a new discourse.
	Strength of the Soul	The strength of the soul gives the public official the inner strength to withstand the hazards and pressure at work which ensures balance and well-being. This strength is a shield because the soul is considered eternal in religious beliefs.

2.2. Organizational performance and spirituality

The spirituality of commitment and collaboration makes the organization a common project, a shared work to which the participants bring the best of their energies [9], thus facilitating performance. Ouimet (1999) [82] shows that the common effort, supported by the Spirit, has a human and spiritual impact on the participants themselves and greatly benefits the entire community. The energy guided by the Spirit and cooperation contributes to the prosperity and growth of the organization [9]. The latter thus produces high-quality goods and convinces users that it offers them the best services [9]. Spirituality is a predominant factor that inspires the motivational approach [13] especially at work. Spirituality at work helps reduce absenteeism and employee turnover; leading to positive effects on motivation [56-77] and behavior [98]. It is a key performance factor [95]. Spirituality at work helps increase staff performance and productivity [32]. Karakas (2010) [57] discusses the effects of spirituality on organizational performance. Duyck and Mhenaoui (2013) [32] believe that spirituality at work directly affects organizational performance but remains underexploited due to the semantic void surrounding it. Fornaciari et al. (2005) [42] indicate that 65 spirituality scales are used in 29 research studies on spirituality, and highlight ethics, religion, faith and values instead of spirituality itself. Ghazzawi et al. (2016) [47] show that employees who can express their spirituality through their work, have as consequences, an increase in their involvement, creativity and performance. According to Traoré (1990) [97] religious teachings indicate that useful work, accomplished methodically, is the only moral means of satisfying the needs of the individual and the community. Garg (2017) [46] shows

that spirituality at work has an indirect effect that explains 55% of the total effect on organizational performance, which is mediated by work motivation. However, Fernando (2005) [38] believes that spirituality can in no way be considered as a tool for performance, but as an end in itself for organizations. We note that spirituality with the three dimensions noted above, ethics, empathy and behavior at work, allows the public agent to integrate values at work, to arrive at a public organization that also defends values and performs. Thus, the different levers of organizational performance in the public sector that we mobilize are, without being exhaustive, quality of service [59], compliance with deadlines [60], motivation [87], satisfaction [21-59].

3.   THEORETICAL GROUNDING

We draw on the theory of servant and spiritual leadership [43-90], or (Wise and Spiritual Leadership) to answer the research question "What are the levers of spirituality that catalyze the performance of a public administration?" This analytical framework can give us a fruitful explanation of the link between spirituality and organizational performance in the public sector. This framework also joins the reflections of Mitroff and Denton (2012) [76] and Mintzberg (1982) [74] on spiritual or missionary organizations. Fry's spiritual leadership model is based on the creation of a vision in relation to which employees find the development of an organizational culture based on altruistic love where leaders and followers have reciprocal attention to each other [84] which leads to organizational performance. We note that the verbatim "Performance" is cited 28 times in the body of Fry's text (2003) [43]. To return to Barrett's spiritual leadership (2003) [6] taken up by Plane and Nkakleu (2021) [85], we note that it is linked to sustainable and responsible management with a connotation of benevolence, wisdom, ethics, creativity and vision. The literature on leadership increasingly recognizes the existence of an ethical leadership style [8]. Thus, we infer hypothesis H1: "the ethics of the public agent positively influences his spirituality." Spiritual leadership promotes an attitude of discernment with regard to intervention, listening and humility [61] which affect the behavior of actors, particularly public agents. The contributions of researchers on spiritual leadership focus on the "animating life force" or intrinsic motivation that can lead to performance. Spiritual leadership develops the values, attitudes and behaviors necessary to intrinsically motivate, involve and engage oneself and others to perform in the organization so that they have a sense of spiritual well-being through their vocation and belonging, that is, they give meaning to their lives, have the feeling of making a difference and feel understood and appreciated. Thus, we infer hypothesis H2: "the behavior of the public agent at work positively influences his spirituality. » Spiritual individuals are much more likely to become servant leaders than those who are not [41] because the possession of spiritual values such as humility, integrity, and empathy/compassion are believed to facilitate servant leadership"[41-61-99]. We thus infer hypothesis H3: "the public official's empathy positively influences his or her spirituality. » According to Janet

(2021) [51], religious spirituality is expressed, among other things, through religious beliefs, scientific beliefs, mystical beliefs and what happens inside oneself that we call soul force. He places the birth of belief in constant motives of the human psyche, notably anxiety. Belief is essential to human life, both individual and social; we can base our judgment only on beliefs [51]. Thus, we infer hypothesis H4 : "the public agent's beliefs positively influences his spirituality." According to Fry & Coen (2009) [45], the purpose of spiritual leadership is to: ...tap into the core needs of the leader and follower for spiritual well-being through calling and membership, to create vision and value congruence across the individual, empowered team, and organizational levels [...] to foster employee well-being, organizational commitment, and performance. These authors state that the theory of spiritual leadership is developed within the framework of an intrinsic motivation model and that it is based on qualities such as hope, faith and altruism [45]. The literature finds the existence of a positive and significant relationship between spirituality in leadership and organizational performance [22]. Yang et al. (2019) [110] agree with the assertion that spiritual leadership is one of the most important factors in improving professional performance. Thus, we infer hypothesis H5: "the spirituality of the public servant positively influences organizational performance." From this analytical framework we deduce four hypotheses that we attempt to confirm or refute later in this work. We summarize the research hypotheses that arise from the literature and the theory of servant and spiritual leadership (Wise and Spiritual Leadership theory):

H1: "the ethics of the public servant positively influences his spirituality."

H2: "the behavior of the public servant at work positively influences his spirituality."

H3: "the empathy of the public servant positively influences his spirituality."

H4 : "the public agent's beliefs positively influences his spirituality."

H5: "the spirituality of the public servant positively influences organizational performance."

Moon et al. (2020) [77] show in the case of South Korea that employee spirituality positively influences performance. Regarding organizational performance indicators, people with spiritual power score high on characteristics such as creativity, honesty, strength, ethics, trust, resilience, etc. increasing productivity, decreasing attrition, sustainability, and productivity [86].

4. METHODOLOGY

We present the methodological approach, the research data and the data processing technique.

4.1. Methodological approach: qualitative and quantitative

Our methodological approach is mixed, on the one hand qualitative to explore the levers of spirituality and performance and, on the other hand, quantitative to measure the links between the different variables resulting from the exploratory phase. We follow an abductive logic because we seek to understand the levers of spirituality and then to explain organizational performance through spirituality. Indeed, Duyck and Mhenaoui (2013) [32] argue that quantitative work constitutes one of the alternatives that would allow us to "democratize" the concept of spirituality and make it exploitable. According to Krahnke et al. (2003) [62], the study of spirituality at work must use quantitative methodology which seems to constitute the only well-founded approach. The latter provides organizations with objective results that are difficult to refute: "for spirituality at work to be a viable construct in the improvement of organizations and individuals, it requires a degree of confidence that can only be achieved through scientific measurements" [62].

4.2. Data and processing technique

The data for this research come from the administration of a questionnaire to 136 public agents randomly interviewed respectively 70% at their workplace and 30% in the street. The structural equation technique is used for data processing using AMOS software.

Nineteen studies have used this technique in particular [5-22-52-68-73-77-107].

The variables used are six latent variables, i.e. variables not directly measured, including spirituality which is explained by four others variables: Ethics, Work Behavior, Empathy and Beliefs. All these four latent variables are in turn explained by items measured with a five-level Likert scale (1 = weak to 5 = strong) as Moon et al. (2020) [77]; and the latent variable Organizational Performance which is explained by four items, measured in the same way.

We tested the consistency and validity of the scales of these items using Cronbach's alpha in SPSS software. The results in Table 1 indicate that all items are validated because they have an individual and global Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.8, considered good [93].

Table 2: Validation des échelles de Likert par l'alpha de Cronbach

Latent variables	Items	Scale variance	Cronbach's alpha
Work Behavior	Sociable	686,526	0,846
	Engaged/Committed	692,042	0,848
	Helpful	713,636	0,851
	Conscientious	694,673	0,848
Empathy	User-sensitive	705,735	0,849
	Listening	689,187	0,847

Latent variables	Items	Scale variance	Cronbach's alpha
	Attentive to Needs	666,236	0,840
	Do-for/ Dedication	713,636	0,851
Ethics	Respect for laws	679,099	0,843
	Equity-Impartiality	676,994	0,843
	Probity/Integrity	669,110	0,841
	Honesty	670,619	0,841
Performance	Motivation	686,185	0,846
	Job satisfaction	722,382	0,851
	Quality of service	678,472	0,843
	Respect for deadlines	726,638	0,853
Beliefs	Religious	642,074	0,831
	Scientific	665,310	0,837
	Mystics	677,244	0,842
	Strength of the Soul	639,074	0,829

5. RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

We successively present the results, discussions and theoretical and managerial contributions.

5.1. Results

We present the results of the structural equation modeling by showing the regression coefficients of spirituality on organizational performance. The absolute adjustment indices of our structural equation modeling indicate that the proposed measurement model fits the data reasonably well. The comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.000, goodness of fit index (GFI) = 0.781, AGFI = 0.767 and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.043. The significance test of the validity of the model is confirmed, $\chi(20) = 8472.08$, $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the appropriate distributional assumptions are met and the specified model is correct from the current data set.
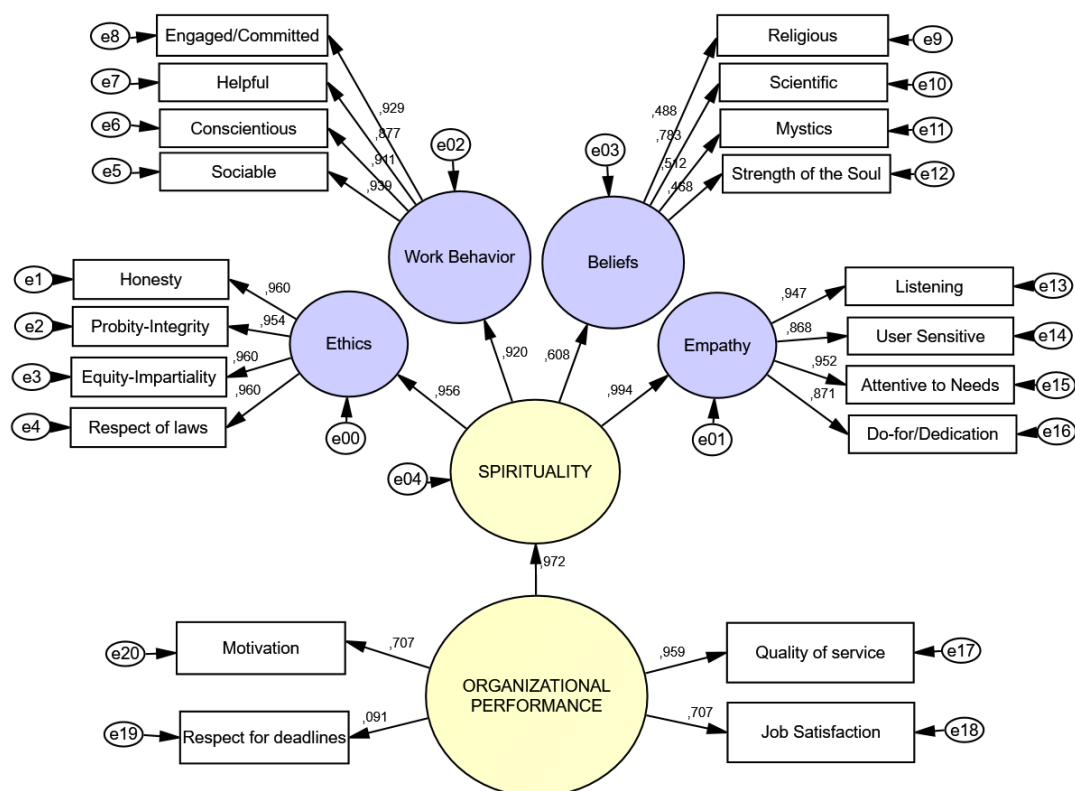
Figure 1: Agent Spirituality and Organizational Performance Model

It is necessary to evaluate the significant value of each indicator. The p-value is between 0.001 ($\alpha = 0.1\%$) and 0.02 indicates that the indicator is significant. The CR value greater than 1.96 must be accompanied by a significant p-value before considering that an item has sufficient magnitude.

The latent variables Work Behavior, Ethics, Empathy and Beliefs have positive standardized indirect effects on the organizational performance variable respectively, 0.895, 0.930, 0.966 and 0.591. Thus, this may connote mediating or moderating effects on the spirituality-performance relationship.

Which is not the subject of this research but can be the subject of future research. In addition, the items of the latent variables Work Behavior, Empathy, Ethics and Beliefs have positive standardized indirect effects on the organizational performance and spirituality variables (Table 3). This may also inspire research perspectives by studying the moderating or mediating effects of these items on the relationship between spirituality and performance.

Table 3: Estimation of regression coefficients

			S.E.	β	p-value
Spirituality	<--	Organizational Performance	,646	,972	***

			S.E.	β	p-value
Ethics	<--	SPIRITUALITY	,108	,956	***
Empathy	<--	SPIRITUALITY	,885	,994	,020
Work Behavior	<--	Spirituality	,088	,920	***
Beliefs	<--	SPIRITUALITY	,032	,608	***
Respect Of Deadlines	<--	ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE	,022	,091	***
Quality Of Service	<--	ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE	,164	,959	***
Motivation	<--	ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE	,043	,707	,002
Job Satisfaction	<--	Organizational Performance	,043	,707	,003
Honesty	<--	Ethics	,023	,960	***
Probity-Integrity	<--	Ethics	,022	,954	***
Equity-Impartility	<--	Ethics	,023	,960	***
Respect Of Laws	<--	Ethics	,023	,960	***
Listening	<--	Empathy	,124	,947	,006
Attentive Of Needs	<--	Empathy	,131	,952	,008
Do-For/Dedication	<--	Empathy	,075	,871	,005
User Sensitive	<--	Empathy	,074	,868	,003
Sociable	<--	Work Behavior	,074	,939	***
Helpful	<--	Work Behavior	,053	,877	***
Conscientious	<--	Work Behavior	,062	,911	***
Engaged/Committed	<--	Work Behavior	,069	,929	***
Religious	<--	Beliefs	,060	,488	***
Scientific	<--	Beliefs	,043	,783	***
Mystics	<--	Beliefs	,061	,512	***
Strength Of The Soul	<---	Beliefs	,060	,468	***

*** p-value less than 0,001

Table 4: Standardized indirect effects of items

Variables	Items	Organizational Performance	Spirituality
Spirituality	Empathy	,966	-

Variables	Items	Organizational Performance	Spirituality
	Ethics	,930	-
	Work Behavior	,895	-
	Beliefs	,591	-
Beliefs	Scientific	,463	,476
	Mystics	,303	,311
	Religious	,288	,297
	Strength of the Soul	,276	,284
Work behavior	Sociable	,840	,864
	Engaged/Committed	,832	,855
	Conscientious	,815	,838
	Helpful	,785	,807
Empathy	Attentive to Needs	,920	,946
	Listening	,915	,941
	Do-for/Dedication	,841	,865
	User Sensitive	,839	,863
Ethics	Honesty	,893	,918
	Equity-Impartiality	,892	,917
	Respect of Laws	,892	,917
	Probity-Integrity	,887	,912

5.2. Discussion

The results in Figure 1 and Table 2 indicate that spirituality significantly and positively influences organizational performance, contrary to the results of Astuti et al. (2020) [5] which show that spirituality at work has no impact on employee performance.

The latent variable spirituality is explained by latent variables behavior, empathy and ethics. Each latent variable is in turn explained by the measured variables. Ethics is explained by the items: honesty, justice, fairness-impartiality and respect for the law. Empathy is explained by the items: taking into account the needs of others, listening to others, altruism, benevolence. The agent's behavior at work is explained by the items: sociable, conscientious, committed [2] and helpful.

The dimensions that explain performance are quality of service, meeting deadlines, motivation [100] and job satisfaction [5-10].

According to Astuti et al. (2020) [5] spirituality in the workplace directly affects job satisfaction, but our result shows that it indirectly affects job satisfaction.

The variables ethics, work behavior and empathy have indirect catalytic effects on organizational performance because each has a positive Standardized indirect effect on the organizational performance variable.

These results allow us to confirm all five hypotheses retained above, H1, H2, H3, H4 and H5. We retain that spirituality positively influences performance in a public organization. This result is in agreement with authors such as Soha et al. (2016) [91], Yang et al. (2019) [110], Pesqueux (2020) [84], Daud (2021) [22] but our result is opposed to Ledoux (2015) [65]. In our context, spirituality is positive for the organization of course. However, it would also have a dark side. Dupriez (2015) [31] expresses concern about the use of spirituality as a tool for improving performance. Vigilance is required because it can be used as a tool for domination and manipulation [66] of employees.

5.3. Contributions of the research

The theoretical implication of this research is our model that links the spirituality of public agents to organizational performance. It shows that ethics, behavior and empathy, components of spirituality, catalyze organizational performance, among other things, through the shared commitment of agents to work because spirituality shapes behavior to lead to organizational performance.

The managerial implication of this research is at the level of the levers of spirituality that promote organizational performance. Indeed, we suggest to institutional authorities that public agents be made aware, admitted to advanced training courses, trained and coached on empathy, ethics and behavior, in order to improve these three aspects that catalyze organizational performance. In African countries, advertising on public agents or the civil service is not brilliant because they are generally accused of being corrupt.

State authorities are forced to restore the image of these representations of the public agent and the civil service, through voluntary actions. They can establish spots promoting ethics, in particular television spots against corruption. Traditional and religious spiritual leaders must use their platforms to raise awareness of everyone, particularly public agents or civil servants.

6. CONCLUSION

At the end of this research which attempts to find the factors that can link spirituality and performance in a public organization, we answer the question "What are the levers of spirituality that catalyze performance in a public administration?" We adopt a mixed approach (qualitative and quantitative) and an abductive logic. The analytical framework that we used in the quantitative phase (hypothetico-deductive) is anchored on the theory of servant and spiritual leadership or Wise and Spiritual Leadership theory to explain the link between spirituality and performance. The data comes from the documentary compilation downloaded from the internet for the exploratory qualitative phase and from the administration of a questionnaire to 136 public agents for the quantitative phase.

We mobilize the technique of thematic content analysis with the documentary data and the technique of structural equations to process the primary data from the questionnaire.

The results indicate that factors such as ethics, empathy and the behavior of actors at work explain spirituality and it positively influences the performance of the organization. Ethics is explained by the honesty, probity, fairness-impartiality of public officials and the respect of laws by public officials. Empathy is explained by the dedication of public officials or "doing for or in place of", listening to others, being sensitive to the problems of others and taking into account the needs of users.

Finally, the behavior of agents at work is explained by the commitment of public officials, sociability, helpfulness and professional conscience of agents. As for organizational performance, it is explained by the satisfaction of agents at work, quality of service, motivation of agents and respect for deadlines. These results allow us to confirm all four research hypotheses retained. H1: "the ethics of the public official positively influences his spirituality. » H2: "the behavior of the public agent at work positively influences his spirituality." H3: "the empathy of the public agent positively influences his spirituality." H4 : "the public agent's beliefs positively influences his spirituality." H5: "the spirituality of the public agent positively influences organizational performance."

We note two weaknesses in this research. The first is related to the number of items retained to measure spirituality and performance which are latent variables. The second is related to the sample used which groups public agents without differentiating the hierarchy.

As perspectives It is necessary to deepen theoretical research to prevent spirituality from becoming a new fad in management [40]. We can study the spiritual leadership of public sector executives, and explore the relationship that an organization itself becomes spiritual through the leadership of its executives. We can also look for the factors that explain a spiritual organization.

Future research can compare the model obtained in this study from the perspective of other stakeholders, such as public sector executives and politicians, for better generalization. It would also be interesting to explore the dark side of spirituality in the public sector to follow the vein of Dupriez (2015) [31] and Lesch (2018) [66] regarding manipulation and domination.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

All authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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