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The Impact of Spiritual Leadership on Employee's Work Engagement—A Study Based on the Mediating Effect of Goal Self-Concordance and Self-Efficacy

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Received: 25 August 2021 Accepted: 09 November 2021

ABSTRACT

The average stress of people in China's workplace is reaching the peak in recent two years. To improve employee's positive psychological factors, Spiritual leadership has a good performance in this regard. Based on the mediating effect of goal self-concordance and self-efficacy, this paper further studies the impact of spiritual leadership on employee's work engagement. Through the empirical study, the following conclusions are drawn: (1) Spiritual leadership significantly positively affects the employee's work engagement. (2) Spiritual leadership has a significant positive effect on goal self-concordance and self-efficacy. (3) Goal self-concordance and self-efficacy have significant positive effects on employee's work engagement. (4) Goal self-concordance and self-efficacy play a partial mediating role in the process of spiritual leadership's impact on employees' work engagement. This study found the new mediator which partly revealed the mechanism between the effectiveness of Spiritual Leadership and employee's work engagement. This study may serve as one of the researches for improving the effectiveness of leaders in organizations and promoting the motivation of employees in the workplace.

KEYWORDS

Spiritual leadership; employee's work engagement; goal self-concordance; self-efficacy

1 Introduction

In 2020, the COVID epidemic swept the world, which brought multidimensional negative impacts and challenges throughout the industry, enterprises and job market. The *Workplace Stress Report 2020* released by Phoenix Technology claims that the average stress of people in China's workplace in 2020 is 6.9, reaching the peak in recent two years. In such a challenging era, spiritual leaders act as the condensers of organizational spiritual strength, focusing on improving employees' positive psychological factors, work performance and well-being, and promoting their self-realization. In front of this, enterprise leaders intend to alleviate employees' pressure by integrating them into their work roles, realizing self-worth from the spiritual level, and caring for their spiritual needs. Fry proposed spiritual leadership based on intrinsic motivation theory, referring to the leadership style in which leaders enable employees to acquire a sense of spiritual value, attitude and behavior through intrinsic motivation based on their mission and membership [1]; Fry divided spiritual leadership into three dimensions: vision, faith, and altruistic love.



Work engagement is recently popularized as a positive psychological factor. Kahn [2] believes that employees' work engagement well combines employees themselves and their work role. He expounded the realization of better work engagement from the three dimensions of physiology, cognition, and emotion by conducting investigations and research. According to previous research, individuals with better work engagement may present a positive state, for instance, the high emotional identity and work efficiency, and these behaviors significantly affect factors, such as work performance, to promote their career development and success. More work engagement may indicate that employees can devote themselves to their work and develop freely. Rich et al. [3] perceive work engagement as a multi-dimensional concept of motivation, which plays a comprehensive role in one's work process. It dynamically connects personal characteristics, organizational factors, and work performance.

Since spiritual leadership acts as the condensers of organizational spiritual strength, focusing on improving employees' positive psychological factors, work performance and well-being, and promoting their self-realization, also work engagement as a positive psychological factor that plays an important role referring to work performance, this study hopefully would reveal the mechanism of the positively impact of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement, especially in the post epidemic era.

Existing studies reveal that spiritual leadership has a significant positive impact on work engagement and psychological capital and affirm the positive regulatory role of self-monitoring [4]. Peng [5] studied the path of the impact of spiritual leadership on work engagement from the three perspectives of spiritual leadership, discovering that spiritual leadership may condense the spiritual strength of enterprises and steer their development. By conducting a two-stage questionnaire investigation, Zhang et al. [6] studied the impact of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement and concluded that spiritual leadership positively affects employees' work engagement. The literature mentioned above verifies that spiritual leadership positively impacts work engagement, while its mechanism has not been comprehensively explained.

Are there some factors which play potential impacts in this work mechanism? From the observation of practical work environment and the references we found that employees who are now inclined to rethink the meaning of life and work with the development of society and the impact of the epidemic. They tend to perceive work as a journey to pursuit value and obtain spiritual satisfaction rather than a repeated action to support families merely. In other words, whether a goal is meaningful and valuable in daily work determines employees' mental health and well-being. The self-determination theory explains that the goal-pursuit, which reflects individual interests and internal values and beliefs and meets the primary psychological demand of individuals, does help to improve their sense of happiness [7]. Sheldon et al. [7] further explored that goals that are highly consistent with individual interests and intrinsic value beliefs (self) are more willing to create happiness. Yue et al. [8] took the post-90s employees as the objects; self-efficacy was selected as the antecedent variable affecting work performance, they explored the intermediary role of work engagement during the epidemic. The study discovered that employees with high self-efficacy present more confidence in completing tasks, set higher work goals for themselves, and devote themselves to achieving the goals, all of which improve their daily performance.

Therefore, we can assume that the positive behaviors of improving employees' goal-self concordance, stimulating their sense of self-efficacy and promoting work engagement are crucial to gain happiness and ensure mental health. In this regard, the objective of this study involves: whether spiritual leadership gives rise to individual positive characteristics (goal-self concordance and self-efficacy); whether goal-self concordance and self-efficacy promote work engagement; and what is the impact of these two individual characteristics on the relationship between spiritual leadership and work engagement.

2 Theories and Hypotheses

2.1 Introduction to Related Theories

2.1.1 Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership is considered a cutting-edge theme in the field of leadership research in the international academic community. Under the background of giving challenges, Spiritual leadership is generally perceived as the cohesion of organizational spiritual strength in such a challenging era; its main task lies in encouraging employees to thoroughly realize themselves and enhance the exchange relationship between leaders and members, to enhance the competitiveness of the organization.

The research on spiritual leadership was first proposed under the background of American religious culture. Therefore, the definition of spiritual leadership is set based on the relationship between spirituality and religious belief. Fry [1] first introduced the mainstream based on the intrinsic motivation theory, which creatively fuzzed the relationship between spiritual leadership and religious belief and perceived that religious belief does not serve as a necessary, sufficient condition for spiritual leadership. Meanwhile, He also perceived spiritual leadership as a leadership style in which leaders provide employees with a sense of spiritual existence, attitude and behavior based on intrinsic motivation as well as employees' mission and membership; the spiritual leadership is hereby divided into three dimensions, including vision, faith and altruistic love. Compared with Fry's opinion, Menon held an absolute view that there is no relationship between spiritual leadership and religion, which received little support. He believed that organizations must distinguish between religious belief and spirituality to give full play to employees' potential [9]. While Hicks [10] provided another perspective that spiritual leadership and religious belief are inextricably linked. However, they are independent of each other, and he pointed out that it is impossible to clearly distinguish the boundaries of religious belief, spirit, political economy and other factors.

Some academic breakthroughs have been made in spiritual leadership concerning its depth, breadth, and innovativeness in recent years. Shi and coworkers [11] found the "key" of autonomous motivation from the self-determination theory perspective to reveal the internal path of spiritual leadership affecting employees' career calling, and update Fry's functional logic of spiritual leadership. Ribeiro Mónica et al. proposed that spiritual leaders mean a lot in the health care system. All health care institutions should try to hire leaders who promote the spirit of the workplace, which may be conducive to the humanization of nursing services [12]. Based on the spiritual leadership theory, Yang et al. [13] discussed the relationship between spiritual leadership and employees' innovative behavior and concluded that spiritual leadership promotes innovative behavior. They broadened the research on the outcome variables of spiritual leadership. Based on self-determination theory, Deng et al. [14] demonstrated that the satisfaction of psychological needs plays an intermediary role in the impact mechanism of spiritual leadership on employees' craftsman spirit and adjusted the relationship through work values. They further expanded the research on the outcome variables of spiritual leadership.

2.1.2 Goal-Self Concordance

The goal-self concordance model is originated from the goal-setting theory and self-determination theory, which explains that the degree of concordance between goal and self reflects the level of one's motivation. Deci et al. [15] put forward the self-determination theory in the 1980s, a relatively complete theoretical framework has been formed now. The theory holds that individuals can improve their sense of happiness by pursuing the goal reflecting their interests and internal values or meeting the demands of individual psychological development. It indicates that the theory focuses on the intermediary role of psychological needs in the connection between individuals and society, and affirms the irreplaceable role of various social environments in forming individual motivation. Goal Setting Theory perceived that individuals, driven by goal commitment, tend to achieve their goals and improve performance when they believe that goals can be achieved and appreciate the value of goals [16].

Early studies on goal-self concordance focus on the process and results of individual pursuit of goals; it was also assumed that goals reflect individual value beliefs, which verified that the individual pursuit of goals had a positive effect on survival and development of humans [17]. However, further studies revealed that goals could not be generalized. Self-based goals reflecting no individual interests and internal values can hardly be achieved; such goals may not produce more happiness even if they are achieved [7].

According to the updated self-determination theory, the research on goal-self concordance is conducted based on individuals' goal-setting and studies the motivational process and the conative processes of achieving goals that individuals actively generate. In this process, controlled causes and autonomous causes may affect the behavior of pursuing goals. There are three general explanations for goal-pursuit: the goal is exciting and pleasant; the goal is essential to individuals; the goal represents individual values. While the controlled cause is to avoid shame or guilt by pursuing goals. Therefore, Koestner et al. [18] proposed that people are more likely to achieve their goals when they set values, interests and talents consistent with themselves. Besides, the pursuit and realization of self-concordant goals provide personal growth and development experience, which is essential to the sense of well-being. On the contrary, pursuing conflicting goals will lead to time-wasting cases. Kennon et al. [19] explored how individuals "cross obstacles" when choosing goals, and concluded that people could improve their goal choice by considering their motivation before choosing.

Based on the self-determination theory, Wang [20] also studied the relationship among goal-self concordance, psychological empowerment and organizational commitment and perceived that goal-self concordance positively affects organizational commitment, in which psychological empowerment acts as a complete intermediary factor. As stated by Wang et al. [21] the self-concordant goal refers to those goals reflecting one's intrinsic value, meeting their psychological needs and conforming to their internal personality. Achieving a self-concordant goal is conducive to acquiring happiness. It was also verified that factors like self-insight, social insight and personality traits may affect a self-concordant goal.

2.1.3 Sense of Self-Efficacy

Bandura [22], a famed American psychologist, first proposed the concept of self-efficacy. He perceived self-efficacy as people's internal belief, and the degree of confidence in whether one can complete a job, as well as the evaluation of control over behavior and activities. Bandura divided self-efficacy into general self-efficacy and special self-efficacy according to the differences of specific tasks and fields. One may acquire various personal abilities according to different scenarios.

Sherer et al. [23] regarded self-efficacy as a personality trait, namely a relatively stable cognition held by one in various situations. Everyone may have a general sense of self-efficacy, whose level reflects their confidence in completing tasks and overcoming obstacles. Literature also tells that people with high general self-efficacy are inclined to overcome difficulties in altered situations.

In China, Lu et al. [24] combined with the characteristics of managers, perceived that managers' self-efficacy refers to "the evaluation of managers' confidence in whether they can apply their abilities or skills in completing management tasks". Thus, self-efficacy is considered one's confidence and evaluation of behavioral ability rather than one's real strength.

The application of self-efficacy is expanding from the field of pedagogy to organizational management. Yue et al. [8] took the post-90s employees as the research objects, took self-efficacy as the antecedent variable affecting job performance, and explored the intermediary role of work input. The research found that employees with high self-efficacy can be incredibly confident in setting higher work goals and completing tasks. They are more inclined to make more efforts to achieve work goals, which improves job performance. Taking the new generation employees of industrial manufacturing enterprises as the research object, Liang [25] discussed the relationship between self-efficacy, work engagement, and job performance, indicating that improving self-efficacy can promote job performance. Work engagement

plays an intermediary role. Recently, Chen et al. [26] introduced self-efficacy into the impact of professional identity on work, revealing that self-efficacy plays a positive regulatory role. Meanwhile, Liu et al. [27] conducted an empirical study on the relationship between entrepreneurs' experience and effectuation based on social cognitive theory and taking self-efficacy as an intermediary factor. The results indicate that self-efficacy plays a complete intermediary role between entrepreneurial experience and effectuation, and the former improves effectuation, which provides relevant decision-making suggestions for entrepreneurs of start-ups.

2.1.4 Work Engagement

Work engagement reflects the positive characteristics of individuals, which have been greatly influenced by the positive psychology advocated by the academic community in recent years. Positive psychology is proposed to help people, from the perspective of practical, constructive forces involving people's virtue and function, to obtain the necessary elements of happiness, so it stresses the positive forces of individuals.

Kahn [2] first introduced the concept of work engagement; he perceived work engagement as a fine combination of employee's self and their work role. High work engagement may indicate that employees devote themselves to their work and display themselves willingly. He also expounded the individual performance for realizing work engagement from the three perspectives of physiology, cognition and emotion. While Maslach et al. [28] further defined job involvement given the negative factor of job burnout. Job burnout and work engagement were taken as opposite factors in his studies, and the results showed an utterly negative correlation between them. Based on Kahn's definition of work engagement, Rothbard focused on two critical factors in role engagement, namely the attention and absorption in individual roles [29]. It is worth noting that attention refers to the time spent focusing on the role, while focus means the degree of attention paid to the role. Therefore, Rothbard's researches on work engagement merely focus on the dimension of cognition, and there is no in-depth research on the two dimensions of physiology and emotion. Rich et al. [3] believed that work engagement should be defined as a multi-dimensional concept concerning motivation, which plays an overall and comprehensive role in one's work. It connects personal characteristics, organizational factors and work performance. Generally, despite Kahn's innovative consciousness, his research was limited and lacked advanced and standardized measurement methods, which have not been widely used in other fields.

Li et al. [30] studied the influencing factors of work engagement from the matching degree between work environment and work impacts, which revealed that work demand, work resources and organizational commitment are essential to predict work input. Hu et al. [31] combed the development context of work engagement. They concluded that work engagement refers to a lasting and stable psychological and behavioral state formed under the impacts of individual characteristics, work factors and work relations, manifested explicitly in the simultaneity and integrity of positive emotional, cognitive and physical states. Recently, combined with the youth phenomenon of college counselors and based on the self-determination theory, Zhuang [32] perceived that colleges and universities should cultivate service-oriented leaders, improve the psychological security and organizational identity of the new generation of counselors, and explores the strategies to improve the work investment of the new generation of employees, all of which improve the work engagement. Similarly, Zhao et al. [33] took the post-90s employees as the research object to explore the relationship between workplace pleasure, positive emotion and work engagement. The research results indicate that workplace pleasure promotes work engagement, in which positive emotion plays an intermediary role. This study broadens the research on the antecedent variables of work engagement.

2.2 Research Hypothesis and Theoretical Model

2.2.1 Hypothesis of the Impact of Spiritual Leadership on Work Engagement

Fry [1] elaborated on spiritual leadership and divided employee motivation into three dimensions: vision, faith and altruistic love. He perceived that spiritual leadership forms a series of beneficial attitudes

and behaviors by internally motivating itself and employees to satisfy the spiritual demands of enterprise members. It can be hereby inferred that spiritual leadership may promote the positive trait of employees' work engagement.

First, from the perspective of vision, clear goals promote individuals to form a positive attitude and intrinsic motivation. Spiritual leadership may construct a clear and comprehensible vision; it conveys positive work concepts to employees via words and demands consistent with the organizational vision, thereby promoting employees' work engagement by providing organization members with a sense of mission and existence.

Secondly, concerning faith, spiritual leaders are confident in themselves, organizations and employees, which provides employees with working motivations through reasonable incentives.

Third, from the perspective of altruistic love, the selfless care and spiritual care of leaders for employees meet the psychological needs of the latter, which provides employees a sense of respect and trust and promotes employee's work engagement.

More and more research has been done on the relationship between spiritual leadership and employees' work-related behavior in recent years. Deng [4] verified that spiritual leadership positively impacted work engagement and psychological capital and affirmed the positive regulatory role of self-monitoring. Peng [5] analyzed the impact of spiritual leadership on work engagement from the three perspectives of spiritual leadership, and believed that spiritual leadership could condense spiritual strength and promote the development of enterprises. Similarly, Zhang et al. [6] studied the impact of spiritual leadership on work engagement based on cognitive and emotional factors through a two-stage questionnaire investigation, concluding that spiritual leadership has a significant positive impact on work engagement.

The following hypothesis is proposed based on the cases mentioned above:

H1: spiritual leadership has a positive impact on employees' work engagement.

2.2.2 Hypothesis of the Mediating Role of Goal-Self Concordance

Goal-self concordance is considered a part of self-integration, which originates from the needs of one's internal interest and self-identity. In setting goals and pursuing goals, the initiative of personal growth and integration means a lot. Highly consistent goal-self concordance may predict positive attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, internal motivation is essential for achieving goal-self concordance.

Liu et al. discussed the impact of transformational college leadership on teachers' organizational commitment in combination with the current situation of college education, and verified the intermediary role of goal-self concordance and self-efficacy. The results reveal that the transformational is beneficial in promoting employees to achieve goal-self concordance [34]. It is hereby speculated that positive leadership promote goal-self concordance. Spiritual leaders focus on the spiritual needs and value feelings of their subordinates and pursue the coordinated development of their interests and organizational interests. The mechanism provides employees with a strong sense of trust and organizational identity, and satisfies employees' interests and self-identity.

Base on the researches of the goal-self concordance model, Sheldon et al. [35] found that more autonomous motivation dominates lead to a higher degree of goal-self concordance. When pursuing goals, people may acquire more positive emotions and achieve goals more quickly. When it comes to day-to-day work, goal-self concordance reflects the degree of integration between employees' work goals and self [36]. High goal-self concordance represents employees' fine recognition of their job, and transforms their inner satisfaction into positive work behavior. Concerning the relationship between core self-evaluation and employees' work engagement, Wei took goal-self concordance as an intermediary variable, which concluded that goal-self concordance improves employees' job satisfaction and creates a positive psychological environment positively affecting employees' work engagement [37].

The following hypotheses are proposed based on the cases mentioned above:

H2: spiritual leadership has a positive impact on goal-self concordance.

H3: goal-self concordance has a positive impact on employees' work engagement.

H4: goal-self concordance plays an intermediary role between spiritual leadership and employees' work engagement.

2.2.3 Hypothesis of the Impact of Self-Efficacy on Work Engagement

In recent years, researches on and self-efficacy have been deepening, and the theory of self-efficacy has been widely used in education, medical treatment, human resources, etc. Self-efficacy refers to one's subjective attitude towards whether he or she can complete a thing, which can be essentially summarized as: one's confidence in finishing a task by their behavior. Besides, self-efficacy is considered a key factor to stimulate people's motivation and behavior by perceiving the external environment.

Jiang et al. [38] studied the impact mechanism of authentic leadership on employees' well-being based on sociological theory and attachment theory, which revealed that self-efficacy serves as a significant intermediary factor. The results also indicate that positive leadership may improve employees' self-efficacy, cultivate employees' positive attitudes, and promote their well-being. Wang et al. [39] introduced innovative self-efficacy as an intermediary variable in the study of the impact of inclusive leadership on employees' innovative behavior, discovering that creative self-efficacy positively regulates the relationship between employees' trust and innovative behavior. Concerning the current research outcomes, self-efficacy positively mediates the impact of positive leadership on employees' behavior.

Sense of self-efficacy serves as one of the main factors affecting work engagement. With the increasing pressure confronting the development of enterprise, employees are becoming the core potential of the enterprise, leading to that individual factor that may significantly affect employees' work engagement. Individual factors refer to employees' perception and motivation, then their perception of ability may significantly affect work engagement [40]. While Zhang [41] discussed the impact mechanism of tour guides' work engagement by taking self-efficacy as an intermediary factor in the influence of personality traits on work engagement, which verified that self-efficacy had a significant positive predictive effect on work engagement.

The following hypotheses are proposed based on the cases mentioned above:

H5: spiritual leadership positively affects self-efficacy.

H6: self-efficacy positively affects employees' work engagement.

H7: self-efficacy intermediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and employees' work engagement.

2.2.4 Establishment of Theoretical Model

As mentioned above, the self-concordant goal originates from autonomous motivation and personal choice and recognition. When people pursue goals accords with internal values or interests, they tend to acquire a high degree of goal-self concordance. Employees may also gain more sense of well-being when achieving goal-self concordance, to improve work engagement. While spiritual leaders can provide more care and encouragement to employees in daily work to meet their spiritual demands. When the leaders convey the mission and vision to employees, the latter may obtain a sense of belonging and achievement based on organizational members' identity, promote the formation of positive psychological values, stimulate autonomous motivation, and then affect employees' work engagement.

Meanwhile, spiritual leadership can improve the external environment perceived by employees, which provides the latter with more positive hints to improve self-efficacy. As told in previous literature, self-efficacy positively mediates the impact of positive leadership on employees' behavior. Therefore, it is

hereby assumed that self-efficacy assists employees in achieving their work targets and improve work engagement.

The theoretical model is hereby established as Fig. 1 shows:

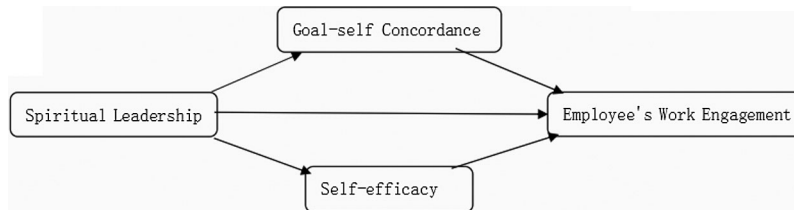


Figure 1: Theoretical model

3 Empirical Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

3.1 Survey Procedures and Samples

The formal investigation was conducted from February 20, 2021 to March 26, 2021. To ensure the preciseness, universality and authenticity of the data, online questionnaires were collected from employees in 12 China's major cities including Shanghai, Nanjing, Beijing, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Qingdao, Zhengzhou, etc., via students, teachers, relatives and other channels, covering fields of finance, hospitals, real estate, colleges. A total of 300 questionnaires are collected in this survey, of which 212 are valid (excluding the questionnaires with obvious overlapped same options), the overall effective rate reached 70.67%. The sample of this survey is illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1: Description of samples

	Individual employee characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Nature of industry	Manufacture	47	22.2
	Technology	58	27.4
	Research and development	41	19.3
	The others	66	31.1
Level of education	High school or below	32	15.1
	Associate degree	68	32.1
	Bachelor degree	82	38.7
	Master degree or above	30	14.2
Year of birth	1969 and before	13	6.1
	1970–1979	34	16.0
	1980–1989	70	33.0
	1990 and beyond	95	44.8
Working seniority	Less Than 1 Year	30	14.2
	1–2 Year	25	11.8
	2–5 Year	60	28.3
	5–10 Year	74	34.9
	Over 10 Years	23	10.8

(Continued)

	Individual employee characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Position	Ordinary member	102	48.1
	The mainstay of scientific research and technology	75	35.4
	Team leader	35	16.5
Gender	Male	108	50.9
	Female	104	49.1

Note: N = 212.

3.2 Scale

Most of the scales adopted in this paper have been extensively applied and verified in the corresponding fields to ensure preciseness, which presents high reliability and validity. The 5-point scoring method was adopted in this paper: 1 refers to “completely inconsistent,” 2 refers to “relatively consistent,” 3 refers to “generally consistent,” 4 refers to “inconsistent,” and 5 refers to “fully consistent.”

The spiritual leadership scale adopts the three-dimensional scale developed by Fry [1], divided into three dimensions of vision, faith, and altruistic love, with 14 items. Schwarzer et al. [42] scale is introduced to measure self-efficacy, which consists of one dimension and a total of 10 items. Concerning the factor of work engagement, the simplified scale revised by Schaufeli et al. [43] is adopted, which includes three dimensions of vitality, dedication and concentration, with a total of 9 items. In the goal-self concordance model, the author adopts the evaluation method of the PAC unit in the research of motivational psychology. In this method, the subjects are required to write down 5 goals they are pursuing or going to pursue and then classify the degree of motivation internalization according to the self-determination theory, namely extrinsic regulation, intrinsic regulation, identity regulation and concordance regulation. A item is designed for each category as follows: “I pursue this goal because of the pressure of others or the environment,” “I pursue this goal because I will feel anxiety, shame and guilt if I don’t do so,” “I pursue this goal because it is consistent with my values,” “I pursue this goal because it comes from my interests, pursuing it makes me happy.”

3.3 Reliability Analysis and Validity Analysis

SPSS22.0 software is applied in this study to analyze the reliability of each variable, and the Alpha coefficient is introduced to test the reliability of each scale. When Alpha is greater than 0.7, it indicates that the internal consistency level of the questionnaire is relatively credible. Based on this standard, the Alpha coefficients of the four scales in this study are all measured above 0.8, which indicates a high internal consistency and reliability of the scales in this paper. The data is illustrated in Table 2:

Table 2: Reliability analysis of the scale

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha value
Goal-self concordance	12	0.833
Spiritual leadership	14	0.878
Employees’ work engagement	9	0.822
Self-efficacy	10	0.840

Spss22.0 software is applied to analyze the aggregate validity of four variables, including spiritual leadership, sense of self-efficacy, self-efficacy and employee's work engagement. Previous studies show that data is available for factor analysis when the KMO value is no less than 0.7. Meanwhile, a significant result of Bartlett's spherical test indicates that there are common factors among the sample items. As shown in Table 3. The KMO values of the four scales are above 0.8, and the results of Bartlett's spherical test are also significant, namely the value of χ^2 is large, and the P values are close to 0, indicating a strong correlation between variables and an excellent aggregation validity, which lays a comprehensive foundation for the factor analysis.

Table 3: Results of KMO and Bartlett testing

Variables	KMO value	Approximate χ^2 value	df	Significance
Spiritual leadership	0.916	878.755	91	0.000
Goal-self concordance	0.880	597.925	66	0.000
Self-efficacy	0.887	551.734	45	0.000
Employee's work engagement	0.880	453.890	36	0.000

Concerning the dimensional distinction between spiritual leadership and work engagement scale, AMOS22.0 is hereby introduced in this paper to conduct confirmatory factor analysis to test the internal structural validity of the two scales. As illustrated in Table 4, all indicators fall in the scope of adaptation criteria, and the internal structural validity of the two scales is tested excellent.

Table 4: Internal fit index of spiritual leadership scale and work engagement scale

Variables	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	TLI
Spiritual leadership	1.288	0.032	0.973	0.974	0.962
Employee's work engagement	1.249	0.030	0.986	0.986	0.973
Basis for evaluation	<3.000	<0.08	>0.900	>0.900	>0.900

Note: χ^2/df refers to the ratio of Chi-square value to degrees of freedom, RMSEA refers to the mean square root of the approximation error, CFI refers to the comparative fit index, IFI refers to the incremental fit index, and TLI refers to the Tucker-Lewis index in the comparative fit index.

AMOS22.0 software is used to conduct confirmatory factor analysis on the whole questionnaire to test the discriminant validity further, as illustrated in Table 5, the four-factor model serves as the ideal one among the four validation models ($\chi^2/df=1.324$, RMSEA = 0.034, CFI = 0.955, IFI = 0.956, TLI = 0.947), which indicates an acceptable discriminant validity between spiritual leadership, goal-self concordance, sense of self-efficacy and employees' work engagement.

Table 5: Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Models	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	IFI	TLI
Four factor model: SL; GS; SE; WE	1.324	0.034	0.955	0.956	0.947
Three-factor model: SL+GS; SE; WE	1.344	0.035	0.952	0.953	0.944
Double factor model: SL+GS+SE; WE	2.341	0.137	0.847	0.852	0.832
Single factor model: SL+GS+SE+WE	3.345	0.149	0.751	0.731	0.697

Note: SL refers to spiritual leadership, GS refers to goal-self concordance, SE refers to the sense of self-efficacy, WE refer to work engagement.

3.4 Correlation Analysis

Multiple collinearity analysis is preferentially considered in this study. The author judges whether there is collinearity problem between variables via two indicators: variance expansion factor and tolerance. The results indicate that VIF of the two indicators is less than 4, tolerance is greater than 0.1, no serious collinearity problem is detected.

Then, the mean value, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of the research variables are calculated and analyzed by SPSS22.0. Hypotheses H1, H2 and H5 are hereby verified. As shown in Table 6, spiritual leadership is significantly positively correlated with employees' work engagement ($r=0.823$, $p < 0.01$), goal-self concordance ($r=0.823$, $p < 0.01$) and sense of self-efficacy ($r=0.823$, $p < 0.01$). There is also a significant positive relationship between goal-self concordance and employee's work engagement ($r=0.796$, $p < 0.01$), H3 is verified. Significant positive relationship can also be seen between sense of self-efficacy and employees' work engagement ($r=0.809$, $p < 0.01$), H6 is verified. All of these results lay a good foundation for the hypothesis-testing.

Table 6: Mean value, standard deviation and correlation coefficient

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Spiritual leadership	Goal-self concordance	Self-efficacy	Employee's work engagement
Spiritual leadership	3.5280	0.77835				
Goal-self concordance	3.5550	0.73896	0.823**			
Self-efficacy	3.5009	0.79423	0.839**	0.802**		
Employee's work engagement	3.5241	0.81287	0.844**	0.796**	0.809**	

Note: *** indicates $p < 0.001$, ** indicates $p < 0.01$, and diagonal brackets indicate the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of each variable.

3.5 Mediating Effect Test

The testing method proposed by Baron et al. [44] is introduced in this paper to test whether goal-self concordance and self-efficacy have mediating effects in the impact of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement. Using SPSS22.0, spiritual leadership is set as the independent variable and employee's work engagement as the dependent variable. Based on controlling the variables like nature of the industry, education level and birth year, et al., the author make a linear regression analysis on the variables of spiritual leadership, goal-self concordance, self-efficacy and employee's work engagement and then verified the hypotheses.

Firstly, the relationship between independent and dependent variables is verified, which indicates that spiritual leadership has a significant positive impact on employees' work engagement ($\beta = 0.845$, $p < 0.001$), H1 is verified.

Secondly, the relationship between independent and mediating variables is tested: spiritual leadership has a significant positive impact on goal-self concordance ($\beta = 0.817$, $p < 0.001$), H2 is verified. Spiritual leadership has a significant positive impact on self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.833$, $p < 0.001$), H5 is verified.

Thirdly, when adding spiritual leadership and goal-self concordance into the same model, the impact of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement is weakened (M7: $\beta = 0.576$, $p < 0.001$), that is, goal-self concordance plays a partial intermediary role between spiritual leadership and employee's work engagement, H4 is hereby tested. Similarly, when spiritual leadership and self-efficacy are introduced into the model at the same time, the impact of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement is

weakened (M8: $\beta = 0.538, p < 0.001$), that is, self-efficacy played a partial mediating role in the influence of spiritual leadership on employee's work engagement, and H7 is tested.

Finally, the variables of goal-self concordance and self-efficacy are introduced into the impact model of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement, to test the role of goal-self concordance and self-efficacy as intermediary variables in the impact path of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement. See Table 7 for details.

Table 7: Hypothesis test of the variables

Variables	Goal-self concordance		Self-efficacy		Employee's work engagement				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9
Nature of industry	0.069	0.036	0.095	0.061	-0.037	-0.071	-0.083	-0.094	-0.097
Level of education	0.031	0.027	0.024	0.019	-0.054	-0.058	-0.067	-0.065	-0.070
Birth of year	-0.118	-0.055	-0.096	-0.031	-0.108	-0.042	-0.024	-0.031	-0.020
Working seniority	-0.007	-0.006	0.009	0.010	0.059	0.060	0.062	0.057	0.059
Position	0.065	0.056	0.099	0.089	-0.052	-0.061	-0.079	-0.094	-0.100
Gender	0.024	0.045	0.026	0.048	0.036	0.058	0.043	0.040	0.033
Spiritual leadership		0.817***		0.833***		0.845***	0.576***	0.538***	0.413***
Goal-self concordance							0.329***		0.239***
Self-efficacy								0.369***	0.285***
R ²	0.026	0.689	0.032	0.709	0.020	0.728	0.761	0.757	0.872
ΔR^2		0.662		0.688		0.708	0.034	0.038	0.038
F	0.930	64.624	1.115	74.619	0.701	77.920	81.013	83.049	80.371

Note: *** represents $p < 0.001$.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Results

This paper studies the impact of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement, and explores the mediating role of goal-self concordance and self-efficacy in this influencing path. Following conclusions are made according to the empirical analysis of 212 questionnaire data: 1. Spiritual leadership significantly promotes employees' work engagement; 2. Spiritual leadership significantly promotes goal-self concordance and self-efficacy; 3. Goal-self concordance and self-efficacy significantly promote employees' work engagement; 4. Goal-self concordance and self-efficacy play a partial intermediary role in the impact path of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement.

4.2 Meaning

4.2.1 Theoretical Meaning

Firstly, the author extends the research on the relationship between spiritual leadership and employees' work engagement. Previous literature shows that there are various antecedent variables affecting employees' work engagement, such as work characteristics, active personality, goal-self concordance, various leadership styles, and so on. This paper combines theory with practical research to better focus on the impact of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement, and enrich the research on the antecedent variables of work engagement.

Secondly, this study enriches the researches on the mediating factors between spiritual leadership and work engagement. Under the same impacts of spiritual leadership and upper guidance, goal-self concordance and self-efficacy are the intermediary variables in the path of spiritual leadership's impact on employee's work engagement. The self-concordant goal originates from independent motivation and the personal interest and value identification of the selected goal. While self-efficacy is defined as people's subjective evaluation of their ability.

4.2.2 Practical Meaning

First, from the perspective of employees, this study may assist employees in adjusting their negative emotions in the work process, which meets their higher spiritual needs and realizes personal value. With the development of living conditions, employees desire to respect and realize their needs rather than be confused by low-level needs. Meanwhile, the spiritual leaders may create a long-term and stable value within the enterprise by extending their leadership status and qualification, which further affects the generation of employees' self-concordant goals.

Second, from the perspective of the enterprises, the conclusion of this paper may be applied to optimize the leadership style from the manager level, improve the work engagement of employees, and contribute to the improvement of enterprise performance. Spiritual leadership positively guides employees in improving self-efficiency and generating self-concordant goals, while employees' realization of goal-self concordance and improvement of self-efficacy also positively affects work engagement. The performance and market competitiveness of the enterprise will also be improved accordingly with the promotion of work engagement. Spiritual leadership motivates employees from various aspects, improves their loyalty, enhances their initiative to serve the organization and customers, and enhances the organization's competitiveness.

5 Discussion

5.1 Enlightenment of This Study

- (1) As the new normal of development in the international economy, enterprises' internal and external environment is constantly changing. Enterprises must realize the significance of spiritual leadership style in the workplace and pay more attention to the spiritual needs of employees if they intend to retain talents and promote employee' work engagement in the fierce market competition. Firstly, managers should establish clear and reasonable goals to motivate subordinates based on the organization's vision. Secondly, a positive image should be established to maintain the firm belief in the vision and development of the enterprise and guide the employees to promote work engagement with their persistence and enthusiasm. Finally, managers should timely provide employees spiritual support and care, thus promoting a sense of belonging and achievement and increasing employees' sense of identity with the organization.
- (2) Leaders may pay more attention to improving employees' self-efficacy and adopt various incentive methods for those with differed self-efficacy. Considering that self-efficacy positively affects the impact of spiritual leadership on employees' work engagement, leaders may focus on guiding

employees with low self-efficacy and provide them with spiritual encouragement and work support, and extend the function of spiritual leadership.

- (3) It is essential to create an excellent corporate culture and emphasize the value of employees, given that employees have increasingly become an indispensable part of the core competitiveness with the continuous progress of modern society. In the operation and management of the company, leaders may also care about the career growth of employees, which means establishing a sound communication mechanism to maintain long-term communication with employees and enhancing the relationship between superiors and subordinates.

5.2 Limitations and Prospects

- (1) Considering that most of the research samples are obtained based on the availability principle, the limited quantity of collected samples may lead to insufficient diversity of samples and biased survey coverage. Follow-up researches are required to expand the quantity and source range of samples to improve the diversity and representativeness of samples. Future studies may also expand the regional and industrial coverage of the sample, conduct detailed surveys for various types of employees, increase the sample capacity and avoid homologous data.
- (2) The questionnaires are filled in by the employees and leaders of the enterprise according to their subjective judgment. More methods for investigation are required in the future to make up for the lacking of objectivity. An in-depth review and specific case analysis may be adopted to improve the objectivity of the research and lay the foundation for the combination of theory and practice.
- (3) This paper found that the theory of goal-self concordance provides a meaningful path to approach positive motivation, as well as to understand complex humanistic concepts, such as “authenticity” and “real self.” It is worth exploring future research and practice to understand the profound meaning of goal-self concordance and continue to study the variables associated with goal-self concordance.

Acknowledgement: The authors would like to thank the Editor for his hard work in processing this article. Helpful comments from the anonymous reviewers are greatly appreciated.

Funding Statement: Youth Program of National Natural Science Foundation of China (No. 71702068).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest to report regarding the present study.

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