



## THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP, COMMUNICATION, AND SPIRITUALITY ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE (CASE STUDY AT SKG INDONESIA KARATE SCHOOL)

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### Abstract

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The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of leadership, communication, and spirituality variables on organizational performance. This study uses a qualitative approach by conducting in-depth interviews with five respondents. The five respondents are active karate practitioners who hold a black belt. The results of this study prove that the variables of leadership, communication, and spirituality have a significant influence on organizational performance. The role of the communication variable as a common moderator of the relationship between leadership and spirituality variables on performance and the spirituality variable as a partial moderator of the relationship between communication and leadership variables on performance.

### Keywords:

Leadership, Communication, Spirituality Performance

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## INTRODUCTION

Improving organizational performance is the main goal for companies in facing increasingly tight business competition. One of the factors that can affect organizational performance is communication, spirituality, and leadership (Nguyen et al., 2020; Fitri et al., 2020; Alshehhi et al., 2021). Effective communication can strengthen relationships between organization members, increase employee engagement, and improve work productivity (Zhang et al., 2019). Meanwhile, spirituality can help employees find meaning in their work, cope with stress, increase motivation, and improve psychological well-being (Fauzi et al., 2021).

Leadership has a significant influence on organizational performance. However, the type of leadership used and organizational culture also play an important role in influencing organizational performance. Therefore, selecting the right type of leadership and creating a good organizational culture are crucial for improving organizational performance (Alavian et al., 2020; Iqbal et al., 2019).

Indonesia, as a country with diverse cultures, religions, and beliefs, has its own uniqueness in communication patterns and spiritual values. However, research on the influence of communication and spirituality on organizational performance in Indonesia is still limited. Therefore, research is needed to describe how communication and spirituality affect organizational performance in Indonesia.

In this context, this study aims to examine the influence of communication, spirituality, and leadership on organizational performance in the Karate SKG Indonesia Association. This research is expected to provide a clearer picture of the factors that influence organizational performance, especially in the Karate SKG Indonesia Association, and to help other organizations or companies improve their organizational performance.

SKG Indonesia is a karate association in Indonesia that was officially established on January 31, 2020. SKG Indonesia is a representative of Shotokan Karate Germany (SKG) in Indonesia. SKG is currently present in 37 countries worldwide. The founder and president of SKG Indonesia is Sensei Hendratmoko.

Performance is the end result of activities and tasks performed by individuals or groups in achieving specific goals (Karami et al., 2022). Performance is also defined as an individual's achievement in carrying out work tasks that are in line with the organization's quality, productivity, and efficiency standards (Al-Adwan et al., 2021).

Djagbey et al. (2020), in a journal titled "Factors Influencing Employee Performance: The Role of Organization's Culture and Job Satisfaction," revealed that performance is an individual's ability to complete tasks well, produce quality output, and contribute to achieving organizational goals. Meanwhile, Abu-Tayeh et al. (2018) define performance as the level of employee

achievement in carrying out their tasks and responsibilities in the workplace, which reflects productivity, work quality, and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals.

Gunawan et al. (2021) in the journal "The Effect of Ethical Leadership on Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Organizational Culture and Organizational Commitment" revealed that performance is the result of an individual's work in fulfilling their tasks and responsibilities in the workplace, which reflects effectiveness, efficiency, quality, and productivity in achieving organizational goals. Meanwhile, Khan et al. (2019) stated that performance is the level of employee achievement in carrying out their tasks and responsibilities in the workplace, which reflects productivity, work quality, and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals.

It can be concluded that the definitions of performance in these journals have similarities, which include the level of employee achievement in carrying out their tasks and responsibilities in the workplace, reflecting productivity, work quality, and effectiveness in achieving organizational goals. However, there are several journals that focus more on productivity aspects, while others emphasize effectiveness aspects.

Transformational leadership is defined as the process in which a leader significantly influences their subordinates to achieve common goals and builds positive relationships among them (Al-Swidi, et al, 2020). Transformational leadership is defined as the ability of a leader to motivate their subordinates and encourage them to achieve common goals, build good relationships, and create a creative and innovative work environment (Alshehhi, et al, 2021).

Authentic leadership is the ability of a leader to be honest, have integrity, be consistent, and transparent in their interactions with subordinates, thereby helping to create a positive work environment and contribute to organizational performance (Han, et al, 2021). Leadership is defined as the ability of a leader to influence and guide their subordinates to achieve organizational goals and create a good and productive work environment (Madhani, et al, 2021).

Transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on SME organizational performance (Alshehhi, et al, 2021). In other studies, authentic leadership is positively and significantly related to organizational performance, measured by various indicators such as financial performance, non-financial performance, and customer satisfaction (Han, et al, 2021).

Transformational and transactional leadership have a positive effect on employee engagement and organizational performance (Madhani, et al, 2021). Meanwhile, ethical leadership has a positive and significant relationship with organizational performance. In addition, this study also shows that the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance is influenced by several factors, such as the type of organizational performance measurement, the type of ethical leadership, and the organizational context (Liu, et al, 2021).

Communication is the process of exchanging messages or information that occurs between one individual or group and another individual or group through different media (Diah, 2021). In another study, communication is a symbolic interaction process involving the delivery of messages between individuals or groups in a particular context (Oktarina, et al, 2021).

Communication is a process or method of interaction between individuals or groups through various media and channels that allow for the exchange of messages or information (Mutiarawati, et al, 2021). (Osamwonyi, et al, 2021), in their research, revealed a significant relationship between organizational communication and organizational performance in the Nigerian banking industry. Organizational communication has a significant positive effect on organizational performance in both public and private universities in Pakistan (Shaukat, et al, 2021).

Meanwhile, there is a positive relationship between communication and knowledge sharing with organizational performance in SMEs in Iran (Rajabi, et al, 2021). There is also a positive relationship between organizational communication and organizational performance, and factors such as trust, participation, and collaboration are mediators in this relationship (Ni, et al, 2021). Meanwhile, (Mkhize, et al, 2021) revealed that there is a positive relationship between organizational communication and employee performance, and employee engagement moderates this relationship.

Spirituality can be defined as an individual's understanding of the meaning of life and their connection to transcendent powers, such as God or the power of the universe (Hill, et al, 2008; Emmons, et al, 2013; Underwood, et al, 2002). Spirituality is a factor that affects job satisfaction through the mediation of job meaning and service (Judhiawati, et al, 2021; Kethineni, et al, 2021).

Spirituality has a positive effect on employee job performance, especially in terms of motivation, engagement, and creativity. However, different results were obtained from studies that focused on different dimensions of spirituality (Arora et al., 2021). Other studies have revealed that spirituality has a positive effect on employee performance, particularly in terms of engagement, commitment, and job quality. Additionally, this research also found that perception of organizational policies that support spirituality also affects employee performance (Daramola et al., 2021).

Spirituality has a positive influence on employee performance, especially in terms of motivation, job satisfaction, and engagement. However, different results are obtained from studies that consider different dimensions of spirituality (Goyan, et al, 2021). Spiritual leadership has a positive impact on employee performance through the mediation of psychological capital such as self-efficacy, optimism, and resilience. This indicates that spiritual leadership can enhance

the psychological capacity of employees and, in turn, improve their performance (Shahzad, et al, 2021).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted qualitatively. Qualitative research is one type of research that aims to understand a phenomenon from a subjective point of view that occurs in real life. This study focuses on understanding in obtaining data taken directly from the field through observation, interviews, or participatory observation techniques.

The qualitative research approach used in this study is interpretive. This approach requires the researcher to understand the observed phenomenon from the participant's perspective and the subjective meaning given by them. This is done by considering the context, culture, and social environment related to the phenomenon under study.

The data collection techniques used in this study are in-depth interviews and participatory observation. Interviews were conducted to obtain an understanding of the participants' views on the phenomenon under study. Participatory observation is used to understand how participants interact in situations related to the phenomenon under study.

The data analysis technique used in this study is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used to understand and organize data based on specific themes or topics that emerge from interviews and participatory observation (Creswell, 2014). The population in this study is the Chief Instructors of Dojos in the SKG Indonesia Karate Association. The sample was taken using purposive sampling, consisting of 5 Dojo Chiefs selected based on specific criteria that are relevant to the research objectives.

The data collection tool used in this study is an interview guide and observation sheet. The interview guide is used to guide the researcher in conducting interviews with the participants. The researcher schedules a time and place to conduct interviews and participatory observations with the selected participants. Before conducting interviews and observations, the researcher provides information about the research objectives and asks for the participants' consent to become research subjects. After that, the researcher conducts interviews and observations according to the prepared interview guide and observation sheet.

Data analysis is conducted using thematic analysis techniques. After the data collection is completed, the researcher transcribes the interviews and studies the data obtained from the participatory observation. Then, the researcher starts analyzing the data by identifying themes or topics that emerge from the data. The data is then organized based on these themes or topics. Data analysis is conducted continuously until the themes or topics that emerge from the data are clearly identified.

Validity and reliability in qualitative research can be ensured by triangulating data and providing reflective notes. Triangulation of data is done by comparing data obtained from different data collection techniques, such as interviews and participatory observation (Patton, 2015). In qualitative research, researchers must be able to summarize research findings clearly and succinctly. In addition, researchers should also consider the practical and theoretical implications of research findings, and also provide recommendations for future research. Finally, researchers can add final notes as conclusions and reflections on their research experience.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The leadership at SKG is considered very good, especially in providing motivation, guidance, and advice to all karatekas. Values related to personality, honesty, courtesy, and responsibility, as contained in the Karate Oath, are always instilled in every training activity. Character development is the top priority of the training program run by SKG Indonesia. The SKG management believes that with good student character, students will achieve good results in karate as well as other fields, both in the school environment and in the workplace for those who are already employed or have their own businesses. This was also expressed by Senpai Santi, who said:

"The SKG leader always provides motivation, guidance, and advice to all participants in achieving their goals. The SKG leader is also very honest, transparent, and consistent in every action. The SKG leader has excellent leadership skills."

Leadership by example is highly emphasized at SKG. Discipline is also highly instilled and directly exemplified by Sensei Hendi as the leader at SKG. Consistency in actions and maintaining good relationships with all parties is also seen in the leadership at SKG. "Lead by example" is the motto instilled for karate students who have already earned their black belts. The SKG management believes that by providing a good example, it will be easier for the kohai or younger students to accept, absorb, and internalize it. Senpai Emmil expressed it as follows:

"The President of SKG Indonesia, Sensei Hendi, always sets an example by arriving and finishing on time because he does not want to inconvenience others, especially those who will use the venue next. He is also consistent in his words and actions. In addition, he is both a coach and a parent to us, and we have learned many lessons from his constructive ideas and suggestions."

Motivation in the form of mentoring and coaching has a significant impact on all students. Motivation in the form of mentoring and coaching is an integral part of every activity, including during training sessions. Motivation is the lifeblood of the organization. The SKG management strongly believes that humans need motivation throughout their lives because the mental

condition of humans will never be stable throughout their lives. Motivational speeches are mainly given during training, both in the middle and at the end of training sessions. In terms of leadership, which always sets an example and motivates, Senpai Emir also expressed that:

"The SKG leader in Indonesia always appears by providing examples and challenges for the karatekas, is consistent in every action, and always provides motivation on every occasion."

Good leadership is one that can provide a positive influence on all members to achieve organizational goals (Al-Swidi, et al., 2020). Good leadership will provide clear direction, lead by example, and build positive communication within the organization. Good leadership will also always provide motivation, whether in the form of training, mentoring, or coaching to its members.

Spirit, example, motivation, discipline, honesty, courtesy, and self-control are highly valued at SKG. These values are reflected in the behavior of the SKG management. Any violation of these values will result in proportional educational sanctions for all members without exception. For example, when a training participant arrives late, the sanction will be in the form of push-ups. It is not the number of push-ups that is emphasized, but rather the commitment and sense of shame.

The leadership variable plays an important role as a variable that can moderate the influence of communication and spirituality on performance. This is expressed by Senpai Ricky, Senpai Erni, and Senpai Emir. Since SKG is a newly established organization, the leadership factor plays an important role in the development and performance of the organization. Good communication and spirituality may exist, but if they are not supported by effective leadership, they will not be effective. To improve organizational performance, leading by example is the key to success in the message contained in the context of communication and spirituality.

Communication has a significant influence on organizational performance (Shaukat, et al, 2021). Communication plays an important role in organizational performance. Effective and efficient communication, both internally and externally, can improve organizational performance. As a new organization, SKG strives to continuously improve its communication activities, especially by utilizing social media such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Maps. The communication currently being done by SKG is considered effective. This is revealed by Senpai Santi and Senpai Muchtar who stated that:

"Internal and external communication done by SKG is good. Internal communication through the use of WhatsApp groups has been going well where important information, updates, and directions can be conveyed through this WhatsApp group media." Meanwhile, according to Senpai Ricky: "The internal communication in SKG is not yet

optimal as expected. However, this activity is largely influenced by the level of busyness of each participant. External communication to the public is still dependent on social media and it seems that it has not been maximized yet."

Senpai Emmil also stated:

"Regarding internal communication, its effectiveness can still be improved in any way possible to improve organizational performance. External communication is already quite effective. The communication channels used for both internal and external communication are good, but they can still be improved through other channels."

Communication has a positive effect on organizational performance. Communication can also increase members' trust in their leaders and increase organizational participation (Ni, et al, 2021). The importance of internal and external communication is a concern for SKG karateka, as reflected in the comments of black belt holders such as Senpai Muchtar, Senpai Ricky, and Senpai Emmil. They all agree that internal and external communication still needs to be improved to optimize organizational performance.

SKG Indonesia still needs to improve its external communication by increasing it through other communication channels. In addition, SKG Indonesia also needs to appoint someone responsible for external communication. This needs to be done to overcome the busyness of SKG personnel. By appointing a person responsible for external communication, it is hoped that external communication can be carried out more consistently. The presence of a person responsible for external communication is expected to produce more attractive and effective communication content.

Communication is a variable that has a significant influence on organizational performance, as stated by Senpai Muchtar:

"The communication variable because SKG Indonesia is still new. Therefore, constructive input from members (suggestions or ideas) must be communicated together." Senpai Emmil also stated: "Communication will dominate if both internal and external communication can run smoothly."

Good communication will moderate the relationship between leadership and spirituality variables in influencing performance variables. Good leadership without good communication will not result in optimal performance. Similarly, aspects of spirituality without being communicated properly also have the potential to cause misunderstandings. Misunderstandings can lead to potential conflicts in the organization (Hendratmoko, et al, 2022).

SKG has a unique training concept compared to other karate schools. This uniqueness is a special attraction, especially for parents. SKG, the students are not only taught about karate martial arts, but also emphasized on spiritual aspects such as personality, honesty, courtesy,



fighting spirit, and other spiritual aspects. SKG also pays great attention to worship time for learners, especially during prayer time as some training schedules coincide with prayer time. The training is paused briefly to provide an opportunity for Muslim learners to perform prayers.

Life lessons are also instilled in the learners because the management of SKG realizes that karate is not the ultimate goal for learners but a vehicle for them to achieve their respective aspirations. This is as stated by Senpai Emmil:

The life lessons taught in every training are good enough. SKG Indonesia is highly concerned about all learners and anyone within it to always uphold the values of honesty. SKG Indonesia pays great attention to discipline, and this is reflected in the duration of training which is always on time. Courtesy is also an important point in shaping the character of all learners. The perseverance taught in every training will be very noticeable, and it is reflected in all parties involved in the training.

The same is also conveyed by Senpai Santi: It's good to teach children to live well and socialize with others. Teaching children to be honest is excellent. Teaching children discipline is also excellent because it is useful until they become adults. Teaching children courtesy is excellent. Good and excellent because perseverance is necessary like hard work that will not betray the results.

The karate oath at SKG has a different order compared to the karate oath in other karate schools. The karate oath consists of five points, where SKG places points 1-4 on personality aspects, only after that point, the fifth point speaks about achievements. The management of SKG believes that if the learners have a noble personality and character, then hopefully the achievements can be reached. The management of SKG also believes that achieving achievements with a noble personality and character will not only be in the field of karate but also in other fields according to the learners' respective professions.

The management of SKG believes that the main obstacle for young generations, especially generations Y and Z, is the issue of mentality. They are generations born where information technology develops so rapidly. This will certainly affect their attitudes and behaviors. The karate oath is not only memorized but also internalized and implemented. Understanding the karate oath in detail is explained at each training session, and real examples are given. Senpai Muchtar also revealed about the karate oath and its relation to shaping the personality and character of learners:

In the Shotokan Karate Germany/SKG Indonesia karate oath, where "Able to increase achievement" is in the last line (5) because it is a bonus. The most important thing is in lines (1,2,3,4) as it returns to personal oneself.

Spirituality seems to be like leadership and communication variables that also function as moderating variables. From the five interviewees, only two respondents stated that spirituality is the dominant variable in influencing organizational performance. From these two respondents, leadership is still compared alongside spirituality in influencing organizational performance, as stated by Senpai Santi:

I think it's the same. Good leadership will undoubtedly include spirituality, so they are interrelated. Likewise, the statement from Senpai Emir stating that leadership and spirituality have a balanced role, only spirituality variables are considered more dominant in influencing organizational performance. Senpai Emir said:

Actually, they are balanced, but spirituality is more dominant, two statements from Senpai Santi and Senpai Emir emphasize that the spirituality variable cannot stand alone as a moderation variable without being accompanied by the leadership variable. The leadership variable is the most dominant variable among the other two independent variables, namely communication and spirituality variables.

The growth of SKG Indonesia is quite good with the increasing number of participants. The growth of new dojos in Jakarta and other areas such as Jogja is also notable. Currently, SKG is preparing for new dojos in Bekasi, Semarang, and Papua. In addition to leadership, communication, and spirituality factors, the training schedule of only 1 session per week and on weekends also received a positive response from the karate students and their parents. As stated by Senpai Santi:

"The growth of SKG dojo is very rapid or fast-growing despite being a new dojo, and many new dojos are emerging, but SKG is developing fast and has been proven. The training is very appropriate because it is held on weekends and does not disturb the school/learning activities of the children. It is great because, in addition to learning martial arts, children are taught manners, honesty, responsibility, and courage."

Currently, there are around 90 karatekas who have joined SKG Indonesia, even though SKG is only one year old. Every black belt holder is also required to create their own dojo. Apart from the growth and development of the dojo, this is intended to encourage black belt holders to become entrepreneurs and serve as examples for their kohai or students. The unique training program, which does not directly relate to technical aspects such as discipline, tidiness, and responsibility, also distinguishes SKG from other karate schools. This was also mentioned by Senpai Muchtar:

"The growth of participants during the approximately one year that SKG Indonesia has been running is quite good, with 71 active participants. The growth of new dojos is gradually progressing, and there are now 10 dojos throughout Indonesia, with every black belt karateka required to open at least 1 dojo. The training progress for now is still once a week, but it may increase to twice a week while looking at future developments. Students

from children to adults are taught to cultivate and have a sense of responsibility for themselves”

For example, they must tidy their shoes or sandals properly and show respect when entering or leaving the training venue, as well as towards seniors or coaches." The rapid growth of SKG Indonesia is due to its character-focused training program. Meanwhile, technical management issues are left to each dojo. As stated by Senpai Emmil:

"With good licensure, SKG Indonesia delegates policies to each dojo, which results in more new dojos growing under SKG Indonesia. Related to the training program that SKG Indonesia runs, it is comprehensive and good for the trainees, covering both physical training and the formation of good character. The quality of the students' results will be better overall, as SKG Indonesia prioritizes character-focused training programs."

The training program that places more emphasis on character development and application is what makes the growth of SKG Indonesia so rapid, as stated by Senpai Emir:

"Considering that SKG Indonesia is only 1 year old, with more than 60 participants, the growth of the dojos is also quite good. The training program emphasizes character and application, which I think is far more important than achievement. Because it focuses on character education, the character will inevitably continue to be trained, making it more familiar."

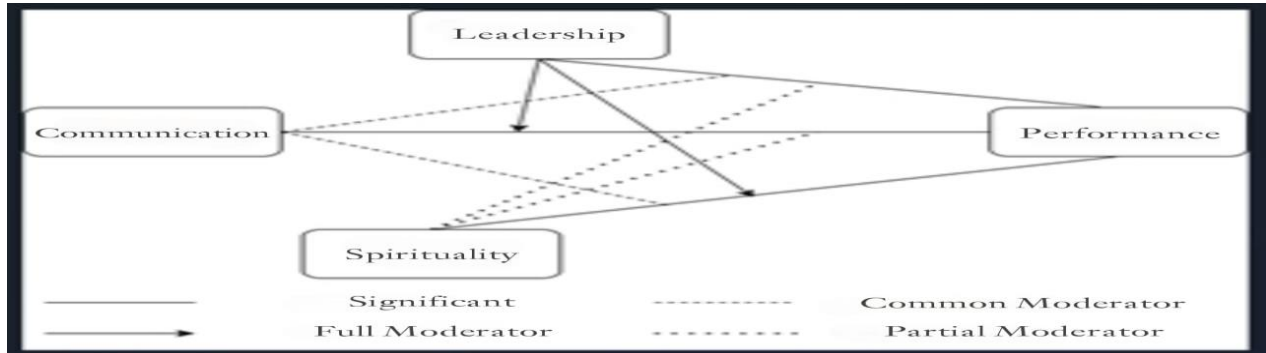
SKG Indonesia is also considered an adaptive organization in responding to the needs and desires of the community. There are several optional curricula, especially for adult learners, women, and people with disabilities. Although breakthrough training programs are still needed, more black belts need to be trained to help in creating new dojos. This was also mentioned by Senpai Ricky:

"The SKG organization moves very quickly and is quite flexible in recruiting members. This has resulted in a fairly rapid growth in the number of participants. The establishment of new dojos, however, is not as fast as the growth of members, because SKG has to produce black belt members and to be able to built more dojos. SKG training program still mostly follows the general karate training. And we need to innovate more quickly to attract new members. The quality of SKG students in the mentioned aspect is very good. The impact of the sensei and senpai in training is evident, emphasizing the development of members' character."

From the above discussion, it is revealed that the variables of leadership, communication, and spirituality have a significant influence on organizational performance. This study also revealed that the leadership variable plays a dominant role as a full mediator between the communication and spirituality variables and organizational performance. Meanwhile, the communication variable plays a common moderator and the spirituality variable as a partial moderator. This is a significant finding in this research.

Leadership is a variable that has a significant influence on organizational performance. Leadership that can provide inspiration, motivation, and teach aspects of honesty, discipline, and manners has a significant influence on organizational performance. Lead by example, as the motto of leadership in SKG Indonesia, is easily accepted, absorbed, and internalized by all students.

Figure 1. Relationship between Variables



Modified by: Hendratmoko and Mutiarawati (2023).

The communication variable also has a significant influence on organizational performance. Good, polite, and transparent communication for both internal and external factors also has a significant influence on organizational performance. The optimal use of social media can also affect organizational performance.

Spirituality is the third variable that has a significant influence on organizational performance. Lessons about life that are instilled in students such as noble personality, honesty, manners, fighting spirit, and other spiritual aspects have a significant influence on organizational performance.

The leadership variable is a full mediator in the relationship between independent variables (communication and spirituality) and performance. Meanwhile, the communication variable is a common moderator and the spirituality variable as a partial moderator. Leadership is the main key to the success of organizational performance.

Internal communication involving organization members, especially in discussing organizational strategies and programs, needs to be improved. The involvement of organization members in formulating strategies and work programs will increase the sense of belonging of the organization's members.

Optimizing social media and assigning a special person responsible for external communication is essential. Having someone who is specifically responsible for handling external communication will make external communication more consistent, as well as making the message conveyed more attractive and effective.

## CONCLUSION

Leadership is a variable that has a significant influence on organizational performance. Leadership that can provide inspiration, enthusiasm, motivation, and teach aspects of honesty, discipline, and courtesy has a significant influence on organizational performance. 'Lead by example,' as the motto of leadership at SKG Indonesia, is easily accepted, absorbed, and internalized by all participants.

Communication is also a variable that has a significant influence on organizational performance. Good, polite, and transparent communication, both internally and externally, also has a significant influence on organizational performance. The optimal utilization of social media can also affect organizational performance.

Spirituality is the third variable that has a significant influence on organizational performance. Lessons about life instilled in participants, such as noble character, honesty, courtesy, fighting spirit, and other aspects of spirituality, greatly affect organizational performance. The leadership variable acts as a full mediator in the relationship between independent variables (communication and spirituality) and performance. Meanwhile, the communication variable serves as a common moderator, and the spirituality variable as a partial moderator. Leadership is the main key to the success of organizational performance.

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