

Spiritual Leadership, Internal Marketing, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Conceptual Review for Islamic Educational Institutions

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Abstract

This conceptual study explores the interrelationships among spiritual leadership, internal marketing, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) within Islamic educational institutions. Utilizing a narrative literature review of 32 peer-reviewed publications spanning 2000–2024, the paper synthesizes theoretical and empirical insights to clarify how spiritually grounded leadership practices shape employees' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. The review identifies spiritual leadership as a values-based framework that promotes meaning, purpose, and ethical direction in organizational settings, yet prior studies reveal inconsistencies regarding its direct influence on OCB, indicating the potential role of mediating variables. Internal marketing is proposed as a strategic mechanism that aligns institutional values with employee experience, strengthens motivation, and enhances prosocial behaviors such as OCB. Drawing on Social Exchange Theory and the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) model, this paper introduces a conceptual framework positioning internal marketing as a mediator between spiritual leadership and OCB, thereby addressing a significant gap in the literature. The proposed model offers practical implications for leaders seeking to cultivate spiritually grounded, value-driven, and performance-oriented cultures in Islamic educational environments while providing a foundation for future empirical validation.

Keywords: Spiritual Leadership, Internal Marketing, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Islamic Education



INTRODUCTION

The growing emphasis on spiritually grounded educational practices has positioned spiritually oriented leadership as an essential paradigm in contemporary Islamic educational institutions. In an era shaped by globalization, rapid technological transformations, and increasing moral challenges, educational organizations require leadership models that move beyond traditional performance driven approaches to embrace deeper dimensions of meaning, purpose, and psychological well being (Avolio et al., 2009; Fry, 2003). Spiritual leadership, with its focus on articulating a compelling vision, nurturing altruistic love, and cultivating hope and faith, offers a holistic foundation for guiding human behavior and institutional progress (Bruni, 2005; Fry, 2003). Recent studies further highlight the rising relevance of spiritually grounded leadership in reinforcing ethical behavior and employee engagement in value based institutions (Piwovar-Sulej & Iqbal, 2024; Samul, 2024).

Within Islamic educational organizations, spiritual leaders hold a strategic and multidimensional role. They not only administer managerial functions but simultaneously act as moral exemplars and custodians of Islamic values that shape institutional identity and culture (Emilisa et al., 2025). This leadership orientation is widely regarded as a determinant of Organizational Citizenship Behavior, a set of voluntary, extra role behaviors that enhance organizational functioning, including helping colleagues, demonstrating loyalty, and contributing to institutional development (Organ, 1988). Emerging evidence reveals that spiritual leadership significantly enhances prosocial and altruistic behaviors in educational settings, suggesting its potential for fostering cohesive and value inspired organizations (Göçen & Şen, 2021).

Although many empirical studies demonstrate a positive connection between spiritual leadership and OCB across education, health care, and service sectors (Chen & Yang, 2012; Puspitasari & Maksum, 2025), contradictory findings also exist. Some studies report weak or statistically insignificant relationships, implying the presence of underlying mechanisms that shape or enhance the effect of spiritual leadership on OCB (Putra & Khan, 2023). One variable that may serve as an influential mediator in educational institutions is internal marketing, which has received limited scholarly attention in Islamic school contexts. Scholars have recently emphasized the importance of mediation processes in leadership behavior studies, underscoring the need to integrate organizational communication and human resource systems as explanatory pathways (Cheng et al., 2025).

Internal marketing conceptualizes employees as internal customers who must be supported, developed, and motivated to ensure the consistent delivery of quality services to students, parents, and other stakeholders (Park & Tran, 2018). In educational institutions, internal marketing practices encompass structured professional development, transparent communication, recognition systems, and efforts to reinforce collective identity and shared purpose (Wieseke et al., 2009). These practices have been associated with strengthened job satisfaction, greater institutional commitment, and higher engagement in OCB (Munir et al., 2021). Recent research confirms that internal marketing significantly contributes to positive employee behavior and strengthens organizational cohesion within mission driven institutions (Brown et al., 2025; Imani et al., 2020).

For Islamic educational institutions, integrating spiritual values with organizational management systems presents unique opportunities as well as challenges. Schools operating within Islamic frameworks must uphold both professional standards and religious values, requiring leadership models that can harmonize spiritual character with effective internal governance practices. Despite this need, the literature examining the interplay between spiritual leadership, internal marketing, and OCB specifically in Islamic schools remains limited. Given the rapid institutional transformation occurring in Islamic education systems across Southeast Asia and the Middle East, contemporary scholarship calls for conceptual frameworks that align spiritual leadership with modern organizational practices (Rahman, 2025).

Most existing studies concentrate on direct relationships between leadership, motivation, and prosocial behavior, with less attention to how contextual elements like religiously embedded culture or internal communication systems may shape these interactions (Ficapal-Cusí et al., 2020). In the context of Islamic education, however, the influence of spiritual leadership is likely mediated by the extent to which values are institutionalized through systematic internal processes, including communication, employee development, and value aligned organizational practices. Therefore, this conceptual review aims to synthesize existing theories and empirical findings to propose an integrative model linking spiritual leadership, internal marketing, and OCB. The study seeks to provide theoretical contributions to value driven leadership research and practical insights to support transformational management strategies within Islamic educational institutions. By developing a comprehensive conceptual framework, this article also aims to guide future empirical investigations and support institutional leaders seeking to enhance organizational effectiveness through spiritually grounded governance (Syahir et al., 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership integrates vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith to inspire intrinsic motivation and organizational meaning (Fry, 2003). Its core dimensions vision clarity, compassion, and spiritual hope create a sense of calling and membership that enhances employee well-being. In educational contexts, spiritual leadership guides value formation and ethical conduct, especially within Islamic schools where leaders serve as moral exemplars (Supriyono et al., 2025). Empirical studies show its positive influence on satisfaction, commitment, and OCB, though effectiveness varies depending on internal support systems (Na-Nan et al., 2020). In Islamic educational institutions, spiritual leadership is strengthened through values such as *ikhlas* and *ihsan*, fostering deeper moral engagement among teachers.

Internal Marketing

Internal marketing conceptualizes employees as internal customers who must be developed and motivated to deliver service excellence (Brown et al., 2025). Its dimensions internal communication, professional training, managerial support, and recognition enhance alignment with institutional goals (Santos et al., 2023). In educational settings, IM strengthens teachers' competence, morale, and commitment by providing structured development and shared identity (Wieseke et al., 2009). Empirical findings show IM's positive effect on satisfaction, commitment,

and OCB, making it a central mechanism linking leadership to employee outcomes (Yang et al., 2025). In Islamic schools, IM practices often incorporate spiritual development activities and value-based training that reinforce religious and organizational cohesion.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)

OCB refers to voluntary behaviors that exceed formal job duties and contribute to organizational effectiveness (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Its dimensions altruism, conscientiousness, courtesy, civic virtue, and sportsmanship reflect proactive and cooperative employee conduct (Organ, 1988). In schools, OCB manifests in teachers' willingness to assist colleagues, engage in school programs, and support students beyond instructional tasks (Ennida et al., 2025). Research links OCB to satisfaction, commitment, and supportive leadership, showing it is strongly influenced by both individual attitudes and contextual systems (Worku & Debela, 2024). In Islamic educational institutions, shared spiritual values encourage sincere and socially responsible behaviors, strengthening OCB as part of religious and professional identity.

METHOD

This study adopts a narrative literature review approach to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize scholarly works examining the relationships between spiritual leadership, internal marketing, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) within Islamic educational institutions. The narrative review method was chosen because it enables a comprehensive exploration of theoretical development and empirical evidence across multiple disciplines while offering new perspectives on how these variables interact in educational settings (Al-kfairy, 2024). This approach also facilitates a deeper contextualization of leadership and behavioral dynamics within faith-based institutional environments.

The literature search was conducted using major indexed databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, covering publications from 2000 to 2024. English and Indonesian keywords related to spiritual leadership, internal marketing, OCB, and Islamic education were used to gather both national and international studies. Data sources were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, empirical or conceptual studies discussing at least two of the three variables, and publications from journals indexed at least in Scopus Q3 or SINTA 2. Non-scholarly works, studies with irrelevant industrial contexts, and articles addressing only a single variable without conceptual linkage were excluded. From an initial collection of 84 articles, 32 were selected after screening titles, abstracts, and full texts based on their methodological rigor and relevance.

To analyze the selected literature, thematic coding was applied to categorize studies into three clusters: research on spiritual leadership and OCB, internal marketing and OCB, and studies integrating all three variables into a unified conceptual model. Conceptual mapping techniques were then used to synthesize theoretical patterns, identify inconsistencies, and highlight research gaps, allowing the development of an integrated conceptual framework suitable for Islamic educational contexts (Mohammad Alharbi, 2024). This synthesis also enabled the evaluation of how independent variables conceptually contribute to OCB as the dependent variable, thereby offering a structured foundation for future empirical research.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Critical Synthesis of Variable Relationships

The body of literature indicates that the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is multifaceted rather than straightforward. Spiritual leadership contributes to a meaningful, value-oriented organizational climate that emphasizes calling, altruistic love, and shared purpose (Fry, 2003). However, the emergence of OCB as a consistent behavioral outcome depends heavily on the extent to which organizational systems reinforce and operationalize these values (Camacho, 2025). This is where internal marketing (IM) plays an essential mediating role.

Spiritual leadership offers a foundation of meaning, purpose, and moral guidance for employees. Internal marketing functions as the mechanism that institutionalizes these values by embedding them into communication practices, training programs, managerial support, and recognition structures. The result is that OCB is more likely to manifest as a stable and sustainable employee behavior. When IM is absent or underdeveloped, the values imparted through spiritual leadership may fail to translate into practical, observable actions.

Therefore, this conceptual review proposes that internal marketing mediates the influence of spiritual leadership on OCB, especially within Islamic educational institutions where religious values, collective commitment, and sincere service orientation are central components of work culture. Furthermore, this relationship becomes increasingly significant in environments where moral and spiritual expectations are intertwined with professional responsibilities, which reinforces the need for comprehensive organizational systems that support value internalization.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

Based on theoretical integration and evidence from prior studies, this research asserts that the interaction among spiritual leadership, internal marketing, and OCB is complex and interdependent. The conceptual model positions internal marketing as a mediating mechanism that connects the influence of spiritual leadership to the development of OCB within Islamic educational environments.

Theoretical Foundations

This framework relies on two major theoretical perspectives.

The first is Social Exchange Theory (SET), which argues that when leaders consistently express spiritual values such as empathy, fairness, and altruistic love, employees reciprocate with heightened loyalty, commitment, and extra-role behaviors (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). The exchange of positive socio-emotional resources ultimately strengthens employees' willingness to perform beyond formal job requirements.

The second is the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory, which posits that spiritual leadership acts as the stimulus triggering employees' internal cognitive and affective processes

(organism), which are then shaped through organizational mechanisms such as internal marketing. These processes ultimately lead to OCB as the response (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). This integration of SET and SOR provides a comprehensive explanation of how leadership values become internalized and transformed into behavioral outcomes.

Mechanisms of Influence

Spiritual Leadership as a Systemic Catalyst

Spiritual leadership operates not only as a value-driven leadership style but also as a catalyst for broader organizational strategies. It instills calling, which encourages employees to perceive their work as purposeful, membership, which strengthens the sense of belonging, and hope or faith, which fosters optimism toward the organization's collective vision (Fry, 2003). These values exert long-term influence only when they are systematically aligned with everyday organizational practices (Wieseke et al., 2009). Consequently, spiritual leadership must be supported by structured institutional mechanisms to prevent value misalignment or inconsistency in implementation.

Internal Marketing as the Mediating Variable

Internal marketing serves as the core mediating element that translates spiritual leadership values into actionable practices. It operationalizes these values through effective communication, training infused with religious and ethical principles, administrative support, and recognition practices that emphasize intrinsic motivation rather than purely financial rewards. These mechanisms enhance employees' perceptions of fairness, appreciation, and clarity of their roles, thereby increasing intrinsic motivation and reinforcing OCB (Shinde, 2025). By aligning spiritual values with organizational functions, internal marketing ensures that employees experience consistency between what leaders preach and what the institution practices.

Contextual Adaptation: The Case of Islamic Schools

The conceptual model is particularly relevant to Islamic educational institutions, where organizational norms are shaped by religious teachings and local cultural practices. In these settings, spiritual leadership carries strong transformative potential. However, it requires complementary internal management systems that ensure values are continuously reinforced and operationalized.

Islamic schools thus need management practices that integrate shura-based decision-making, spiritual mentoring, and structured communication systems, which help sustain the values promoted by spiritual leaders. Moreover, teachers in Islamic institutions often possess high religiosity, making them more responsive to leadership that embodies spiritual credibility and ethical consistency. Resource availability also plays a mediating role, as schools with better support systems can more effectively institutionalize internal marketing practices.

Key Contributions

This conceptual review provides several contributions.

The first is theoretical. It integrates Social Exchange Theory and the Stimulus–Organism–Response model to explain how spiritual leadership, although inherently value-based, produces tangible behaviors such as OCB when mediated by internal marketing.

The second is practical. It identifies actionable strategies, including communication practices, training systems, and recognition mechanisms, that Islamic schools can employ to amplify the impact of spiritual leadership.

The third is contextual. It addresses a gap in organizational studies by focusing on settings where spirituality is deeply embedded in institutional identity. This contextualization underscores the importance of aligning spiritual leadership with functional management processes to create a cohesive and value-driven educational environment.

CONCLUSION

This literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the interrelationship between spiritual leadership, internal marketing, and organizational citizenship behavior within Islamic educational institutions. The synthesis of previous studies indicates that spiritual leadership positively influences organizational citizenship behavior by encouraging teachers to demonstrate commitment and contributions beyond their formal responsibilities. However, this relationship is not always direct and is shaped by various internal organizational factors.

Internal marketing emerges as a pivotal variable that strengthens the link between spiritual leadership and organizational citizenship behavior. Effective internal marketing practices, including constructive internal communication, continuous development of human resources, and the creation of a supportive work environment, serve as an essential bridge that enables the values of spiritual leadership to be translated into positive extra-role behaviors. Therefore, the alignment of spiritual leadership with well-implemented internal marketing has the potential to enhance performance quality, loyalty, and the overall contributions of educators in Islamic educational settings.

For future research, it is recommended that this conceptual model be empirically tested using quantitative or mixed-method approaches to obtain more precise measurements of the relationships among variables. Further studies may also extend the context to other types of educational institutions or value-based organizations to examine the consistency and applicability of this model across diverse settings.

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