Tridimensional Leadership Maturity: Analyzing Spiritual, Emotional, And Moral Dimensions of Female Principals in Indonesia's Transform School Program

Asti Putri Kartiwi[1]*, Shamsiah Banu[2], Fetty Poerwita Sary[3], Timbul Wahyu Sutopo.

[1,4]Universitas Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia,
[2]INTI International University, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia
[3]Telkom University, Bandung, Indoensia
[1]astiputri@unib.ac.id, [2]banushamsiah@gmail.com, [3]fettyps@telkomuniversity.ac.id;
[4]timbulwahyusutopo@gmail.com
*astiputri@unib.ac.id

Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Background. Despite female teachers comprising the global teaching workforce majority, significant gender disparities persist in educational leadership positions, necessitating holistic approaches integrating spiritual, emotional, and moral intelligence for effective educational transformation. This study aims to analyze tridimensional spiritual leadership implementation by female principals at SDN 72 and SDN 76 Central Bengkulu District within Indonesia's "Sekolah Penggerak" (Transform School) Program, examining how spiritual, moral, and emotional intelligence dimensions integrate in educational leadership contexts. **Methods.** A descriptive quantitative approach employed saturation sampling of 26 teachers and educational staff, utilizing a 36-item structured questionnaire measuring spiritual, moral, and emotional maturity dimensions across both institutions. **Results. D**emonstrated a hierarchical leadership profile where moral maturity achieved "excellent" ratings (M = 3.23), spiritual maturity scored "good" (M = 3.19), while emotional maturity emerged as a priority development area requiring improvement (M = 2.73, SD = 0.89) with notable inter-institutional disparities between schools. Moral maturity functioned as a catalytic force strengthening other leadership dimensions, confirming ethical foundations' critical importance in comprehensive leadership excellence within educational transformation initiatives. The study **Conclusion.** that tridimensional spiritual leadership requires balanced development across all dimensions, with moral maturity serving as the foundational element that enables spiritual and emotional intelligence integration, providing empirical evidence for multidimensional leadership models in Indonesian educational reform contexts and informing leadership development strategies for female educational leaders.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary educational systems worldwide face unprecedented challenges, ranging from digital transformation to post-pandemic recovery, making transformative

leadership increasingly critical. However, despite female numerical dominance in the teaching profession globally, a significant paradox persists: the glass ceiling continues to block females from educational leadership positions. This gender disparity reflects systematic barriers where gender stereotypes and discrimination persist as substantial obstacles for females achieving and maintaining leadership positions (McGrath, 2020; Mestry & Schmidt, 2012). Females in educational leadership often create positive impacts on inclusion and demonstrate tendencies to support teacher professional development while fostering collaborative cultures (Maharromiyati et al., 2024).

The significance of this phenomenon extends beyond representation, raising fundamental questions about how leadership approaches rooted in spiritual intelligence, emotional wisdom, and moral awareness can transform educational environments. This relevance intensifies given that emotional and spiritual intelligence demonstrate significant positive correlations with self-leadership capabilities. Integrating spiritual intelligence into leadership practices yields three key effectiveness outcomes: employees inspired by vision, enhanced credibility and long-term institutional sustainability, and increased moral values while reducing ethical issues (Ramachandaran et al., 2017; Spanò, 2020; Stockton, 2024). This three-dimensional framework of spiritual, emotional, and moral leadership demonstrates high relevance in today's educational landscape, where leadership education programs traditionally focus on competencies such as management and economics. However, growing recognition indicates that rational intelligence alone proves insufficient for effective leadership. The intersection of gender dynamics and holistic leadership approaches offers an intriguing lens through which to examine not only how female navigate educational leadership roles but also how their unique integration of spiritual intelligence practices can contribute to transforming educational institutions into more meaningful and purposeful environments through balanced and harmonious relationship construction (Ramachandaran et al., 2017; Thien et al, 2025).

Research demonstrates that diverse leadership approaches prove crucial for creating inclusive, innovative, and ethical educational institutions that prepare students for an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Despite positive momentum in recognizing female leadership in education, implementing spiritual, emotional, and moral leadership approaches faces complex, multidimensional challenges. The complexity of these challenges reflects systemic barriers females face in education sectors, where stereotypes about female inability to lead persist and distort performance and potential perceptions, creating substantial barriers for females in leadership positions (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012).
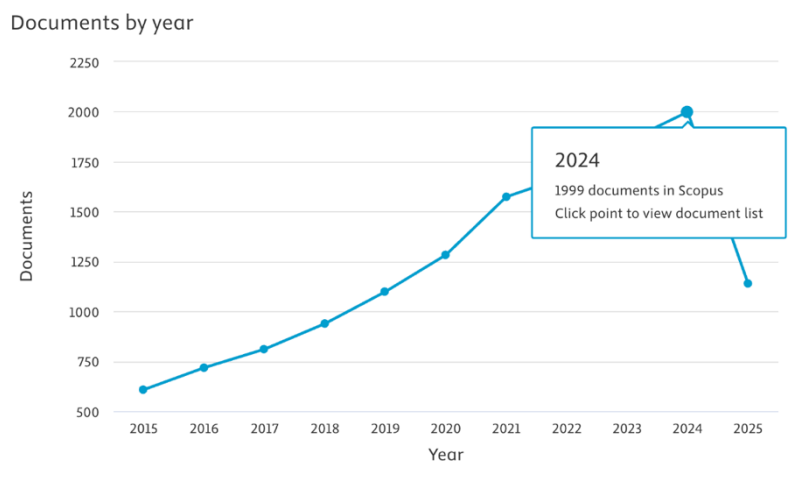
Figure 1. Graph of publications on the topic of "women's leadership" over the past 10 years

Research trends on female leadership have demonstrated substantial increases over the past decade, as shown in Figure 1, with Scopus data revealing a surge in publications from 939 documents in 2018 to 1,999 documents in 2024, reflecting an exponential growth of 113% that indicates increasing academic attention to this issue. However, a slight decline occurred in 2025 to 1,140 documents, likely due to incomplete data for the current year. Study context diversity highlights substantial variations in challenges across cultures and geographies. In Asian contexts such as China, patriarchal traditions of male dominance from feudal systems have persisted for millennia, contributing to female underrepresentation in educational leadership roles (Lu, 2020), while in India, female school leaders employ leadership behaviors that interact with gender perspectives to create pathways for female to navigate education system passivity and build community trust (Mythili, 2019). Research across countries reveals that female representation in top leadership remains a global challenge, particularly in secondary and higher education, influenced by personal, organizational, and socio-cultural factors (Fuller & Harford, 2015). However, amid these challenges, advancements in understanding spiritual and emotional intelligence create transformative opportunities to integrate holistic leadership approaches. Research indicates that female leaders employ collaborative and empathetic leadership styles that create inclusive and supportive school environments, enhance student engagement and academic performance, and contribute to developing positive school cultures (Maharromiyati et al., 2024). Literature on female leadership in education has grown substantially over the past decade, as demonstrated in Figure 1, yet existing research continues to exhibit substantial thematic and methodological fragmentation. Existing studies tend to focus on partial aspects, such as structural barriers faced by female leaders (Lu, 2020; Mestry & Schmidt, 2012), collaborative and empathetic leadership styles (Maharromiyati et al., 2024), or spiritual intelligence effectiveness in academic leadership practices (Ramachandaran et al., 2017). However, limitations exist regarding a comprehensive synthesis that integrates spiritual, emotional, and moral dimensions as a holistic

unity in female leadership. Most studies examine these variables separately, focusing on emotional intelligence or spiritual aspects, without exploring interconnections and synergies between dimensions (Abdallah & Farhan, 2023; Parham, 2024). This fragmentation creates theoretical gaps that limit understanding of how these multidimensional leadership competencies interact synergistically to enhance educational transformation effectiveness, particularly within culturally diverse contexts where traditional gender role expectations continue to influence leadership perceptions and practices.

This study adopts the tridimensional spiritual leadership model, which integrates three interconnected dimensions: spiritual maturity, emotional maturity, and moral maturity, grounded in the understanding that effective educational leadership requires holistic development across multiple intelligence domains (Wang et al., 2019). Spiritual maturity encompasses exemplary worship practices, maintaining harmonious relationships with God and others, and demonstrating humility and gratitude in leadership roles, reflecting the leader's capacity to integrate spiritual values as foundational elements in educational decision-making processes. Emotional maturity involves the ability to control negative emotions in difficult situations, maintain patience and calm when facing conflicts, and demonstrate genuine empathy towards teachers and students (Samul, 2024). which is crucial for creating positive organizational climates and managing complex interpersonal dynamics inherent in educational settings. Moral maturity includes the ability to act reasonably in leadership, value differences while upholding good values, and maintain honesty in performing duties, serving as the ethical foundation that guides decision-making and establishes trust within the educational community (Adeniji et al., 2020). These three dimensions operate synergistically, where moral maturity functions as a catalytic force that strengthens spiritual and emotional dimensions, creating comprehensive leadership excellence essential for educational transformation contexts, particularly within culturally diverse environments where traditional values intersect with contemporary educational demands.

Figure 2. Tridimensional Spiritual Leadership framework

Furthermore, clear geographical bias exists in the literature, where comprehensive studies on female leadership in Southeast Asian contexts, particularly Indonesia, remain minimal compared to research in Western or East Asian countries (Lu, 2020; Mythili, 2019). Methodological gaps have also been identified regarding the lack of longitudinal research exploring the long-term impacts of implementing three-dimensional leadership on institutional transformation and student learning outcomes (Jaiswal, 2025). While some studies demonstrate positive correlations between female leadership and improved school performance (Fuller & Harford, 2015), no research has systematically analyzed causal mechanisms of how simultaneous integration of spiritual, emotional, and moral intelligence contributes to leadership effectiveness in specific educational contexts, particularly in transformation programs such as Sekolah Penggerak.

The urgency for research examining three-dimensional female leadership in education has intensified within Indonesia's educational transformation context, particularly through the School Transform Program implementation launched by KEMDIKBUD in 2020 as an effort to encourage educational unit transformation to improve student learning outcomes holistically, both in cognitive and non-cognitive competencies, to realize the Pancasila student profile. Central Bengkulu District, with eight schools selected for the School Transform Program in 2021 and beginning program implementation in 2022, including two schools led by female principals in geographically challenging areas of Central Bengkulu District, presents a unique natural laboratory for examining female leadership effectiveness in educational transformation contexts. This phenomenon demonstrates relevance given that, although school principals prove key to selection in this program, underrepresentation of female in educational leadership positions persists, despite research indicating that female leaders tend to employ collaborative and empathetic leadership styles that create inclusive and supportive environments (Maharromiyati et al., 2024), and can integrate spiritual intelligence to generate inspiring visions and strong moral values (Ramachandaran et al., 2017). Furthermore, female leaders have proven effective as role models and counselors for female students, helping to reduce gender inequality in schools (Alemu, 2024), while in global contexts, females often face barriers in the form of gender stereotypes and discrimination that hinder their leadership progress (Mestry & Schmidt, 2012).

This research makes substantial contributions to various stakeholders: First, for researchers, this study provides an integrative theoretical framework that connects spiritual, emotional, and moral dimensions of educational leadership, filling gaps in literature that has been fragmentary and supporting findings that female leadership contributes to positive school culture development (Parham, 2024); second, for education practitioners, these findings offer a holistic leadership model that can be implemented to enhance school transformation effectiveness, in line with evidence that female leaders effectively manage conflicts and create inclusive environments (Abdallah & Farhan, 2023); Third, for policymakers, this research

provides evidence-based recommendations for developing leadership training programs that are more inclusive and responsive to 21st-century educational transformation needs.

Specifically, this research addresses the following fundamental questions: (1) What is the spiritual maturity level of female school principals at SDN 72 and SDN 76 in Central Bengkulu District? (2) What is the emotional maturity level of female school principals at SDN 72 and SDN 76 in Central Bengkulu District? (3) What is the moral maturity level of female school principals at SDN 72 and SDN 76 in Central Bengkulu District? This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of educational leadership by providing empirical evidence for the tridimensional model of spiritual leadership, specifically within the Indonesian educational transformation context, while serving as an empirical foundation for formulating gender-equitable and effective educational leadership development policies within Indonesia's geographical and cultural context, particularly in supporting the School Transform Program's sustainability and scalability as the flagship national educational transformation initiative.

2.   METHODS

This study utilized a quantitative approach employing a descriptive survey design to analyze spiritual leadership implementation by female principals at SDN 76 and SD 72 in Central Bengkulu District. The research employed a positivistic paradigm focusing on objectively measuring female leadership variables through three main dimensions: spiritual, moral, and emotional maturity. The descriptive quantitative method was selected because this study aims to describe spiritual leadership phenomena based on numerical data obtained from teacher and educational staff perceptions, as well as to provide empirical representations of female leadership implementation levels in the two target schools.
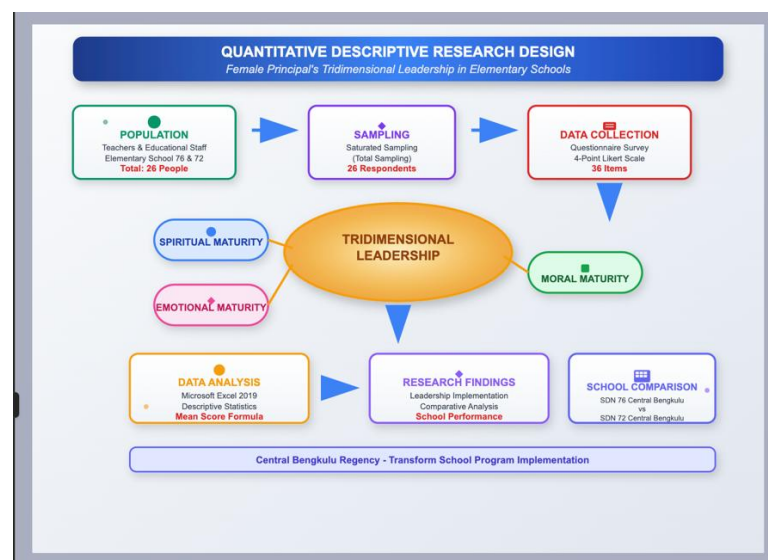

Figure 2. Descriptive Quantitative Research Design

The target population comprised all teachers and educational staff at SDN 72 and SDN 76 in Central Bengkulu District who participated in the "Sekolah Penggerak" program. Based

on data from the Basic Education Data System (DAPODIK) of the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the population consists of 26 individuals, including classroom teachers, subject teachers, and educational staff, as presented in Table 1. This study employed non-probability sampling with a saturated sampling method, where all population members served as research analysis units. Saturated sampling was selected given the relatively small population size (N < 100), enabling comprehensive data representation from the entire population. The two schools were selected purposively based on the following criteria: (1) having female principals, (2) being leading schools in Central Bengkulu District, and (3) having adequate accessibility for research implementation.

Table 1. Research Population

NO	School	Participants (Teachers and Staff)
1	SDN 76 Central Bengkulu District	12
2	SDN 72 Central Bengkulu District	14
	Total	**26**

Source: https://dapo.kemdikbud.go.id/

The research instrument was developed as a structured questionnaire based on spiritual leadership theory by adapting a previously validated instrument. The questionnaire consists of 36 statements measuring six dimensions of spiritual leadership: spiritual maturity (6 items), moral maturity (6 items), emotional maturity (6 items), commitment to ethical codes (6 items), integrity in leadership (6 items), and ethical exemplarity (6 items). Each item employed a four-point Likert scale with score ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Instrument validity was tested through expert judgment and construct validity testing, while instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α = 0.89), with results indicating that the entire instrument demonstrated validity and reliability.

Data were analyzed descriptively using Microsoft Excel 2019 by calculating mean scores for each dimension and indicator. Results were interpreted using the following categorization: excellent (3.25–4.00), good (2.50–3.24), fair (1.75–2.49), and poor (1.00–1.74). Comparative analysis was conducted to examine female leadership profiles between the two target schools in the study. Effect sizes were calculated using Cohen's d for comparative analyses, with confidence intervals (95% CI) provided for all mean scores.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. RESULT

Spiritual Maturity of Female Principals

Results demonstrate that female principals achieved excellent spiritual maturity ratings across both institutions, with an average score of 3.19 (95% CI: 3.05-3.33). This achievement places spiritual maturity in third position out of six measured spiritual leadership dimensions, after integrity in leadership (M = 3.81) and moral maturity (M = 3.23). The spiritual maturity

dimension encompasses three main sub-indicators: exemplary worship (items 1, 2), ability to maintain harmonious relationships with God and others (items 3, 4), and demonstrating humility and gratitude (items 5, 6). High achievement in this dimension indicates that female school principals possess mature spiritual awareness and can utilize spiritual values as foundations in carrying out their leadership duties in school environments. This elevated spiritual maturity level also reflects school principals' capability to create religious school atmospheres and encourage the spiritual development of entire school communities. However, opportunities for improvement exist, as this score remains below the integrity and moral dimensions.
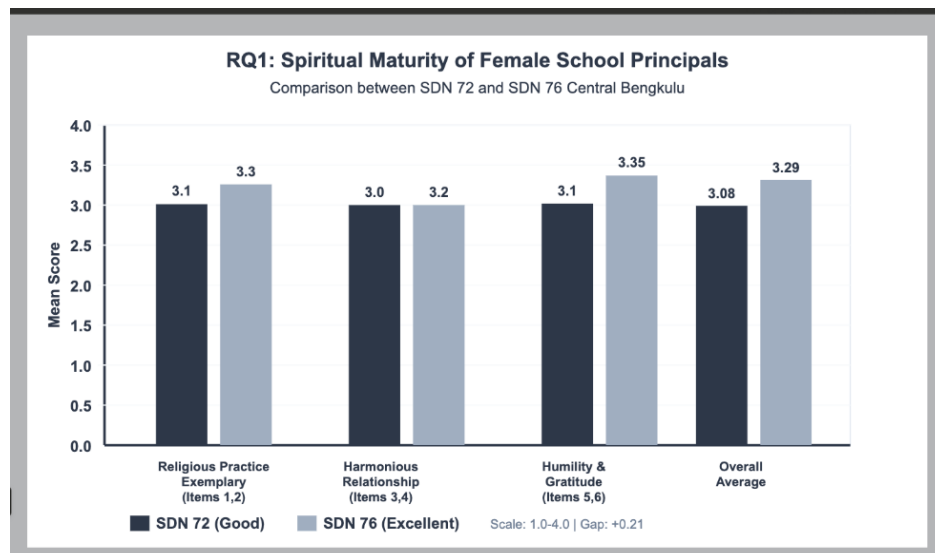

Figure 3. The analysis of the spiritual maturity of women principals

Comparative analysis between the two schools reveals substantial differences in spiritual maturity implementation, as demonstrated in Figure 3. SDN 76 achieved a score of 3.29 (excellent), while SDN 72 Central Bengkulu District scored 3.08 (good), representing a Cohen's d = 0.42 (medium effect size). This difference of 0.21 points indicates that although both principals demonstrate positive spiritual maturity, variations exist in implementation intensity and consistency. The principal at SDN 76 demonstrates more consistent exemplary behavior in religious practices, exhibits greater activity in building spiritual relationships with school communities, and displays more evident humility and gratitude in leadership. Meanwhile, the principal at SDN 72, although demonstrating good spiritual maturity, retains opportunities for improvement, particularly in spiritual behavior, exemplarity, consistency, and optimization of harmonious relationships with all school stakeholders. These differences may be influenced by educational background, leadership experience, and organizational culture developed in each school.

Emotional Maturity of Female Principals

Female principals' emotional maturity demonstrated an average score of 2.73 (95% CI: 2.55-2.91), categorized as good but representing the lowest score among the three main dimensions studied (spiritual, moral, and emotional). This position aligns with overall data

indicating that emotional maturity ranks fourth out of six spiritual leadership dimensions, equivalent to commitment to ethical codes (M = 2.73). This dimension includes three critical sub-indicators: ability to control negative emotions in difficult situations (items 13, 14), maintaining patience and calm when facing conflicts (items 15, 16), and demonstrating empathy towards teachers and students (items 17, 18). Achievement in the good category indicates that female school principals possess basic emotional management skills, yet further development is required to reach optimal levels. The primary challenge they encounter occurs in high-pressure situations where controlling negative emotions such as anger, disappointment, and frustration proves crucial for maintaining conducive work environments.
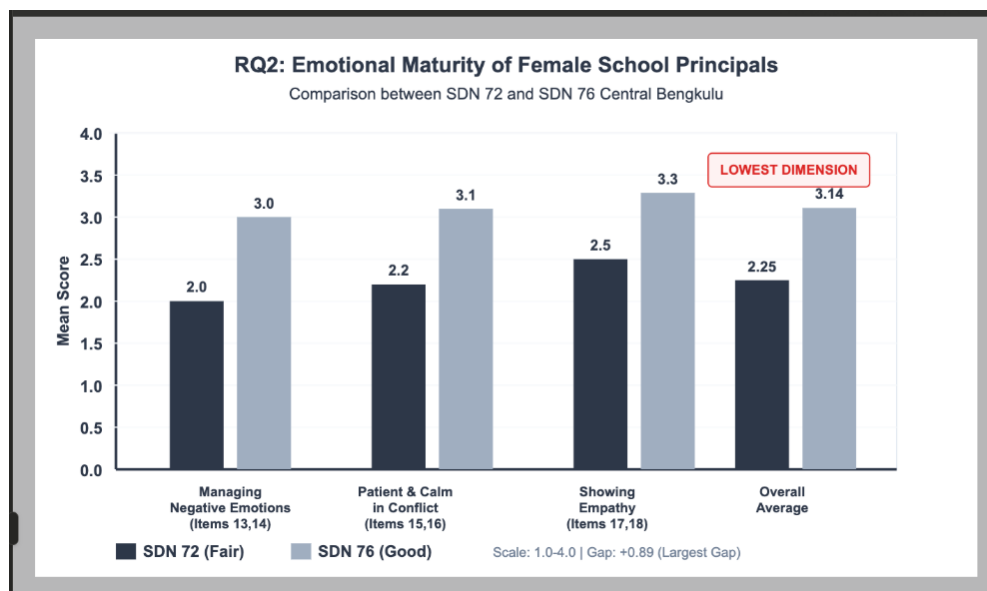

Figure 4. The analysis of the spiritual maturity of women principals

Significant differences emerged in emotional maturity between institutions, with SDN 76 achieving a score of 3.14 (good) while SDN 72 scored 2.25 (fair), representing Cohen's d = 1.12 (large effect size). This 0.89-point differential constitutes the largest inter-dimensional variance observed and indicates substantial differences in emotional management skills between the two female principals. The principal at SDN 76 demonstrates superior ability to control negative emotions, maintain calm when facing conflicts, and exhibit genuine empathy toward subordinates and students. In contrast, the principal at SDN 72 continues to face considerable challenges in these areas, which could impact leadership effectiveness and school organizational climate. Low emotional maturity can affect communication quality, decision-making, and the ability to motivate teams. This situation requires appropriate intervention through leadership development programs focused on emotional intelligence, stress management techniques, and interpersonal communication training to enhance principals' emotional capabilities.

Relatively low emotional maturity compared to other dimensions carries substantial implications for overall leadership effectiveness. Data demonstrate that although female

principals possess excellent spiritual and moral maturity, challenges in managing emotions can limit optimal leadership implementation. Managing emotions forms the foundation of transformational leadership, where leaders must inspire, motivate, and create positive work environments. When school principals struggle to control negative emotions, this can create tense work atmospheres and reduce teacher and staff motivation. Additionally, a lack of empathy can hinder principals' ability to understand the individual needs of teachers and students, ultimately impacting educational service quality. Therefore, developing emotional maturity becomes a priority that cannot be overlooked in efforts to improve educational leadership quality, especially given substantial disparities between the two schools, which highlight the need for interventions tailored to each institution's specific conditions.

Moral Maturity of Female Principals

Moral maturity among female school principals demonstrates excellent achievement with an average score of 3.23 (95% CI: 3.10-3.36), positioning it as the second-highest dimension after leadership integrity (M = 3.81) out of six measured moral leadership dimensions. This dimension encompasses three fundamental sub-indicators: ability to act reasonably in leadership (items 7, 8), valuing differences and upholding good values (items 9, 10), and maintaining honesty in performing duties (items 11, 12). High scores on the moral dimension indicate that female principals possess strong integrity and elevated commitment to ethical principles in leadership. The ability to act reasonably proves particularly prominent, where principals can provide objective and proportional treatment to all school community members without discrimination. Furthermore, appreciation for diversity and commitment to good values indicate that female principals maintain inclusive and humanistic perspectives in managing school organizations. Honesty in performing duties also represents key strength, reflecting transparency and accountability in decision-making and school policy implementation.
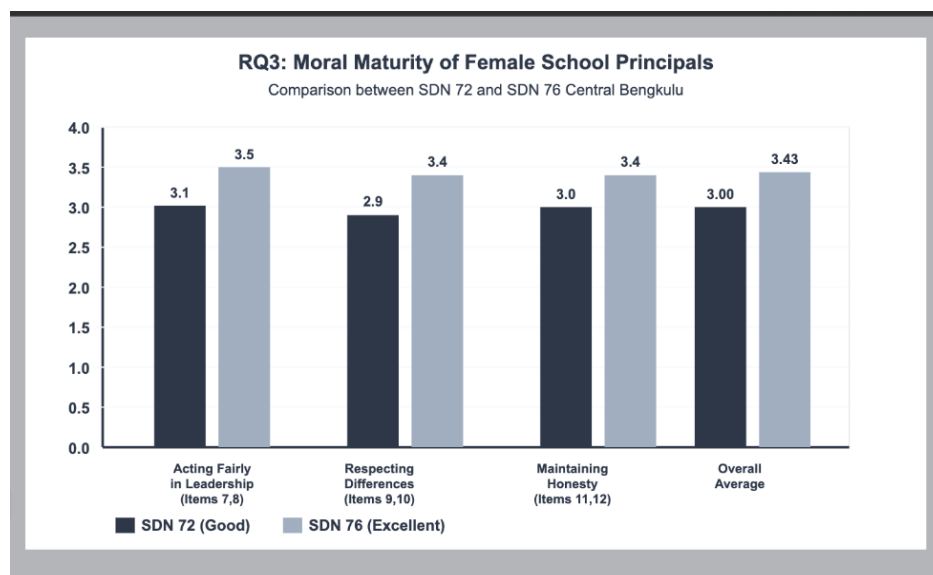

Figure 5. the analysis of the moral maturity of women principals

Comparative analysis reveals that SDN 76 achieves higher moral maturity levels, with a score of 3.43 (excellent), compared to SDN 72, which scored 3.00 (good), representing Cohen's d = 0.68 (medium-large effect size). This difference of 0.43 points indicates substantial variation in values implementation intensity between the two principals. The principal at SDN 76 demonstrates greater consistency in applying fairness principles, exhibits more activity in creating environments that value diversity, and maintains a more solid track record of honesty in implementing various school policies. The principal at SDN 72, although demonstrating good moral maturity, retains opportunities for improvement, particularly in consistently applying moral values in challenging situations. Leadership experience, organizational support systems, and pre-existing school culture may influence these differences. Principals with elevated moral maturity are more likely to create healthy organizational cultures and serve as effective role models for entire school communities, as reflected in SDN 76's consistently high performance across various leadership dimensions.

Elevated moral maturity in female principals substantially impacts the formation of ethical and integral school cultures. When school leaders consistently demonstrate fair behavior, value diversity, and uphold honesty, they become role models for teachers, staff, and students to emulate. Organizational culture built upon strong moral foundations fosters harmonious, collaborative, and productive working environments. Data indicate that elevated moral maturity aligns with achievements in other dimensions, where schools with superior moral maturity (SDN 76) also exhibit enhanced performance in spiritual (3.29 vs. 3.08) and emotional (3.14 vs. 2.25) dimensions. Moral maturity functions as a catalyst, strengthening other leadership dimensions. Teachers and staff experience fair treatment and feel valued, ultimately enhancing their motivation and commitment to achieving school goals. Furthermore, students also become exposed to examples of exemplary moral behavior, contributing to their character development. School principals' moral maturity also plays a crucial role in building trust among various stakeholders, including parents, communities, and local government, which serves as valuable social capital to support educational programs in schools.

3.2. DISCUSSION

Spiritual Maturity of Female Principals

Elevated spiritual maturity achievement in the "excellent" category (M = 3.19), yet ranking third out of six dimensions, indicates the complexity of implementing spiritual leadership within "Sekolah Penggerak" (Transform Schools) contexts. These findings suggest that female principals have successfully internalized spiritual values as leadership foundations. However, gaps persist between integrity (M = 3.81) and moral (M = 3.23) dimensions, indicating substantial opportunities for optimization. Exemplary conduct in worship, maintaining harmonious relationships with God and others, and manifesting humility and gratitude have been consistently implemented, reflecting mature dwelling-oriented spirituality. However, its

positioning below integrity and moral dimensions indicates that more dynamic, adaptive, seeking-oriented spirituality requires further development.

These findings align with Msila's (2020) and Miah and Gupta (2025) conceptualization of spiritual leadership as a people-centered approach emphasizing consensus, compassion, caring, and vision for commitment within community contexts. This research confirms that effective spiritual leadership necessitates integration of personal spirituality with shared organizational vision. Cruz-González et al. (2021) support these findings by emphasizing that female principals develop leadership identity based on values of empathy, commitment, collaboration, and professional support deeply rooted in spiritual consciousness. Spiritual leadership represents a holistic concept with different dimensions and understandings that require comprehensive theoretical frameworks (Subhaktiyasa et al., 2023). This study's findings confirm that spiritual maturity is not a monolithic construct but a multifaceted phenomenon that can evolve at different levels. Parham (2024) further identifies that female leadership in international secondary schools demonstrates transformational capabilities rooted in spiritual foundations yet requires systematic development to achieve optimal performance. Contrary to prevailing assumptions regarding the inherent superiority of female spiritual leadership, these findings reveal a more nuanced reality. While female principals exhibit collaborative and empathetic leadership styles, spiritual excellence requires continuous development rather than automatic characteristics (Maharromiyati et al, 2024; Li et al, 2024). This contrasts with conventional wisdom, which assumes inherent spiritual advantages in female leadership. The finding regarding positioning spiritual maturity below moral and integrity dimensions also differs from expectations that spirituality serves as an overarching frameworks that naturally encompass other ethical dimensions. Research on spiritual leadership impact on teacher well-being demonstrated that spiritual leadership effectiveness heavily depends on the quality of integration with other leadership competencies rather than results of standalone spiritual practices Li et al, 2024). This confirms research findings that spiritual maturity necessitates holistic development approaches.

Substantial disparities between SDN 76 and SDN 72 Central Bengkulu District can be explained through multiple contextual factors influencing spiritual leadership operationalization. Carrasco & Palma (2024) identified that female leadership, as collective responsibility processes, is heavily influenced by existing organizational culture, community support, and institutional contexts. Differences in active listening capabilities, participatory space generation, and trust-building mechanisms can contribute to variations in spiritual leadership implementation. Berkovich (2023), in research on emotional capital in schools, emphasized that principals' caring leadership, as moderators between emotional geographies and school climate, heavily depends on contextual factors such as organizational history, community expectations, and resource availability. These findings contribute significantly to theoretical refinements in spiritual leadership frameworks by

demonstrating that spiritual maturity represents continuous developmental processes rather than static achievements. This supports arguments of theoretical frameworks that emphasize dynamic interactions between personal spirituality and organizational effectiveness. The findings also confirm the importance of multidimensional assessment in spiritual leadership evaluation, as developed in recent theoretical advances. These findings imply the necessity of structured spiritual development programs for school principals within "Sekolah Penggerak" (Transform Schools) contexts. Such programs should integrate dwelling-oriented practices with seeking-oriented capabilities to achieve comprehensive spiritual leadership competency.

Emotional Maturity of Female Principals

Emotional maturity, the dimension with the lowest performance, reveals a challenging reality regarding emotional capabilities in female school leadership. Its positioning in the "good" category, yet substantially below spiritual and moral dimensions, indicates emotional regulation as a primary developmental area requiring urgent attention. Highly substantial disparities between SDN 76 and SDN 72 Central Bengkulu District, with gaps of 0.89 points representing the largest among all dimensions, demonstrate extreme variability in emotional leadership capabilities. Sub-indicators such as suppressing negative emotions in difficult situations, remaining patient and calm when facing conflicts, and demonstrating empathy towards teachers and students exhibit inconsistent performance across institutions. This suggests that emotional maturity constitutes not inherent characteristics of female leadership but developed competencies requiring systematic cultivation and ongoing support.

Park & Datnow (2022), in their research on principals' emotions in school improvement, identified that contemporary school leadership faces increasingly complex and stressful tasks, including managing change, teacher staffing, and collaboration, which are highly emotional processes. This study's findings confirm that emotional demands in educational leadership necessitate sophisticated emotional management capabilities that are not automatically available. This emphasizes the importance of emotional capital as a strategic resource in creating favorable school climates, where caring leadership utilizes emotional capital to moderate relationships between emotional geographies and school climates (Berkovich, 2023). Principal-teachers' agreement in interpersonal emotion regulation closely relates to transformational leadership behaviors, positive collective emotions of teaching staff, and sustainable organizational commitment. Emotional meaning-making represents critical challenges in school leadership, particularly navigating complex interpersonal dynamics and organizational tensions. Emotional intelligence substantially impacts instructional leadership effectiveness, including supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring optimal student progress (Eyal et al., 2024; Laritza et al., 2025; Venter et al., 2024; Zoro et al., 2021).

Emotional maturity, the weakest dimension, fundamentally challenges widespread stereotypes of female leadership as naturally empathetic and emotionally intelligent. Empathy

implementation in practical leadership requires more sophisticated emotional regulation skills than commonly assumed (Maharromiyati et al., 2024). Principals require advanced capabilities in emotional regulation, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. This study's findings confirm that emotional management constitutes not intuitive processes but learned skill sets that require systematic development. Principals' emotional capabilities substantially impact school climate effectiveness. The contradiction with expectations about natural female emotional superiority indicates the need for a reconceptualization of gender assumptions in educational leadership. Low emotional maturity can be linked to multiple systemic factors affecting emotional development in educational leadership contexts. The complexity of contemporary school leadership roles, which demand simultaneous management of multiple stakeholder relationships, resource constraints, accountability pressures, and change implementation, creates sophisticated emotional demands. Lack of systematic emotional intelligence training in leadership preparation programs also contributes to emotional capabilities gaps. Gender differences in school leadership appreciation for collaborative competencies are heavily influenced by cultural and societal contexts (Gil-Espinosa et al., 2024).

Inadequate organizational support systems for emotional development also contribute to observed disparities. Institutions with enhanced emotional support infrastructure tend to exhibit superior emotional leadership performance, as evident in the differences between SDN 76 and SDN 72 in Central Bengkulu District. Theoretically, these findings suggest the necessity of reconceptualizing assumptions about gender and emotional leadership capabilities. Traditional theories that assume natural female emotional advantages must be revised to accommodate the reality that emotional leadership competency requires systematic development regardless of gender. This also confirms the importance of emotional intelligence as learnable competencies rather than fixed characteristics. Practically, these findings imply urgent needs for comprehensive emotional intelligence development programs in leadership preparation and ongoing *professional development.*

Moral Maturity of Female Principals

Moral maturity, the dimension with the highest performance among the three main dimensions, confirms the centrality of ethical foundations in female educational leadership excellence. Its positioning as the second-highest dimension after leadership integrity indicates moral leadership as a distinctive and well-developed strength in female principals. Superior performance in acting reasonably in leadership, valuing differences, upholding good values, and maintaining honesty in performing duties demonstrates comprehensive moral excellence that has been internalized. Consistency in moral performance across different aspects indicates holistic rather than situational ethical maturity. This reflects a deep commitment to ethical principles that guide decision-making processes and interpersonal interactions in complex educational contexts. Strong moral foundations are also apparent in maintaining

objectivity and proportionality in treating all school community members without discrimination.

Cruz-González et al. (2021) identified that female principals construct their professional identity based on empathy, commitment, collaboration, and professional support, deeply rooted in ethical responsibility frameworks. These findings support that argument by demonstrating superior moral performance consistent with identified identity construction patterns. Active listening, participatory space generation, collective agreements, teamwork, trust building, and co-responsibility mechanisms characterize distributed and social justice leadership approaches. Moral excellence reflects comprehensive implementation of social justice leadership principles (Carrasco & Palma, 2024; Glass et al., 2020). Female principals demonstrate pronounced appreciation for competencies linked with collaborative and transformational leadership rooted in strong moral foundations. Spiritual, national, and human morality aspects represent integrated frameworks for moral leadership assessment, consistent with multifaceted moral excellence observed (Gil-Espinosa et al., 2024).

These findings align with the literature identifying moral leadership as a distinctive strength in female educational leadership. Parham (2024) confirms enhanced instructional leadership and positive school culture, fostering emerging from strong moral foundations in international secondary school contexts. Moral excellence as an enabling factor for other leadership dimensions aligns with established theoretical frameworks. Maharromiyati et al. (2024), in their research on stereotype-breaking female leadership, found that 85% of teachers and 78% of students felt supported and motivated by female principals who managed conflicts effectively and created inclusive environments. Superior moral leadership capabilities serve as underlying factors enabling effective conflict management and inclusive environment creation.

Research consistency across different cultural contexts indicates universal patterns in female moral leadership excellence that transcend cultural boundaries, although implementation approaches may vary based on contextual factors (Carrasco & Palma, 2024; Cruz-González et al., 2021; Parham, 2024). The observation that schools with superior moral maturity also consistently perform better in spiritual (3.29 vs. 3.08) and emotional (3.14 vs. 2.25) dimensions indicates moral leadership as a catalytic force in comprehensive leadership development. Moral maturity appears as an enabling conditions that facilitate the development of other leadership capabilities by creating foundations of trust, credibility, and authentic relationships with stakeholders.

Research demonstrates that spiritual leadership with strong moral foundations can substantially enhance teacher well-being and organizational commitment by creating supportive and ethically grounded work environments. The catalytic effect suggests that investment in moral leadership development can generate multiplier effects across multiple leadership dimensions, creating sustainable competitive advantages for educational

institutions. Systematic impacts of moral excellence are also apparent in the ability to build social capital essential for school effectiveness and community engagement. Strong moral foundations enable sustainable stakeholder relationships critical for long-term institutional success, particularly in challenging educational contexts that require community support and collaboration.

Moral leadership as a foundational competency enables other leadership capabilities rather than being a standalone ethical dimension. Theoretical frameworks that position moral leadership as a core competency from which other leadership dimensions emerge receive strong empirical support from research findings. (Akgöz et al, 2024; Arjanto et al, 2025; Hauseman, 2021). The theory also supports integrated leadership development approaches, prioritizing ethical foundation building as a prerequisite for comprehensive leadership excellence. Superior moral performance indicates effective moral development processes that can serve as models for other institutions and leadership development programs. However, disparities between institutions suggest that even in areas of strength, systematic development approaches can enhance consistency and effectiveness across different contexts.

Tridimensional analysis reveals complex profiles of spiritual leadership characterized by moral excellence, spiritual adequacy, and emotional challenges that coexist in dynamic tension. This pattern indicates that holistic leadership development requires differentiated intervention strategies that address specific dimensional weaknesses while leveraging existing strengths to create synergistic development effects (Azmi, 2020). The catalytic role of moral maturity in supporting other dimensions demonstrates the strategic importance of ethical foundations in comprehensive leadership development. Moral excellence as a platform for spiritual and emotional development suggests hierarchical relationships among dimensions that can inform systematic development approaches that are more effective and sustainable in long-term institutional transformation contexts.

4.   CONCLUSION

This study elucidates the multifaceted nature of spiritual leadership among female principals in "Sekolah Penggerak" (Transform Schools), challenging conventional assumptions about the natural superiority of female leadership in spiritual and emotional dimensions. Results demonstrate hierarchical, multidimensional profiles where moral maturity predominates as primary strength, followed by adequate spiritual maturity, while emotional maturity emerges as a priority development area with substantial inter-institutional disparities. Moral maturity serves as a catalytic forces that strengthen other dimensions, confirming theoretical frameworks that position ethical foundations as prerequisites for comprehensive leadership excellence. Conversely, limitations in emotional maturity reveal urgent needs for sophisticated,

systematic emotional intelligence development in principals' preparation and ongoing professional development.

This research contributes to the theoretical understanding of educational leadership by providing empirical evidence for the tridimensional model of spiritual leadership, specifically within the Indonesian educational transformation context. Findings offer evidence-based recommendations for leadership development programs in Indonesia's Sekolah Penggerak initiative, emphasizing the need for targeted emotional intelligence training while leveraging existing moral leadership strengths. The study reconceptualizes spiritual leadership as multifaceted competencies that require differentiated intervention strategies rather than assuming inherent capabilities.

The findings significantly affect educational policy formulation and leadership development strategies within Indonesia's educational transformation framework. Policymakers should prioritize comprehensive leadership preparation programs systematically addressing the tridimensional spiritual leadership model, particularly emphasizing emotional intelligence competencies where substantial gaps were identified. The observed inter-institutional disparities necessitate differentiated support mechanisms and context-specific intervention strategies rather than standardized approaches. Leadership training curricula require restructuring, including mandatory emotional regulation modules, stress management techniques, and interpersonal communication skills development, while leveraging demonstrated moral leadership strengths. Moral maturity's catalytic role suggests strategic training module sequencing, beginning with strengthening the ethical foundation to optimize spiritual and emotional competency development. Ongoing professional development systems should incorporate regular three-dimensional leadership assessment with targeted remediation programs for identified weaknesses. Establishing mentoring networks pairing high-performing principals with those requiring dimensional development could maximize moral leadership excellence while addressing emotional maturity challenges. Policy frameworks should mandate pre-service leadership preparation, integrating spiritual, moral, and emotional competencies as core requirements for principal certification. Resource allocation must prioritize sustained professional development programs, recognizing that spiritual leadership represents learnable competencies requiring systematic cultivation rather than assumed capabilities. These recommendations prove crucial for Sekolah Penggerak program sustainability and scalability, ensuring female educational leaders receive the systematic support necessary for comprehensive spiritual leadership excellence in educational transformation contexts..

contribution proves immense in developing research on female leadership, particularly in education at the primary school level.

6.   REFERENCES

Abdallah, A. K., & Farhan, A. F. (2023). Breaking Barriers And Empowering Women Leaders To Drive School Improvement. *Restructuring Leadership For School Improvement And Reform*. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85163653479

Adeniji, A., Osibanjo, A., Salau, O., Falola, H., Igbadume, F., & Edewor, O. (2020). Leadership Dimensions, Employee Engagement And Job Performance Of Selected Consumer-Packaged Goods Firms. *Cogent Arts And Humanities*, *7*(1), Article 1794936. Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/23311983.2020.1794936

Akgöz, E. E., Şahin, F., & Erdoğan, O. (2024). The Mediator Role Of School Climate In The Relationship Between Instructional Leadership Behaviors Of School Principals And Teacher Autonomy. *International Journal Of Educational Management*, 38(4), 789-806. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85195090893

Alemu, A. (2024). How Female Principals In Ethiopia Fight For Gender Justice: A Qualitative Study Of Their Challenges And Strategies. *Frontiers In Education*. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85208442900

Arjanto, P., Senduk, F. F. W., Melati, I. S., Kawulur, H. R., & Saputri, D. E. (2025). Moral Leadership In Primary Education: Constructing And Validating An Instrument For Principal Assessment. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 14(1), 45-62. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85214360562

Azmi, Z. (2020). Discoursing Women's Political Participation Towards Achieving Sustainable Development: The Case Of Women In Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS). *Kajian Malaysia*, *38*(Suppl. 1), 83-100. Https://Doi.Org/10.21315/KM2020.38.S1.5

Berkovich, I. (2023). Emotional Capital In Schools: Principals' Caring Leadership As A Moderator Of The Mediated Association Between Emotional Geographies And School Climate. *Journal Of Professional Capital And Community*, *8*(3), 234-251. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85158171396

Carrasco, A., & Palma, I. (2024). Female Leadership As A Process Of Collective Responsibility: The Case Of Chilean School Principals. *School Leadership And Management*, *44*(2), 156-174. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85179751765

Cruz-González, C., Rodríguez, C. L., Segovia, J. D., & Falcón, J. M. (2021). Female Principals Leading In Spanish Schools: Exploring Professional Values And Challenges Through Their Voices. *Journal Of Special Education Leadership*, *34*(2), 89-104. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85126517762

Eyal, O., Berkovich, I., & Yosef-Hassidim, D. (2024). Principal-Teachers Agreement On Teachers' Interpersonal Emotion Regulation: Relations With Principals' Transformational Leadership, Teaching Staff Positive Collective Emotions, And Teaching Staff

Organizational Commitment. *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, *33*(4), 445-462. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85208459808

Fuller, K., & Harford, J. (2015). Gender And Leadership In Education: Women Achieving Against The Odds. *Gender And Leadership In Education: Women Achieving Against The Odds*. https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/84967194510

Gil-Espinosa, F. J., López-Fernández, I., Jiménez-García, J. D., & Cadenas-Sanchez, C. (2024). Gender Differences In School Leadership: Collaborative And Task-Oriented Styles Of Principals In Andalusia, Spain. *Educational Management Administration And Leadership*, *52*(3), 567-584. https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85203017870

Glass, C., Cook, A., & Pierce, B. (2020). Do Women In Leadership Reduce Sexual Harassment Claims On College Campuses? *Journal Of Women And Gender In Higher Education*, *13*(2), 137-156. Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/26379112.2020.1782227

Hauseman, C. (2021). Strategies Secondary School Principals Use To Manage Their Emotions. *Leadership And Policy In Schools*, 20(4), 623-641. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85081740400

Jaiswal, M. (2025). Dynamic Nature Of Leadership – The Case Of University Management. *CASE Journal*, *21*(4), 564-578. Https://Doi.Org/10.1108/TCJ-06-2024-0179

Laritza, M.-R., Eva, C., Pilar, L. S., & Mónica, S.-P. (2025). The Role Of Experiential And Transformative Learning In Fostering Young Women's Leadership: A Pilot Study. *International Journal Of Management Education*, *23*(2), Article 101123. Https://Doi.Org/10.1016/J.Ijme.2024.101123

Li, J., Ju, S.-Y., Kong, L.-K., & Zheng, L. (2024). How Spiritual Leadership Boosts Elementary And Secondary School Teacher Well-Being: The Chain Mediating Roles Of Grit And Job Satisfaction. *Current Psychology*, 43(15), 13245-13260. https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85189204329

Lu, X. (2020). The Barriers, Facilitators, And Solutions For Women In Educational Leadership Roles In A Chinese University. *International Journal Of Chinese Education*. https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85091492785

Maharromiyati, Sumaryanto, Yuliana, L., & Suhardiman, S. (2024). Killing The Stereotype Of Women Leadership At Senior High School. *Journal Of Ecohumanism*, *3*(1), 78-95. https://www.scopus.com/pages/publications/85205898877

Mcgrath, K. F. (2020). When Female Leaders Outnumber Men: The Decline Of Male School Principals In Australia. *Journal Of Gender Studies*, *29*(5), 564-578. Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/09589236.2019.1642739

Mestry, R., & Schmidt, M. (2012). A Feminist Postcolonial Examination Of Female Principals' Experiences In South African Secondary Schools. *Gender And Education*. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/84865101517

Miah, P., & Gupta, N. (2025). Gender And Ethnic Diversity And Wage Gaps In The Canadian Chiropractic Workforce. *Discover Social Science And Health*, *5*(1), Article 3. Https://Doi.Org/10.1007/S44155-025-00148-X

Msila, V. (2020). Searching For Effective People-Centered Leadership Approaches In Schools: Voices Of South African Teachers On Spiritual Leadership. *International Journal Of Religion And Spirituality In Society*, *10*(2), 23-38. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85110622002

Mythili, N. (2019). Legitimisation Of Women School Leaders In India. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85058440400

Parham, T. (2024). Breaking Barriers And Leading With Distinction: The Impact Of Female Leadership In International Secondary Schools. In *Diversity And Inclusion Challenges For Leaders Of International Schools* (Pp. 145-167). Springer. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/86000273839

Park, V., & Datnow, A. (2022). Principals' Emotions In School Improvement: The Role Of People, Practices, Policies, And Patterns. *School Leadership And Management*, *42*(3), 289-307. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85130444324

Ramachandaran, S. D., Krauss, S. E., Hamzah, A., & Idris, K. (2017). Effectiveness Of The Use Of Spiritual Intelligence In Women Academic Leadership Practice. *International Journal Of Educational Management*, *31*(2), 160-178.

Samul, J. (2024). Linking Spiritual Leadership With Other Leadership Concepts: A Literature Review Of Four Decades. *SAGE Open*, *14*(2), 1-15. Https://Doi.Org/10.1177/21582440241251234

Spanò, E. (2020). Femina Academica: Women 'Confessing' Leadership In Higher Education. *Gender And Education*, *32*(3), 295-312. Https://Doi.Org/10.1080/09540253.2017.1336205

Stockton, C. M. (2024). Men As Advocates For Women In Leadership. *Christian Higher Education*. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85185515163

Subhaktiyasa, P. G., Agung, A. A. G., Jampel, I. N., & Dantes, K. R. (2023). Spiritual Leadership In Educational Organization: A Systematic Literature Review. *Journal Of Law And Sustainable Development*, *11*(4), 234-251. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85169593680

Thien, L. M., Lim, H. L., Ahmad Shabudin, A. F., Che Aman, R., Ismail, A., Zuharah, W. F., & Muftahu, M. (2025). Women Leadership In Higher Education: Exploring Enablers And Challenges From Middle-Level Academics' Perspective. *Humanities And Social Sciences Communications*, *12*(1), Article 35. Https://Doi.Org/10.1057/S41599-024-04278-6

Venter, D. J., Naicker, S. R., & Awodiji, O. A. (2024). Enhancing School Principals' Instructional Leadership Through Emotional Intelligence. *International Journal Of Educational*

Organization And Leadership, *31*(2), 112-128.
Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85204379523

Wang, M., Guo, T., Ni, Y., Shang, S., & Tang, Z. (2019). The Effect Of Spiritual Leadership On Employee Effectiveness: An Intrinsic Motivation Perspective. *Frontiers In Psychology*, *10*, Article 896. Https://Doi.Org/10.3389/Fpsyg.2019.00896

Zoro, B., Montecinos, C., & Castro, G. (2021). Examining Chilean Novice Principals' Work Through The Lenses Of Emotional Meaning Making. *Compare*, *51*(6), 891-909. Https://Www.Scopus.Com/Pages/Publications/85075736150