

SPIRITUALITY-BASED LEADERSHIP AS A NURSE'S FOUNDATION: LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF POPE FRANCIS

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Abstract

The aim is to explore and understand the concept of spirituality-based leadership by analyzing the life and leadership of Pope Francis, as well as the spiritual principles he adheres to. The background of the importance of spiritual values in a nurse's leadership, especially in facing moral and ethical challenges in the modern era, in providing nursing care services. The method used is a qualitative analysis of book and journal literature. The analysis was conducted to identify the leadership principles employed by Pope Francis and their relevance in the leadership context. The results of the study, spirituality-based leadership exemplified by Pope Francis, include exemplary actions, selfless service, humility, openness to dialogue, and a commitment to social justice. Leadership that can be applied by a nurse is an exemplary attitude, acting selflessly, being humble, and being fair. The conclusion is that leadership based on spiritual values from Pope Francis has great potential to provide strong direction in making wise decisions, motivating patients, and building an inclusive and sustainable community for nurses in carrying out their duties.

Keyword: Leadership, Spiritual, Paus Fransiskus, Nurse.



INTRODUCTION

Pope Francis is one of the most popular religious leaders in the world, not only among Catholics but also outside the Catholic community. Pope Francis is known for his inclusive and humble approach. He often emphasizes the importance of embracing all people regardless of background, social status, or religion. Pope Francis emphasizes the importance of inculcation of the faith, where the life of Jesus serves as an example for His followers (1). His popularity is not limited to Catholics but also extends to society, including those from different religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. His inclusive attitude, humility, and commitment to social issues have earned him respect and recognition as a global moral figure. Pope Francis's leadership approach has inspired many leaders outside the church to adopt spiritual principles in their leadership. This is evident in the increasing number of leaders in various fields who are beginning to emphasize the importance of integrity, empathy, and service in leadership. One example is nurses providing nursing care to each individual they serve. The provision of nursing care takes into account the spiritual values of the patients receiving care (2). This demonstrates that spiritually-based leadership is relevant not only in religious contexts but also in secular leadership. Education must instill solidarity, responsibility, and compassion based on love (3). This illustrates how spiritually-based leadership, exemplified by Pope Francis, is not only relevant in religious contexts but also has a broad impact on global society. A leadership approach that emphasizes love, humility, and service demonstrates that spiritual values can be a powerful force in inspiring positive change and supporting social welfare, as nurses

fulfill patients' spiritual needs (Aupia, et al., 2024).

The literature on spiritually-based leadership identifies this approach as integrating spiritual values with leadership practice. According to Croome, Catholic education should promote a culture of lifelong learning in which all stakeholders continually grow in their knowledge, wisdom, and spirituality (5). Spiritually-based leadership focuses on values such as integrity, empathy, and a noble purpose that transcends personal interests. Spiritual leaders encourage their followers to find meaning and purpose in their work and develop a sense of belonging to a community or organization. Studies in theology and leadership literature often highlight the importance of Christian values such as love, forgiveness, humility, and service in spiritual leadership models (6). Pope Francis, through his teachings and example, frequently emphasizes these values, which are recognized in various literature as essential for building strong and ethical leadership (6). Pope Francis's leadership is often associated with the concept of "servant leadership" (7). Pope Francis, as the supreme leader of the Catholic Church, has exemplified an inclusive attitude (Hildreth, et al., 2000). In the literature, this leadership is characterized by a leader's desire to serve before leading. Pope Francis has demonstrated this attitude through his humble actions and prioritizing the interests of the congregation. The literature mentions that servant leaders focus on the development of others and the community, and make decisions that support the collective well-being. The literature also notes criticism of spirituality-based leadership, particularly in the context of its application, which can be viewed as insufficiently pragmatic or too idealistic in certain situations. For example, Pope

Francis's approach to controversial issues such as the church's relationship with the LGBTQ+ community or abortion has sparked debate and criticism from both conservative and progressive parties within the church (9). The above literature reflects that spiritual-based leadership, as exemplified by Pope Francis, is deeply rooted in Christian teachings and universal values that transcend religious boundaries. The literature highlights the relevance and challenges of this approach in a complex and diverse world, and underscores the importance of integrity, empathy, and a commitment to social justice in leadership. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how spiritual values can be integrated into effective and ethical leadership practices.

This study aims to identify and understand the principles of spiritually based leadership demonstrated by Pope Francis. Through an analysis of Pope Francis's life and actions, this study will outline the spiritual values underlying his leadership style. This study aims to analyze the impact of Pope Francis's spiritually based leadership, both within the context of the Catholic Church and in wider society. This includes examining how the spiritual values implemented by Pope Francis influence policy, social action, and public perception. This study aims to analyze the impact of Pope Francis's spiritually based leadership, both within the context of the Catholic Church and in wider society. This includes examining how the spiritual values implemented by Pope Francis influence policy, social action, and public perception. One of the objectives of this paper is to provide practical recommendations for leaders in various fields, both inside and outside the church, to apply the principles of spiritually based leadership. This study will provide guidance on how spiritual

values can be used to improve the ethics, effectiveness, and positive impact of leadership. The ultimate goal of this study is to raise awareness of the importance of leadership based on spiritual and ethical values. By highlighting Pope Francis's example, this study hopes to inspire leaders across various sectors to prioritize moral values in their leadership.

The argument for a leadership approach centered on spirituality and humanity is that Pope Francis is not only a respected religious leader but also a symbol of hope and change in addressing many global social issues. This study is significant based on the argument: how can the spiritual-based leadership principles exemplified by Pope Francis be applied in contemporary leadership contexts, and what impact does this have on organizations or communities? The spiritual-based leadership demonstrated by Pope Francis is not only relevant in religious contexts but can also be effectively applied in secular contexts. Principles such as humility, inclusivity, and selfless service, upheld by Pope Francis, can serve as a strong foundation for modern leadership. However, unlike conventional approaches that often emphasize efficiency and profitability, spirituality-based leadership offers a more holistic and humane approach to managing organizations or communities. The application of values such as compassion and humility, for example, can promote a more collaborative and supportive work environment, which in turn can increase productivity and innovation (10). Furthermore, a focus on service and social justice can enhance an organization's public image and social responsibility, which in turn can strengthen relationships with communities and customers (11). Thus, this argument offers the perspective

that spiritually based leadership, as exemplified by Pope Francis, is not only relevant in religious contexts but can also be adapted to enhance effectiveness and social responsibility in various types of organizations and communities, including nursing. This suggests that spiritual values can be pragmatically integrated into leadership strategies to achieve a balance between ethical and operational goals (12).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method by conducting a literature review to explore and understand the concept of spirituality-based leadership, with a particular focus on the life and leadership of Pope Francis. The steps taken in this study: a qualitative, exploratory approach, which allows researchers to understand the meaning and values underlying Pope Francis' actions and decisions. This approach also allows for in-depth analysis of complex and contextual phenomena. The results of the analysis and interpretation are compiled in the form of an in-depth report, which not only describes Pope Francis's spiritually based leadership but also provides practical recommendations for leaders in various fields to apply spiritual principles in their leadership.

This research method is designed to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of spirituality-based leadership. By using a qualitative approach and thematic analysis techniques, it seeks to uncover values and principles that can inspire and guide leadership in various contexts, including nurses in providing nursing care.

RESULT

Principles of Spiritual Leadership Applied by Pope Francis

This study found that Pope Francis's leadership is based on several key principles, including humility, inclusivity, selfless service, and a commitment to social justice. Pope Francis consistently demonstrates humility, for example, by choosing to live in a simple place and avoiding luxury. He also encourages inclusivity by opening dialogue with diverse groups, including those of different religions and sexual orientations. This selfless service is evident in the Pope's various initiatives to help the poor and displaced. His commitment to social justice is reflected in his speeches and encyclicals, which emphasize the importance of environmental protection and addressing social injustice.

The Impact of Pope Francis's Spiritual Leadership

The impact of Pope Francis's leadership is far-reaching, both within the Catholic Church and in the global community. Within the church, the Pope has inspired many faithful to focus more on spiritual and moral values and has encouraged reforms in various aspects, including transparency and accountability in church management. Outside the church, Pope Francis has been a strong moral voice on global issues such as climate change, poverty, and migration. His compassionate and understanding speeches have attracted international attention and encouraged many world leaders to consider ethical and humanitarian values in their policy decisions.

Relevance and Challenges of Applying Spiritual Leadership Principles in a Contemporary Leadership Context

This research shows that the spiritual leadership principles applied by Pope Francis have significant relevance in the contemporary

leadership context. Principles such as humility and inclusivity can help build a more collaborative and equitable organizational culture, while selfless service can increase employee satisfaction and motivation. However, there are also challenges in applying these principles, especially in highly competitive or profit-oriented environments. Some leaders may find it difficult to balance spiritual values with business needs. Furthermore, there are challenges in ensuring that spiritual values are consistently applied at all levels of the organization.

DISCUSSION

Pope Francis's Spiritual Leadership Principles

Research shows that Pope Francis applies spiritual leadership principles, such as humility, inclusivity, selfless service, and a commitment to social justice. Issues such as poverty, injustice, and climate change require Catholic education to transform everyone into agents of positive change in global society (9). In the context of modern leadership, these principles can be seen as strategic steps to build trust and credibility. Humility, for example, not only positions leaders as servants of the community but also creates closer and more respectful relationships between leaders and followers. The inclusivity demonstrated by Pope Francis through interfaith dialogue and acceptance of diverse groups reflects the increasingly important values of pluralism and tolerance in today's diverse global world. Education opens students' horizons to discover greater meaning and purpose in life and to embrace spirituality as an integral part of human existence (Hamu, *et al.*, 2024). The principles of nursing care also encompass leadership principles based on deeply held faith and spiritual

values, while respecting the differences of each individual from diverse backgrounds (11).

The Impact of Pope Francis's Leadership

The impact of Pope Francis's approach to spiritually-based leadership is felt not only within the Catholic Church but also in global society. Within the church, Pope Francis has sparked significant changes in transparency and reform, and encouraged Catholics to focus more on service and love for others. Contemplative practices such as meditation, prayer, and deep reflection can foster self-awareness and the wisdom of connectedness necessary for living peacefully and meaningfully amidst the complexities of today, in accordance with Catholic teachings (Hamu, *et al.*, 2024). This demonstrates how spiritually-based leadership can inspire reform and renewal in large and complex organizations. Globally, Pope Francis has played a significant role as a moral voice on issues such as climate change and poverty. His touching and empathetic speeches have influenced world leaders and the general public, demonstrating that leadership rooted in spiritual values can have a broad and significant impact. All ethical, moral, and character values can be applied in Christian leadership activities and in all areas of community life (Abou Zeid, *et al.*, 2022). In its application to nursing care, spirituality-based leadership is highly relevant for nurses, given that humans are social beings and each individual is unique (15).

Relevance and Challenges in Implementing Spirituality-Based Leadership

This discussion highlights the relevance of spirituality-based leadership principles in the contemporary leadership context. These principles can help organizations build a more inclusive, just, and ethical culture. Humility and inclusivity, for example, can promote a more harmonious and productive work environment, while a focus on service can increase employee satisfaction and loyalty. However, the challenges in implementing these principles must also be recognized. In a world often prioritizing efficiency and profit, spiritual values may be perceived as less relevant or even counterproductive. Furthermore, there is a risk that these principles could be misused or interpreted differently, depending on the cultural and organizational context. While there are challenges in integrating spirituality into leadership, such as the diversity of spiritual beliefs and values, leaders need to find ways to lead inclusively and respect diversity. The importance of developing and practicing spiritual leadership is crucial for cultivating the psychological capital of nurses. As leaders, they must possess spiritual competencies to promote spirituality in the workplace on a daily basis as a fundamental area of management (Abou Zeid, *et al.*, 2022).

Integrating Spiritual Leadership in Secular Organizations

Although spiritually-based leadership is often associated with religious contexts, this research shows that the principles adopted by Pope Francis are also relevant in secular organizations. For example, values such as integrity, empathy, and social justice can enhance a company's reputation, attract talented talent, and strengthen community ties. Through

strong collaboration and communication, the pillars of Catholic education can strengthen Catholic identity and values in the educational process (1). This suggests significant potential for integrating spiritual leadership principles in various types of organizations, including businesses, governments, and NGOs. Nurses, who are constantly with patients in various situations, need leadership principles in managing their health and must be able to make decisions on their own (16). This can be found in the learning process provided by nurses. However, this implementation requires careful and sensitive adjustments to the organizational context and local culture. The teachings instilled must be grounded in Catholic teachings, such as respecting the dignity of each individual, promoting social justice, and maintaining integrity in communication (Hermania Bhoki, 2024).

Practical and Theoretical Implications

From a practical perspective, this study provides guidance for leaders in various sectors in implementing spiritually based leadership principles. Priests play a crucial role in providing spiritual and ethical guidance derived from Catholic teachings (3). Nursing leadership can use Pope Francis's example as a model for developing a more ethical and inclusive leadership style. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the literature on spiritual leadership by offering a concrete and relevant case study. It also challenges traditional views of leadership by emphasizing the importance of spiritual values in achieving broader organizational goals. Spirituality of service refers to the spiritual dimension of every service, encompassing spiritual values that can enrich the lives of the faithful served and are also motivated by a spirit of service in nursing (9).

CONCLUSION

The findings presented demonstrate that the spiritually based leadership exemplified by Pope Francis has a positive and significant impact, both in religious and secular contexts. Spiritual principles such as humility, inclusivity, and selfless service are not only relevant but can also contribute significantly to building a more just and humane society. However, challenges remain in implementing these values, especially in the context of the modern world, which often prioritizes efficiency and profit. This study suggests that spiritually based leadership can be a strong and sustainable model for addressing ethical and moral challenges in this era of globalization.

This paper proposes that spiritually based leadership, exemplified by Pope Francis, is a powerful model for meeting ethical and moral challenges in globalization. These principles can guide leaders across sectors in achieving operational goals while also fostering a just and humane society. For nurses, this model provides a foundation for delivering care in today's global era. While implementation can be challenging, the profound benefits demonstrate its transformative potential.

Further research needs to analyze the application of Pope Francis' spiritual-based leadership by nurses in providing nursing care.

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