

## Exploring The Connection of Spirituality at Work in Enhancing Nurses' Job Performance: Insight from Malaysian Hospitals

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**Abstract:** The performance of nurses can be seen as a reflection of healthcare organizations, as they constitute the most critical human resources within hospitals. However, challenges arise when issues such as staff shortages, high turnover rates, and burdensome workloads contribute to poor nurse performance. Conversely, the incorporation of spirituality in the workplace provides nurses with an opportunity to align their inner selves within a supportive community environment, fostering a deeper sense of purpose in their professional responsibilities. This study sought to determine the connection between spirituality at work and nurses' job performance, surveying 350 nurses employed in public hospitals across Malaysia. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 27, revealing that all three aspects of spirituality at work, namely inner life, meaningful work, and sense of community, had a positive and significant influence on nurses' job performance. This study provides potential aid to decision-makers in Malaysian healthcare organizations by offering significant insights for the development of strong spirituality at work values within their organizational setting. Additionally, this study presents recommendations for future research and proposes methods for the authorities to incorporate spirituality at work values into nurses' jobs, ultimately enhancing the overall performance of healthcare services.

**Keywords:** *Spirituality at Work, Nurses' Job Performance, Self-Determination Theory, Nurses, Hospitals*

### 1. Introduction and Background

Healthcare is acknowledged as a burgeoning sector due to its provision of medical services to the entire population, with particular emphasis on the increasingly expanding elderly demographic. Moreover, healthcare services play an essential role in the country by delivering care to individuals affected by illnesses and preserving their lives, especially after the world has encountered the COVID-19 problem. (Nasurdin, Tan, & Khan, 2022). In Malaysia, most people seek medical care through the public healthcare system funded by taxation. (Ahmad, 2019). The Ministry of Health (2021) statistics reveal that public hospitals provided medical care to 2,284,303 patients in 2020, and private hospitals attended 916,294 patients.

In the healthcare environment, nurses have a primary role in delivering patient care (Asiamah, Mensah, & Ocran, 2019; Greenslade & Jimmieson, 2007), distinct from those of their colleagues, such as doctors and other medical staff (Ali & Qun, 2019) and they constitute the biggest segment among healthcare professionals (Asiamah et al., 2019). Thus, their job performance is critical to high-quality healthcare services (Russeng, Wahiduddin, Saleh, Diah, & Achmad, 2020). Nonetheless, according to a study by Manogaran and Muthuveloo (2019), there has been a decline in nurses' job performance in Malaysian healthcare. This decline coincided with a significant rise in the number of complaints reported to the Ministry of Health, rising from 401 cases in 2015 to 453 cases in 2018 (Public Complaints Bureau, 2018). Among the reasons was the rapid increase in patient numbers coupled with a shortage of manpower, which has resulted in heavy workloads and longer working hours among staff nurses (Zakaria, et al., 2021). Undeniably, the former Health Minister of Malaysia, Khairy Jamaluddin, has also announced a shortage of nurses in public hospitals and clinics (Arumugam, 2022). Simultaneously, a significant number of skilled and experienced nurses are opting to work overseas due to more attractive remuneration offers, for instance, 2,000 nurses relocating to Saudi Arabia, and 2,351 nurses choosing to work in Singapore. In addition, Malaysia's nurse-to-patient ratio currently stands at 1:297, much below the World Health Organization's suggested 1:200 ratio (Ministry of Health, 2021).

From the above explanation, it becomes evident that a shortage of healthcare workforce, excessive turnover, and overwhelming work demands will result in poor nurse performance, which, will have a direct influence on the quality of patient care and the overall effectiveness of healthcare delivery (Russeng et al., 2020; Manogaran & Muthuveloo, 2019; Nasuridin, Ling, & Khan, 2018). Consequently, the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG3), which centers on advancing good health and well-being, faces considerable challenges. Therefore, nurses must be driven and inspired to enhance the quality of patient care, thereby improving their job performance.

Integrating spirituality in the workplace allows nurses the opportunity to harmonize their inner selves within a supportive community environment to find purpose when performing their work. (Daniel, 2019), which will alter their behavior and influence their job performance (Bharadwaj & Jamal, 2020). According to Gunawan, Hariyati, and Gayatri (2019), nurses who are highly motivated at work are 2.43 times more likely to do well in their roles compared to their less motivated nurses. Likewise, in a study conducted by Hisam and Sanyal (2021), as well as by Wagner, Brooks, and Urban (2018), it was demonstrated that spirituality at work is one of the internal factors that lead to a healthier and more efficient healthcare work setting, which subsequently adds to higher employee job performance (Ma'arof, Rashid, & Nasuredin, 2024). On the other hand, according to Kouhdasht et al. (2019) and Reutter and Bigatti (2014), an increase in spirituality at work correlated with a reduction in perceived occupational stress as well as enhanced psychological well-being among nurses. Furthermore, James, Miles, and Mullins (2011) claimed that spirituality at work can aid as a personal coping mechanism, especially in situations where nurses suffer from demotivation and excessive workplace pressure while fulfilling their duties and navigating workplace challenges (Fitriasari, 2020).

On top of that, this study supports the Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), which claims that motivational inclinations that govern behavior have substantial consequences for successful behavioral control and psychological well-being. This theory is described as a motivational structure that emphasizes extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, assuming that individuals possess an innate inclination for personal development and advancement. (Deci & Ryan, 1985); that is to say, when a person is satisfied with the three basic psychological needs such as the need for autonomy, need for competence, and need for connectedness, he/she will foster significant levels of intrinsic motivation which will result in beneficial work-related results such as high performance at work, favorable attitudes, and behaviors as well as enhancement in overall well-being (Gagne & Deci, 2005). According to Sharma and Hussain (2012), spirituality is a notion that profoundly influences an individual's inner drive towards motivation. Hence, based on the Self-Determination Theory, intrinsic work satisfaction among nurses is likely to increase when they can discover meaning and purpose at work and articulate beliefs that align with the ideals of the organization. Consequently, nurses will experience an elevated sense of competence, autonomy, and connection with their coworkers and superiors, ultimately resulting in improved nurses' job performance.

Amin, Lubis, and Putra (2020), and Belwalkar, Vohra, and Pandey (2018) collectively emphasized the importance of conducting empirical studies on spirituality at work to unveil its possible connection with employee attitudes and behaviors. However, Wei, Wu, Lee, and Tung (2020) and Wagner et al. (2018) asserted that there is a scarcity of research specifically examining the topic of spirituality within healthcare settings and its impact on nurses' work environments. Similarly, Johari, Shamsudin, Yean, Yahya, and Adnan (2019) identified a gap in the research about the job performance among public sector workers, notably nurses employed in public hospitals. Meanwhile, in Malaysia's context, exploring the connection between spirituality and job performance can offer new ways to enhance nurses' well-being, reduce burnout, and improve the overall quality of healthcare services in Malaysian hospitals. At the same time, since nurse retention is also a critical issue in many Malaysian hospitals which will affect the continuity and quality of care, spirituality at work could help in creating interventions to foster a supportive work environment, thereby improving retention rates. Therefore, building upon this existing knowledge, this study aimed to examine how elements of spirituality at work, specifically inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community, influence the nurses' job performance employed in public hospitals in Malaysia.

## 2. Literature Review

The section gives a comprehensive explanation of how spirituality at work relates to nurses' job performance

at public hospitals in Malaysia.

**Job Performance:** In the current business environment, employee job performance stands out as a paramount concern, as it serves as a direct reflection of the organization's image. Traditionally, job performance has been viewed as actions or behavior aligned with the aims of the organization (Campbell, 1990). Mahmoud and El-Sayed (2016) observed that job performance serves as a means to improve employee qualities, including traits, behavior, and attitudes, thereby bolstering an organization's productivity through adherence to established expectations and norms. Likewise, Visweswaran and Ones (2000) regarded job performance as encompassing activities that may be modified and encompassing products and behaviors that contribute to the organization's objectives. In contrast, Motowidlo (2003) characterized job performance as the overall expected value to an organization of distinct behavioral occurrences done by an employee within a specific period. In alignment with this perspective, Greenslade and Jimmieson (2007) agreed that inside the healthcare sector, nurses' job performance assumes critical importance, as the high quality of care offered to patients is significantly influenced by the attitudes and behavior of nurses.

Nevertheless, throughout the years, studies have advanced the measurement of job performance by incorporating extra behaviors that complement essential task-related activities. Borman and Motowidlo (1993) introduced the concept that job performance can be split into a minimum of two theoretical categories: contextual performance and task performance. According to Borman and Motowidlo (1997), both aspects of performance play a crucial role in attaining organizational goals, as task performance involves the behaviors necessary for fulfilling work tasks or core technical aspects of the organization. In contrast, contextual performance is required to structure the social and psychological environment within the organization. Motowidlo and Van Scotter (1994) asserted that each aspect of performance makes its contribution to the overall rating of job performance. Meanwhile, in the context of healthcare, nursing roles encompass a diverse array of behaviors, encompassing both task-related and contextual activities that significantly impact overall care quality (Greenslade & Jimmieson, 2007). Task performance in nursing involves activities such as giving home care guidance, administering medications and treatments, and demonstrating care and concern toward patients. Conversely, contextual performance examples include assisting unit nurses in addressing work-related issues, staying up late to assist patients, and actively engaging in voluntary hospital initiatives and communities, which are not obligatory but enhance the overall work environment (Greenslade & Jimmieson, 2007).

**Spirituality at Work:** The notion of spirituality at work has gathered significant attention, emerging as a prominent area of inquiry. This heightened interest arises from a shift in people's motivations at work, emphasizing the pursuit of deeper meaning and satisfaction beyond mere financial compensation provided by organizations (Sony & Mekoth, 2019). Recent disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have led to significant changes in working conditions, presenting notable challenges on physical, emotional, spiritual, and psychological fronts (Ledi, Ameza-Xemalordzo, & Ansah, 2023). In today's workforce, employees are actively seeking an environment that aligns with their spiritual needs (Bharadwaj & Jamal, 2020). A spiritual-oriented workplace stems from the belief that such an environment can empower individuals to integrate their inner selves with a sense of purpose while working towards attaining organizational goals.

Ashmos and Duchon (2000) characterized spirituality at work as the acknowledgment of employees' inner life, which thrives and is nurtured through meaningful work conducted within a communal setting. In essence, a workplace can be considered spiritual when it offers employees the opportunity to openly express themselves, cultivate meaningful relationships with the community, and engage in work aligned with their life purpose. (Daniel, 2019). In the context of nursing, Wei et al. (2020) discovered a significant correlation between spirituality at work and job performance due to its ability to promote favorable workplace conduct that ultimately enhances the quality of nursing care.

Previous studies have provided evidence supporting the positive effects of spirituality at work on various outcomes. These outcomes encompass service quality (Ledi et al., 2023), and organizational commitment. (Labetubun & Dewi, 2022; Hisam & Sanyal, 2021), Employee engagement (Almotawa & Shaari, 2020), intention to stay (Milliman, Gatling, & Kim, 2018), task and contextual performance (Fox, Webster, & Casper, 2018), performance among nurses (Marwan, Rajak, & Abubakar, 2019) and organizational performance (Garcia-

Zamor, 2003). Further, the conceptualization of spirituality at work is made up of several facets. Duchon and Plowman (2005) and Ashmos and Duchon (2000) proposed three facets: inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community. In contrast, Milliman, Czaplewski, and Ferguson (2003) suggested three elements: a sense of community, meaningful work, and organizational values. Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006) divided spirituality into four groups: a sense of community, engaging work, mystical experience, and spiritual connection. Likewise, Petchsawang and Duchon (2009) identified four elements: compassion, transcendence, meaning at work, and mindfulness. Nevertheless, the three dimensions of spirituality at work that are frequently employed for conceptualization, as established by Ashmos and Duchon (2000), consist of inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community. Therefore, this study employed the three dimensions of spirituality at work proposed by Ashmos & Duchon (2000).

**Inner Life and Nurses' Job Performance:** According to Iyer (2018), workers possess an inner drive and eagerly anticipate opportunities to show themselves on physical, emotional, and holistic levels within the workplace. Vaill (1998) described inner life as people's sentiments about who they are, what they are doing, and what they contribute. Similarly, Ashmos and Duchon (2000) viewed inner life as the degree to which an employee experiences optimism, self-awareness regarding personal values, and a connection to spirituality. Employees who can articulate their inner lives and exercise autonomy in their work tend to be more productive than others. (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). According to Sarmad, Iqbal, Ali, and ul-Haq (2018), when employees feel a strong emotional connection to an organization that encourages them to express their authentic selves, they are likely to surpass their expected job responsibilities. Furthermore, a study conducted by Daniel (2019) demonstrated a significant correlation between inner life and job performance. Similarly, a study performed by Mousa (2020) at Abu Dhabi University reported that inner life significantly influences the job performance of faculty members. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis for this study is as follows:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Inner life would significantly influence the nurses' job performance.*

**Meaningful Work and Nurses' Job Performance:** According to Sony and Mekoth (2019), employees derive value from their jobs for reasons beyond mere financial compensation. Therefore, individuals who perceive their work as meaningful may experience intrinsic motivation and contentment stemming from their growth opportunities (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). In contrast, employees who do not find their employment to be meaningful and purposeful are unlikely to perform at their fullest potential (Maslow, 1970). Hence, meaningful work can be defined as work that instills joy and enthusiasm, accompanied by a strong motivation to engage in daily work activities (Bharadwaj & Jamal, 2020). According to Belwalkar et al. (2018), when an individual's employment provides him/her with a feeling of purpose and connection with others, it leads to an emotional commitment to their work. Do (2018) argued that providing meaningful job tasks will make employees experience greater satisfaction in their work, ultimately resulting in an improvement in their job performance. Furthermore, Sarmad et al. (2018) revealed a significant influence between meaningful work and job performance. Likewise, a study conducted by Tong (2018) involving nurses in China found a significant association between meaningful work and both task and contextual performance. Consequently, the hypothesis posited for this research is as follows:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Meaningful work would significantly influence the nurses' job performance.*

**Sense of Community and Nurses' Job Performance:** According to Do (2018), fostering strong collaboration among medical staff can give employees a positive sense of community among employees. Therefore, a sense of community refers to a feeling of interconnectedness among team or group members, accompanied by an environment of open expression, care, and support towards each other (Bharadwaj & Jamal, 2020). According to Sintaasih et al. (2018), when employees perceive fair treatment within the organization, experience personal development through their work, and witness a collective effort in addressing issues, they are inclined to develop a sense of community, which may lead to improved job performance. Do (2018) discovered a significant and positive association between a sense of community and the job performance of staff employed at an international hospital. Similarly, a study carried out by Azeez and Genty (2018) involving academicians from two public universities in Nigeria found a significant relationship between a sense of community and organizational citizenship behavior (contextual performance). Hence, the hypothesis put forth for this study is as follows:

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *A sense of community would significantly influence nurses' job performance.*

### 3. Research Methodology

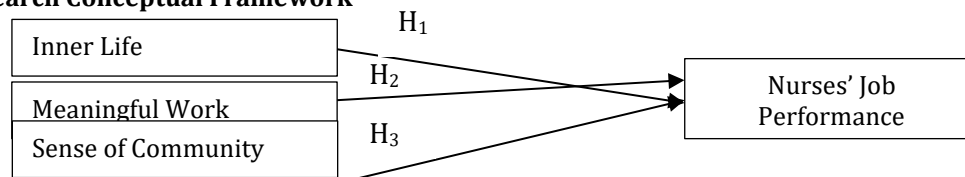
This section focuses on the research methodologies employed to determine the factors influencing spirituality at work and job performance within the context of Malaysian public hospitals.

**Data and Sampling Method:** Before collecting the data, ethical clearance was obtained from the Malaysia Medical Research and Ethics Committee (MREC). Following the approval, the researchers, with support from the Clinical Research Centre (CRC), contacted the directors of the Malaysian public hospitals to seek their participation consent in the study. However, only ten directors were granted their consent, and each participating hospital designated a matron to facilitate the distribution and collection of questionnaires. A total of 375 questionnaires were handed out to nurses and their respected direct supervisors (sisters) at Malaysia's ten public hospitals using a matching approach. Each sister was asked to assess not more than four nurses. The data collection returned 350 responses of which 345 were deemed usable, for an acceptable response rate of 92.00%.

**Measurements and Data Analysis Tool:** The questionnaires were prepared in bilingual (English and Malay Language) to cater to respondents from diverse races and educational backgrounds, and experts' opinions were taken into account to examine the translated questionnaire's content validity, readability, and general questionnaire design. The measurement of job performance was carried out using a 41-item Nursing Performance Scale designed by Greenslade and Jimmieson (2007). Among these 41 questions, 23 evaluated task-related performance, while the remaining 18 gauged contextual performance. The sisters were asked to evaluate the performance of their subordinates (nurses) performance on a 7-point Likert Scale. A rating of 1 denoted "severely below average" performance, while a rating of 7 signified "significantly above average" performance. The following are some examples of task performance questions: giving home care guidelines, attending to patients' worries, and notifying all unit nurses about patient tests and their findings. On the other hand, contextual performance was evaluated using a 7-point Likert Scale, with a rating of 1 indicating "not at all" and a rating of 7 signifying a "great deal". Samples of contextual performance questions encompassed activities such as assisting unit nurses in completing their tasks, staying up late to assist patients, and actively participating in hospital-related meetings. To evaluate spirituality at work, a set of 21 questions from Ashmos and Duchon (2000) was employed, and participants were asked to rate their responses on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agreed). Some sample questions include "I feel hopeful about life" and "My supervisor encourages my development".

Before conducting the actual study, a pilot test was conducted on 90 staff nurses from one district hospital in Malaysia's Southern Region. As a result, Cronbach's alpha in the pilot study was more than 0.70. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 27 as it is more flexible and functions very well in analyzing the survey data (Quinlan, 2011). The framework of this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework**



### 4. Results

The descriptive results derived from SPSS showed that all staff nurses had a diploma. The majority of the respondents were females (94.20%), while the remaining 5.80% were male respondents. Most staff nurses were married (63.90%), whereas only 35.10% were categorized as single, and a mere 1.00% had another marital status. This study involved mostly Malay nurses (85.90%), with a smaller percentage of other ethnicities such as 6.40% from others, 4.00% Indian, and lastly 3.70% Chinese nurses. The findings also indicated that nurses were employed across different departments. Among these departments, most nurses worked in the medical department (26.20%), followed by surgical (14.10%), pediatric (13.90%), obstetrics and

gynecology (11.50%), orthopedic (11.00%), and the smallest is operation theatre (0.30%).

**Table 1: Analysis of Demographic Profile for Nurses (N: 345)**

Demographic Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	5.80
	Female	94.20
Marital Status	Single	35.10
	Married	63.90
	Other	1.00
Ethnicity	Malay	85.90
	Chinese	3.70
	Indian	4.00
	Others	6.40
Education	Diploma	100.00
Department	Medical	26.20
	Surgical	14.10
	Pediatric	13.90
	Obstetrics & Gynecology	11.50
	Orthopedic	11.00
	Critical Care/ICU	5.60
	Ophthalmology	4.80
	Emergency	3.60
	Anesthesiology	3.40
	Oncology	2.80
	Multidisciplinary Unit	2.70
Operation Theatre	0.30	

Meanwhile, the findings of demographic features for sisters revealed that all sisters were female. The married sisters comprised the largest portion of respondents (90.90%), while 8.10% were single, and the remaining 0.90% fell into other categories. The majority of sisters participating in this study were Malays (76.30%), with Chinese comprising the next largest group (10.30%), followed by Indian sisters (10.00%), and the remaining referred to as Others (3.40%). In terms of education, 85.00% of sisters held a diploma, 13.10% held a degree, and the remaining 1.90% had a master's degree. The findings also indicated that most sisters were employed in the Medical Department (23.40%), with the subsequent highest in Surgical (15.00%), Pediatric (13.80%), Orthopedic (12.20%), Obstetrics and Gynecology (11.00%), and Operation Theatre (0.50%) departments.

**Table 2: Analysis of Demographic Profile for Sisters (N: 88)**

Demographic Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	100.00
Marital Status	Single	8.10
	Married	90.90
	Other	0.90
Ethnicity	Malay	76.30
	Chinese	10.30
	Indian	10.00
	Others	3.40
Education	Diploma	85.00
	Degree	13.10
	Master	1.90
Department	Medical	23.40
	Surgical	15.20
	Pediatric	13.80
	Orthopedic	12.20
	Obstetrics & Gynecology	11.00
	Critical Care/ICU	4.20

Ophthalmology	4.00
Emergency	3.60
Anesthesiology	3.40
Oncology	2.80
Multidisciplinary Unit	1.90
Operation Theatre	0.30

**Multiple Regression Analysis:** This study used multiple regression analysis to investigate the link between spirituality at work and the nurses' job performance in Malaysian public hospitals (H<sub>1</sub>-H<sub>3</sub>). The result presented in Table 3 shows that each aspect of spirituality at work, including inner life, meaningful work, and sense of community, was able to explain 25.00% of the observed variations in job performance (R<sup>2</sup>change = 0.25, F-change = 107.51, p<0.01). Hence, it confirmed that inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community were positively and significantly associated with nurses' job performance. The multiple regression results also reveal that meaningful work ( $\beta = 0.33$ ,  $t = 9.72$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) was a more critical factor in explaining the nurses' job performance because of its highest Beta value. Thus, these results support H<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>2</sub>, and H<sub>3</sub>.

**Table 3: Multiple Regression of Spirituality at Work and Job Performance**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variable	
	Job Performance	
	t value	Std. $\beta$
Inner Life	5.25	0.15*
Meaningful Work	9.72	0.33*
Sense of Community	4.85	0.16*
R <sup>2</sup>		0.25
R <sup>2</sup> Change		0.25
F-Change		107.51

**Discussion**

The present study examined the effects of spirituality at work, namely inner life, meaningful work, and a sense of community, on the nurses' job performance employed in public hospitals in Malaysia. All three hypotheses are supported by statistical findings. The findings revealed that spirituality at work positively and significantly influences nurses' job performance. That is to say, the utilization of spirituality at work could enhance the work atmosphere and facilitate nurses' job performance. Nurses can achieve higher performance or perform better in the workplace when they can openly communicate their inner life requirements at work, believe that their employment is important and meaningful, and foster a sense of connection and appreciation by their colleagues, especially while giving exceptional care to patients.

The findings of this study are consistent with prior works of literature. According to a recent study by Mousa (2020), spirituality at work has significant influences on employee job performance. Meanwhile, within the nursing context, Pasikhani and Kuchesfahani (2018) established a link between meaningful work, a sense of community, inner life, and contextual performance. Similarly, Marwan et al. (2019) also showed that spirituality at work has a significant influence on nurses' job performance. Wei et al. (2020) argued that spirituality at work is strongly tied to nurses' job performance because it can foster excellent workplace behaviors which directly impact the quality of patient care delivered by nurses.

Furthermore, several empirical studies have shown that inner life significantly affects job performance, consistent with previous research. (Mousa, 2020; Daniel, 2019). In line with previous findings, meaningful work was discovered to influence job performance significantly (Do, 2018; Sarmad et al., 2018; Tong, 2018). Furthermore, the study findings supported the significant effect of a sense of community on job performance, which is consistent with the findings of other studies (Azeez & Genty, 2018; Do, 2018; Sintaasih et al., 2018). This is understandable, given that scholars like Ali et al. (2021) and Moon et al. (2020) have mentioned spirituality at work has the potential to increase an individual's intrinsic motivation, which can have a good impact on an organization, including being dedicated and have a strong commitment towards achieving their work objectives.

Moreover, from the standpoint of Self Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) perspective, nurses who express their need for inner life are more prone to have high motivation while meeting day-to-day challenges and are likelier to perform better in their tasks. Along the same lines, nurses who experience a deeper meaning in their work are more likely to trigger high performance and improve patient quality of care. Nurses who can meet their desire for connectivity will experience a sense of belonging within the organization, which will lead to individual development and togetherness in resolving problems, consequently increasing the likelihood of greater job performance. Hence, this highlights the importance of supporting spirituality at the workplace so that both parties (health care organizations and health care personnel) can take equal benefits in the long term.

## 5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

The study findings offer valuable contributions and recommendations for hospital administration and supervisors regarding the role of spirituality at work and how it influences the behavior of nurses working at public hospitals in Malaysia. The hospital management should include spirituality in organizational culture and actively promote values such as compassion, empathy, and a sense of purpose in the workplace by organizing seminars, workshops, and training sessions that focus on exploring and strengthening different initiatives to raise awareness and perception on spirituality values. This is because cultivating a spiritual environment can enhance job satisfaction and reduce occupational stress which ultimately improves job performance and better patient care among nurses. At the same time, Matrons and sisters should adopt a supportive leadership style that aligns with spiritual values by being approachable, fostering open communication, providing regular feedback, and recognizing the spiritual needs of nurses which can lead to a more engaged and motivated employee. Supportive leadership practice by acknowledging spirituality at work can strengthen the connection between employees and organizations as well as between employees and their superiors, leading to high levels of performance and commitment. Hospital management also can encourage team-building activities that include elements of spirituality such as group reflections and shared purpose exercises. These activities can strengthen team cohesion through shared spiritual practices that can foster a supportive work environment which can reduce conflicts and ultimately enhance nurses' job performance. The significant findings of the study also could help policymakers in the healthcare sector to integrate spiritual well-being initiatives into human resource management practices, improving workplace morale and patient care quality.

## Conclusion

The present study offers empirical evidence for the proposed relationship based on Self Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985). The findings indicate that the Malaysian Ministry of Health and administrators of public hospitals should prioritize how spirituality at work may lead to constructive workplace behavior, while nursing leadership must take steps to incorporate spiritual values within their working environment. Nursing management and sisters can enhance their nurses' view of inner life, meaningful work, and community by promoting professional growth, enriching job experience, boosting cooperation, and nurturing a supportive and cooperative atmosphere. These hold significance as how hospitals handle their human resources will significantly influence nurses' work behavior.

While conducting this study, several limitations should be considered. First, the study sample included only nurses and their sisters who worked in public hospitals excluding those in private hospitals. Future studies should try broadening the scope to boost the generalizability of findings. Second, due to the study's cross-sectional nature, it is hard to show the causality of variables. As a result, a longitudinal study is recommended for future research to validate the precision of findings because individuals' behavior could change over time. Finally, this study only examined spirituality at work dimensions. Future research may want to investigate other variables, such as psychological capital, human resource management practices, and job characteristics.

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