

## Impact of Spiritual Leadership on Stress Among University Teachers Through Organizational Trust

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*This research endeavor sought to delve into the intricate interplay between spiritual leadership, trust, and stress within two esteemed private-sector universities situated in Lahore, Pakistan. The study comprised a substantial sample size of 375 participants, and data was meticulously collected through surveys, while employing the Heys process macro in SPSS for comprehensive analysis. The findings of this investigation yielded profound insights. Primarily, the study unveiled a compelling and affirmative direct correlation between spiritual leadership and trust, signifying that heightened levels of spiritual leadership were inextricably linked to amplified levels of trust among individuals within academic institutions. Furthermore, a significant inverse relationship between trust and stress emerged, indicating that heightened levels of trust were associated with reduced stress levels among the participants. Intriguingly, the study uncovered trust as a pivotal mediator in the relationship between spiritual leadership and stress. This mediation analysis underscored that a portion of the influence exerted by spiritual leadership on stress was transmitted through its profound impact on trust. Indeed, trust played an instrumental role in mediating the relationship between spiritual leadership and stress levels, specifically in the context of these private-sector universities. Based on these seminal findings, the study conclusively asserts that spiritual leadership assumes a pivotal role in nurturing trust within the academic institutions under scrutiny. Furthermore, trust emerges as a potent protective factor against stress, suggesting that individuals who perceive higher levels of trust experience a notable reduction in stress levels. These revelatory outcomes carry significant implications for leadership practices within educational establishments, particularly in the private sector in Lahore, Pakistan. Fostered cultivation of spiritual leadership qualities and the establishment of unwavering trust among faculty members and administrators may significantly contribute to the mitigation of stress levels and the promotion of a more salubrious work environment. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that these conclusions are contingent upon the specific context and sample size of this meticulously conducted study.*

## 1. Introduction

Modern life is too mechanical and complex despite having many facilities to spend a luxurious life. Although, modern pieces of equipment have eased up the life of the common man yet man is not free from psychological issues, tension and stress. He is equally disturbed in his family and professional life (Priya et al., 2020). The main reason is the mismanagement of his time. If he gives more time to his family, his professional life is affected and if he gives more time to his profession or job, his family life is affected. He needs to balance and manage the affairs of his life to minimize his stress (Haar et al., 2019; Jaharuddin & Zainol, 2019). A profession or job that is mainly based on human skills and services requires highly active, vigilant, and psychologically fit personnel for the smooth and successful operation of his profession or job (Nankervis et al., 2019). The education sector is one such sector among all other sectors whose success mainly depends upon its distinct human resource. Riyadi (2019) argues that if the human resource of this sector feels anxiety, depression, and stress, it will affect his performance negatively. Stress at work has become very crucial around the globe. It has negative impact on employee performance because it makes an employee mentally disturbed that he loses his confidence in work (Thanem & Elraz, 2022). Moreover, it hurdles in the way to achieve the goals of organizational success. Hence, there's serious need of stress management for organizational success (Altindag, 2020).

Despite numerous studies exploring leadership and stress in various organizational settings, limited research focuses on spiritual leadership and its potential impact on stress reduction among university faculty. While there are studies on spiritual leadership in corporate and business sectors, Arokiasamy and Tat (2020) argue that there is a need for more research on spirituality in academic settings. Few studies have investigated the application and implications of spiritual leadership principles within the context of higher education, specifically among university teachers. Moreover, In the Chinese education industry, Li et al. (2023) discovered a link between spiritual leadership and the stress experienced by teachers. However, there is a research gap in exploring the potential mediating role of organizational trust in the relationship between spiritual leadership and stress reduction among university teachers in the context of other countries other than China. Additionally, Chawla (2023) found that spiritual leadership is negatively correlated with work stress in the automobile sector of India. However, the connection between spiritual leadership and stress reduction in the academic environment remains underexplored, leaving a research gap in understanding how spiritual leadership practices may lead to decreased stress levels among university faculty. Furthermore, Terzi et al. (2020) suggest that spiritual leadership fosters trust among employees, but the literature is still lacking in terms of how much organizational trust mediates the link between spiritual leadership and lowering stress levels in university teachers. Akhtar et al. (2018) claim that stress has inverse relation to the performance of Pakistan's service sector and Faisal, Noor and Khair (2019) assert that the main challenges faced by university teachers of Pakistan are stress and depression. Past literature on stress in the context of Pakistan

highlights that stress exists among university teachers and it adversely affects their performance (Haque et al., 2019; Naz, 2022).

Faisal et al. (2019) claim that stress is extremely harmful to the mental health of university teachers in Pakistan. It can lead to serious consequences. Quraishi et al. (2018) suggest that stress among university teachers must be minimized to improve their performance. Hence, Usman et al. (2011) suggest future researchers to find out the antecedents of stress and Faisal, Noor, Khair, et al. (2019) suggest future researchers to find out stress-reducing factors among university teachers of Pakistan. Therefore, this study aims at fulfilling the objective of exploring antecedents of stress and stress-reducing factors among university teachers of Pakistan. This research aims to investigate the relationship between spiritual leadership, trust, and stress among university teachers. Firstly, it seeks to understand whether spiritual leadership has a direct effect on the stress experienced by university teachers. Secondly, in order to determine if trust functions as a mechanism by which spiritual leadership affects stress levels, the study focuses on examining whether trust mediates the relationship between stress and spiritual leadership. Additionally, it aims to examine the impact of spiritual leadership on the trust levels of university teachers, assessing whether spiritual leadership practices have an effect on the trust they have in their leaders. Lastly, it aims to assess whether trust influences the level of stress experienced by university teachers, examining whether higher levels of trust mitigate or reduce stress. This research is significant as it can provide insights into the role of spiritual leadership and trust in managing stress and promoting a positive work environment for university teachers, ultimately contributing to their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

## **2. Literature Review**

Spiritual leadership has gained increasing attention in organizational research as an influential factor that can impact employees' well-being and job-related outcomes. University teachers, as a critical segment of the workforce, face various stressors in their professional roles, and understanding the role of spiritual leadership and organizational trust in mitigating stress is essential for promoting their overall well-being and performance. This literature review aims to explore existing research related to spiritual leadership, organizational trust, and employee stress, with a specific focus on university teachers.

### **2.1 Spiritual Leadership and Stress**

Spiritual leadership is a unique type of leadership. It encompasses the values, attitude and behavior that help one to motivate intrinsically through vision, faith and altruistic love (Fry, 2003; Karadağ et al., 2020). Sholikhah et al. (2019) claim that it can play its role for motivating the employees towards a certain behavior. According to Supriyanto et al. (2020), a spiritual leader is one who deliberately observes the religious teachings and influences others to observe the same and he can change global dimension into spiritual dimension. They add that the ability to influence people is referred to as leadership. According to Alfarajat and Emeagwali (2021), spiritual

leadership is vital for introducing creative and innovative service behavior among employees. This highlights the importance of spiritual leadership in formulating the employee behavior. According to Malik et al. (2017) and Ozamiz-Etxebarria et al. (2021), university teachers face numerous stressors in their professional lives, including high workloads, time pressure, student-related challenges, research demands, and administrative responsibilities. Soto-Rubio et al. (2020) and Afzal et al. (2018) claim that prolonged exposure to these stressors can lead to physical and psychological health issues, reduced job satisfaction, and lower productivity. Hence, understanding the factors that contribute to stress among university teachers is crucial for developing effective interventions and promoting well-being in the academic setting. Therefore, when an employee feels stress at workplace, his stressed behavior can also be influenced through spirituality as claimed by Perera et al. (2018). They further state that stress can be tackled well through religious coping. Chirico et al. (2020) also claim that the adverse effects of stress can be controlled through spirituality. In this regard, Chen et al. (2019) state that spiritual leadership can play its important role to observe spirituality at workplace in reducing stress. This postulates the following hypotheses

***H1: Spiritual leadership has significant negative impact on employee stress among university teachers.***

## **2.2 Organizational Trust as a mediator**

Organizational trust plays a pivotal role in the well-being of employees and the overall effectiveness of an organization. It encompasses the willingness of employees to exhibit vulnerability and place reliance on the decisions and actions of their leaders and colleagues (Cho et al., 2021). When employees perceive a higher degree of trust within their organizational environment, it fosters a sense of diminished uncertainty and anxiety, leading to reduced stress levels (Top & Tekingunduz, 2018). Empirical research has consistently demonstrated that organizational trust acts as a mediator in the intricate relationship between leadership and various employee outcomes. For instance, Yue et al. (2019) found that trust mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. Similarly, in the context of spiritual leadership, Khan et al. (2022) substantiated that trust played a mediating role in the impact of spiritual leadership on employee engagement and commitment. Consequently, these findings give rise to the formulation of the following hypotheses.

***H2: Organizational trust mediates the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee stress among university teachers.***

***H3: There is significant positive impact of Spiritual leadership on organizational trust among university teachers.***

## **2.3 Organizational Trust**

The trust is a major element for being influenced by someone. Shattered trust can lead to undesired results. By using spiritual values, a leader can build up trust in employees that can lead to have desired employee behavior. Brück et al. (2020) claim that trust plays a significant role in

shaping human behavior. Furthermore, they state that the improved level of trust can lead to the employees overcome their stressed behavior. As per the findings of Ozyilmaz et al. (2018) and Verburg et al. (2018), organizational trust plays a pivotal role in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors. It refers to the confidence and belief that individuals have in the integrity, competence, and benevolence of their organization (Koohang et al., 2017). Zak (2017) claim that trust fosters positive relationships, facilitates effective communication, and enhances cooperation among members and this trust makes the organizations more productive. Hence, in the context of universities, organizational trust can influence job satisfaction, commitment, and well-being of university teachers. In addition to this, Top and Tekingunduz (2018) assert that trust has significant negative relation with job stress. This shows that trust impacts job stress negatively. This postulates the following hypotheses

**H4: Trust has significant negative impact on employee stress among university teachers.**

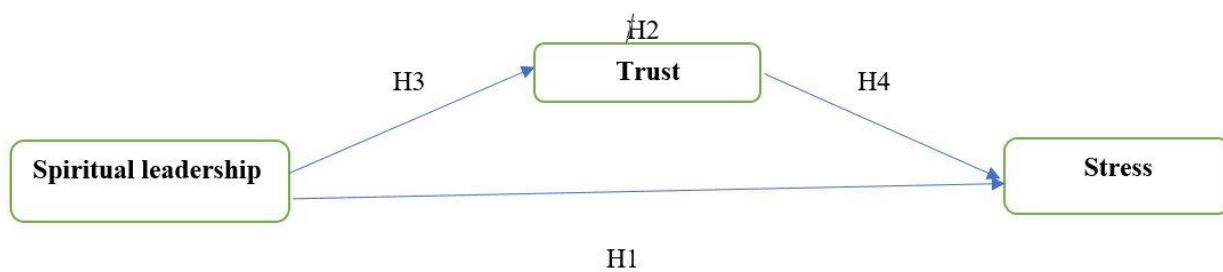
**2.4 The Context of Universities in Pakistan**

The context of universities in Pakistan presents its own unique challenges and opportunities. According to Malik et al. (2017), the multifaceted changes that higher education institutions are currently facing challenge their established practices and have an impact on their organizational structures, mandates, and authority. The stress-free working environments that previously pervaded the workplaces of higher education institutions have vanished. They added that employees, including teaching personnel, are now subject to stricter work-related restrictions, which could stress and exhaust them. Exploring these factors within the Pakistani context is crucial for developing tailored strategies to promote well-being and mitigate stress among university teachers.

**3. Methodology**

This study is quantitative in nature. The target population is university teachers of Lahore Pakistan. The sample is taken from the two renowned private sector universities of Lahore. The unit of analysis is faculty members of these universities.

**Figure No 1: Research Framework**



### 3.1 Scale and Measurement

The data has been collected through personally administered questionnaire adopted from previous researches having five-point Lickert scale. The variable spiritual leadership has been operationalized using 14 items from the work of Fry and Matherly (2006). The variable organizational trust has been operationalized using 6 items from the work of Loes and Tobin (2020). The variable stress has been operationalized using 8 items from the work of Garg and Saxena (2020). The total 425 questionnaires were distributed to the faculty of two major private sector universities of Lahore to take the feedback of 375 sample size using convenient sampling technique. The questionnaires that were not properly filled and unfilled were discarded. The response rate was 88.23%.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Reliability Statistics

Table No 1: Reliability Statistics

U1	Cronbach's Alpha	U2	Cronbach's Alpha
Stress	0.753	Stress	0.713
Trust	0.70	Trust	0.704
Sp.Lead	0.719	Sp.Lead	0.691
Overall	0.843	Overall	0.821

Table 1 presents the reliability statistics, specifically the Cronbach's alpha values, for two distinct universities, denoted as U1 and U2, along with their corresponding constructs. For University U1, the Stress construct exhibited a commendable Cronbach's alpha value of 0.753, surpassing the threshold of 0.7, thereby signifying a strong internal consistency for this measurement scale. Similarly, the Trust construct obtained a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.700, precisely meeting the acceptable level of 0.7, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Likewise, the construct of Sp.Lead (Spiritual Leadership) demonstrated a noteworthy Cronbach's alpha value of 0.719, once again surpassing the threshold, affirming a robust internal consistency for this scale. Moreover, the overall Cronbach's alpha value for University U1 stood at 0.843, exceeding 0.7, and thus, confirming good internal consistency for the overall measurement scale. This threshold of 0.7 or higher is widely acknowledged as acceptable for research purposes, further bolstering the reliability of the measurements. In contrast, for University U2, the Stress construct displayed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.713, surpassing the acceptable level of 0.7, indicating commendable internal consistency. The Trust construct attained a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.704, slightly above 0.7, which still denotes acceptable internal consistency. However, the Sp. Lead (Spiritual Leadership) construct exhibited a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.691, slightly below 0.7, though it remains within acceptable limits.



The overall Cronbach's alpha value for University U2 was calculated at 0.821, once again exceeding 0.7, thereby affirming good internal consistency for the overall measurement scale. Researchers can therefore be confident in the reliability of these measurement scales for assessing the respective constructs in both University U1 and U2. In conclusion, the reliability statistics demonstrate that the constructs of Stress, Trust, and Sp.Lead (Spiritual Leadership) exhibit good internal consistency, with their Cronbach's alpha values surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.7. The Trust construct, though slightly above 0.7 in both universities, still displays acceptable internal consistency. Overall, researchers can rely on the robustness and dependability of these measurement scales to effectively gauge the targeted constructs.

#### 4.2 Descriptive Analysis

**Table No.2: Demographics**

Gender	University	Frequency	Percentage
Male	U1	81	45.25
Male	U2	116	59.18
Female	U1	98	54.74
Female	U2	80	40.81
Age	University	Frequency	Percentage
25-35	U1	53	29.6
25-35	U2	40	20.4
35-45	U1	61	34.07
35-45	U2	71	36.2
45-55	U1	52	29.05
45-55	U2	70	35.7
55-65	U1	7	0.0391
55-65	U2	13	6.6
Above 65	U1	6	0.0335
Above 65	U2	2	1
Qualification	University	Frequency	Percentage
M.Phil./MS	U1	127	70.94
M.Phil./MS	U2	139	70.91
Ph. D	U1	52	29.05
Ph.D.	U2	57	29.08

The above table no.2 presents the demographics. Out of total 375 respondents, 179 respondents including 81(45.5%) male and 98(54.74%) female teachers from U1 and 116(59.18%) male and 80(40.81%) female teachers from U2 took part in this study. The age of the respondents from U1 and U2 ranges from 25 years to above 65 years. Out of total 179 respondents of U1, there are 53(29.60%) fall in the range 25-35, 61(34.07%) fall in the range 35-45, 52(29.05%) fall in the range 45-55, 7(.0391%) fall in the range of 55-65 and 6(.0335%) fall in the range of above 65. Out of total 196 respondents of U2, there are 40(20.4%) fall in the range 25-35, 71(36.2%) fall in the

range 35-45, 70(35.7%) fall in the range 45-55, 13(6.6%) fall in the range of 55-65 and 2(1%) fall in the range of above 65. There are 127(70.94%) and 52(29.05%) respondents who possess M.Phil and Ph.D. degrees respectively in U1. There are 139(70.91%) and 57(29.08%) respondents who possess M.Phil. and Ph.D. degrees respectively in U2.

#### 4.3 Process Macro Model 4 Results

For data analysis, statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 24 has been used. The process macro–Andrew F Hays model 4 is used to test mediation in the model. The results are as under

**Table No 3: Spiritual Leadership and Stress**

	Beta value	T value	P value
U1	-.8787	4.4125	.0000
U2	-1.3261	6.0897	.0000

The above table no.3 shows direct effect of spiritual leadership on stress in both universities. The results for university 1 are; the beta value represents the standardized regression coefficient or the effect size. In this case, the beta value for spiritual leadership in university 1 is -0.8787. This indicates that for each unit increase in spiritual leadership, there is an expected decrease of approximately 0.8787 units in stress, holding other factors constant. The t value measures the statistical significance of the beta value. In University 1, the t value for spiritual leadership is 4.4125. A higher t value indicates stronger evidence against the null hypothesis and suggests that the effect of spiritual leadership on stress in university 1 is statistically significant. The p value is associated with the t value and indicates the probability of obtaining the observed results by chance, assuming the null hypothesis is true. In this case, the p value for spiritual leadership in university 1 is 0.0000, which is typically considered statistically significant (below the commonly used threshold of 0.05). This reinforces the finding that there is a substantial correlation between stress and spiritual leadership at university 1 and provides strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The results for university 2 are; The beta value for spiritual leadership in university 2 is -1.3261. This indicates that for each unit increase in spiritual leadership, there is an expected decrease of approximately 1.3261 units in stress, holding other factors constant. The t value for spiritual leadership in university 2 is 6.0897, indicating a statistically significant relationship between spiritual leadership and stress in university 2. The p value for spiritual leadership in university 2 is also 0.0000, suggesting strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis and support the conclusion of a significant relationship between spiritual leadership and stress in university 2. In nutshell, it is concluded that there is a significant negative relationship between spiritual leadership and stress in both University 1 and University 2, within the private sector of Lahore, Pakistan. Hence, higher levels of spiritual leadership are associated with lower levels of stress in these universities.



**Table No 4: Mediation Analysis**

<b>Mediator</b> (Trust)	<b>P</b>	<b>LLCI</b>	<b>ULCI</b>
University1(U1)	.000	.4213	.6931
University2(U2)	.000	.3254	.6290

Table 4 presents the outcomes concerning the role of trust as a mediator between spiritual leadership and stress in the private universities of Lahore. For University 1, the mediator's (trust) p-value is recorded as 0.000, underscoring a statistically significant mediating impact on the relationship between spiritual leadership and stress. This signifies that trust assumes a crucial role in mediating the association between these variables. The lower and upper bounds of the confidence interval (LLCI and ULCI) for the mediating effect of trust in university 1 are reported as 0.4213 and 0.6931, respectively. This range represents a certain level of confidence within which the estimated mediating effect of trust is likely to lie. Similarly, for university 2, the mediator's (trust) p-value is also noted as 0.000, indicating the mediating effect of trust on the link between spiritual leadership and stress to be statistically significant. The LLCI and ULCI for University 2 are reported as 0.3254 and 0.6290, respectively, representing the lower and upper bounds of the confidence interval for the mediating effect of trust in this context. In conclusion, the findings substantiate that trust indeed acts as a mediator between spiritual leadership and stress in both University 1 and University 2, within the private sector of Lahore, Pakistan. The statistical significance of the mediating effect underscores the significant role played by trust in elucidating how spiritual leadership influences stress levels within these academic institutions.

**Table No 5: Spiritual Leadership and Trust**

<b>Path (a)</b>	<b>Beta value</b>	<b>T value</b>	<b>P value</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
University1 (U1)	.5572	8.0907	.0000	.5196
University2 (U2)	.4772	6.2009	.0000	.4067

Table 5 presents the findings of a comprehensive statistical analysis examining the direct relationship between spiritual leadership (IV - independent variable) and trust (mediating variable), with stress (DV - dependent variable) as the ultimate outcome, in both University 1 (U1) and University 2 (U2) within Lahore's private sector. For University 1, the path a beta value is reported as 0.5572, signifying that with each unit increase in spiritual leadership, there is an approximate 0.5572 unit increase in trust, while other factors remain constant. The path a t value is noted as 8.0907, indicating a high level of statistical significance for the direct impact of spiritual leadership on trust in university 1. Furthermore, the path a p value is recorded as 0.0000, indicating strong evidence against the null hypothesis and confirming a significant direct association between spiritual leadership and trust in university 1. The R-squared value for university 1 is 0.5196, representing that approximately 51.96% of the variance in trust can be attributed to spiritual



leadership alone. Likewise, for university 2, the path a beta value is reported as 0.4772, indicating an expected increase of around 0.4772 units in trust for every unit increase in spiritual leadership, while other variables are held constant. The path a t value is recorded as 6.2009, signifying a statistically significant direct effect of spiritual leadership on trust in university 2. The path a p value is 0.0000, demonstrating ample evidence to reject the null hypothesis and supporting the conclusion of a significant direct relationship between spiritual leadership and trust in university 2. The R-squared value for university 2 is 0.4067, suggesting that approximately 40.67% of the variance in trust can be attributed solely to spiritual leadership. In essence, the results highlight a noteworthy positive direct effect of spiritual leadership on trust in both University 1 and University 2 within Lahore's private sector. Elevated levels of spiritual leadership are associated with increased levels of trust in these academic institutions. The R-squared values indicate that a considerable portion of the variability in trust can be accounted for by spiritual leadership alone.

**Table no.6: Trust and Stress**

Path (b)	Beta value	T value	P value	R <sup>2</sup>
University1 (U1)	-.5536	6.2662	.0000	.4261
University2 (U2)	-.5959	8.7254	.0000	.5309

Table 6 presents the outcomes of a comprehensive statistical analysis investigating the influence of trust (mediating variable) on stress (DV - dependent variable), with spiritual leadership as the independent variable (IV), in both University 1 (U1) and University 2 (U2) within Lahore's private sector. For University 1, the path b beta value is recorded as -0.5536, signifying that with each unit increase in trust, there is an expected decrease of approximately 0.5536 units in stress, while keeping other variables constant. The path b t value is noted as 6.2662, indicating high statistical significance for the direct effect of trust on stress in university 1. Furthermore, the path b p value is reported as 0.0000, providing strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis and affirming a significant direct relationship between trust and stress in university 1. The R-squared value for university 1 is 0.4261, representing that around 42.61% of the variance in stress can be attributed solely to trust.

Similarly, for university 2, the path b beta value is reported as -0.5959, indicating an expected decrease of approximately 0.5959 units in stress for every unit increase in trust, while other factors are held constant. The path b t value is recorded as 8.7254, suggesting a statistically significant direct effect of trust on stress in university 2. The path b p value is 0.0000, indicating compelling evidence to reject the null hypothesis and supporting the conclusion of a significant direct relationship between trust and stress in university 2. The R-squared value for university 2 is 0.5309, suggesting that approximately 53.09% of the variance in stress can be attributed solely to trust. In essence, the results demonstrate a substantial negative direct effect of trust on stress in both University 1 and university 2 within Lahore's private sector. Elevated levels of trust are

associated with lower levels of stress in these academic institutions. The R-squared values indicate that a significant portion of the variability in stress can be accounted for by trust alone.

#### **4.4 Discussion**

The study delved into the intricate relationships among spiritual leadership, trust, and stress within two private-sector universities in Lahore, Pakistan. The path and mediation analyses revealed significant and positive direct effects of spiritual leadership on trust in both university 1 and university 2. This indicates that higher levels of spiritual leadership fostered increased levels of trust among individuals within these academic institutions, underscoring the pivotal role of spiritual leadership in nurturing trust. Furthermore, the results indicated significant and negative direct effects of trust on stress in both universities. Higher levels of trust were associated with lower levels of stress, emphasizing trust's protective nature against stress. Individuals who perceived higher levels of trust experienced reduced stress levels, exemplifying the importance of trust as a buffer against stress. Moreover, the mediation analysis unveiled that trust played a significant role in mediating the relationship between spiritual leadership and stress in both universities. Trust acted as a crucial mechanism through which spiritual leadership influenced stress levels.

The mediation analysis provided compelling evidence supporting trust's role as a mediator, substantiating the significance of trust in explaining how spiritual leadership impacted stress levels. Consequently, all hypotheses were supported by the findings, aligning with previous research (Ali et al., 2021; Kapoor, 2021; Samul, 2019; Yang & Fry, 2018). In conclusion, this study underscores the positive direct effect of spiritual leadership on trust, which, in turn, exerts a negative direct effect on stress. Moreover, trust assumes a vital mediating role between spiritual leadership and stress, emphasizing the significance of spiritual leadership in promoting trust and reducing stress levels within private universities in Lahore, Pakistan. The study offers valuable empirical evidence and insights into the dynamics of spiritual leadership, organizational trust, and stress among university teachers in the Pakistani context. These findings hold practical implications for university administrators, leaders, and policymakers, as they can guide the development of targeted strategies and interventions to cultivate supportive work environments for university teachers. By fostering spiritual leadership practices and nurturing organizational trust, universities can enhance the well-being and job satisfaction of their teaching staff, ultimately improving teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. The study's contextual relevance makes it particularly valuable to the Pakistani higher education sector, enabling tailored interventions and policies to address stress and promote teacher well-being effectively.

#### **5. Conclusion**

Upon conducting a thorough data analysis, it is unequivocally concluded that the results substantiate a significant negative correlation between spiritual leadership and stress in both University 1 (U1) and University 2 (U2) within Lahore's private sector. Heightened levels of spiritual leadership are unequivocally associated with reduced stress levels in these academic

settings. The beta values, along with their corresponding t and p values, present compelling evidence, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, thereby confirming the existence of a statistically significant direct effect. Additionally, the comprehensive analysis illuminates trust's paramount role as a substantial mediator between spiritual leadership and stress in both University 1 and University 2. The remarkably low p-values associated with the mediator (trust), precisely 0.000, unambiguously indicate the statistically significant mediating effect. Moreover, the confidence intervals (LLCI and ULCI) provide further support, delimiting the estimated mediating effect of trust within specific ranges, thereby conferring a certain level of confidence to the mediation. Furthermore, the investigation uncovers a profound and noteworthy positive direct effect of spiritual leadership on trust in both University 1 and University 2. Augmented levels of spiritual leadership unequivocally correspond to elevated levels of trust. The beta values, t values, and p values furnish robust evidence, culminating in the rejection of the null hypothesis, firmly establishing the existence of a statistically significant direct effect. Likewise, the analysis distinctly reveals a substantial negative direct effect of trust on stress in both University 1 and University 2. Elevated levels of trust unequivocally correspond to diminished stress levels. The beta values, t values, and p values furnish compelling evidence, culminating in the rejection of the null hypothesis, firmly validating the existence of a statistically significant direct effect. In summary, the research findings unequivocally demonstrate that spiritual leadership exerts a direct negative impact on stress levels in both University 1 and University 2. Additionally, trust assumes a pivotal role as a significant mediator, explicating the intricate mechanism through which spiritual leadership influences stress levels. The results conclusively suggest that higher levels of spiritual leadership engender increased levels of trust, which, in turn, yield lower stress levels among university faculty. These profound insights hold vital implications for private sector educational institutions in Lahore, Pakistan. The cultivation and nurturing of spiritual leadership qualities among academic leaders have the potential to not only ameliorate stress levels among university faculty but also foster a culture of trust within the institution. This, in turn, can augment overall well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity among faculty members, fostering a positive work environment and ultimately enhancing educational outcomes.

### **5.1 Limitations**

While conducting the study on the impact of spiritual leadership on stress among university teachers through organizational trust in the context of two universities in Pakistan, it is imperative to acknowledge several inherent limitations. Foremost, the findings may possess limited generalizability due to the study's specific focus on only two universities in Pakistan. Consequently, the results may not be fully representative of the entire university population in the country or applicable to other universities in different regions. Moreover, the sample size of 375 participants might not comprehensively capture the diverse perspectives and experiences of all university teachers within the selected institutions. Therefore, the sample's representativeness of the broader population of university teachers could be questioned. Another noteworthy limitation pertains to the study's cross-sectional design, which merely captures data at a singular point in

time. Consequently, the ability to establish causal relationships or ascertain the direction of the observed effects is restricted. Utilizing longitudinal or experimental designs would offer more robust evidence to establish causality in such investigations. Furthermore, the cultural context specific to the two universities in Pakistan could potentially influence the study's findings. Cultural nuances might impact the dynamics of spiritual leadership, organizational trust, and stress in unique ways, warranting caution in generalizing the results to other cultural settings. Despite these limitations, it is crucial to recognize that the study provides valuable insights into the intricate relationship between spiritual leadership, organizational trust, and stress among university teachers within the selected universities. As with any research, acknowledging and addressing these limitations can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

## 5.2 Future Research Direction

Future research should aim to overcome these limitations by including a more diverse sample, employing longitudinal designs, and considering additional factors that may contribute to stress among university teachers. Longitudinal studies can help understand the causal relationships between spiritual leadership, trust, commitment, whole-life management, and stress among university teachers. By following participants over an extended period, researchers can assess their interactions and dynamics. In addition to this, investigating additional mediating factors, such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, social support, and organizational culture, can provide a more nuanced understanding of the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors affecting stress levels. Moreover, designing and implementing interventions based on spiritual leadership, trust, commitment, and whole-life management can further explore their effectiveness in reducing stress among university teachers. Besides this, cross-cultural studies can reveal cultural variations in the significance and manifestation of these factors, leading to the development of evidence-based interventions and strategies for promoting well-being and job satisfaction in the education sector.

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