



# Elements of Spiritual Leadership and Its Relations to Leadership Communication in Imran Khan's Speeches at International Forums

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**Abstract:** The study employs Western spiritual leadership theories yet is supposed to be from an Asian-Pakistani perspective. Associating Imran Khan's (IK) political communication with these spiritual leadership theories would transform them into the eastern-cum-Asian context. IK and other world leaders may communicate distinctively in public interaction. Because political/religious leaders in Pakistan frequently utilise religious references in their communication to persuade their supporters, mediating or moderating political communication or leadership communication accordingly. Thus, spiritual leadership ideas influence attitudes and behaviours religiously. This qualitative study analysed textual speeches employing a directed qualitative content method enhancing trustworthiness. Researchers transcribed IK's video speeches (2008-2022) using Notta Premium. In the findings, IK cited Islam and Islamic history, knowing that his audience values a spiritual leader who speaks about religious teachings alongside political communication and understands the importance of religious spirituality. His communication may inspire local trust and optimism. However, religious implications in political communication may confound international audiences. Thus, IK utilised local spiritual/religious leadership elements to pursue Pakistanis' devotedly influenced audience in his speeches.

**Keywords:** Leadership Communication, Spiritual Leadership, Political Communication, Elements of Spiritual Leadership, Directed Qualitative Content Analysis

## 1. Introduction

The current study deals with IK's political speeches involving spirituality to influence the audience. His way of communication as a political leader may be considered influential, as he is skilled in stimulating religious spirituality in his speech. Leadership communication may seem diversified in public addresses by IK and other world leaders. For example, political and religious leaders in Pakistan frequently use references to religion in their speeches and political communication to attract their followers. So too, they might inspire dread of the afterlife, like how the current political communicator (IK) uses religious analogies to convince his audience that they should not worry. Alternatively, this local political communication (keeping religious elements) would not influence the global audience (especially the West), as the definition of spirituality may differ. For instance, the present research aimed to determine what aspects of spiritual leadership of Hatcher (1991) and Fry (2003) were utilised by IK in leadership communication at the international forums in his speeches. As for political communication, concerns are purposeful about politics (Norris 2001: 11631; McNair 2017). At the same time, leadership communication can be mediated or moderated (Reichert & Print, 2017) depending on communicative reasons or motivations (Bayes et al., 2020). As a result, attitudes and behaviours may be influenced (Udin, 2020), and the impacts can be examined by observing leadership communication related to leadership or spiritual leadership.

A leader encourages the international audience to improve political relationships, aligning with their religiopolitical ideals, and tries to influence their ideas and actions. However, some leaders can present their ideology in a way that can create confusion between the local and global definitions of spiritual leadership. This study offers evidence of a Muslim leader IK's, political representation at the worldwide level. Considering the religious elements, this study on IK leadership communication can significantly become a reference or model for future studies on leadership, specifically in Muslim communities and countries. Therefore, the

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present model can also be applied to any Muslim community in other localities or regions. This research also encourages other scholars to take motivation from Fry (2003) and Hatcher (1991) to construct a leadership communication model based on the political values deduced from religious spirituality. So, this study examines the role of leadership communication in targeted speeches of the leader (i.e., aired on YouTube) employing the elements of spiritual elements of leadership.

RQ: Are deductive elements of spiritual leadership present in the political communication of IK?

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the theoretical framework deduced by the present researchers from Hatcher (1991) and Fry (2003), specifically focusing on the deduced elements of spiritual leadership.

### 2.1 Spiritual Leadership

The current study intends to deal with the element of spiritual leadership that appears to exist in the speech content. The study aims to determine how political leadership uses the opportunity to motivate the public through political communication. Most leaders highly try to influence the thought and performance of the people after observing their trends, beliefs, and faith. In this regard, several fields of study over the years have started to emphasise certain parts of leadership theories. Many researchers studied spiritual leadership and its influence on people assessing the level of moral character traits a leader possesses, such as honesty and openness in communication that influenced their success (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013; Roof et al., 2017; Samul, 2019; Samul & Wangmo, 2021). According to Fry (2003), spiritual leadership is crucial for an organisation's success in transitioning and maintaining a learning culture alongside motivational, charismatic, or transformational leadership. According to this theory, spiritual leadership should be studied with specific dimensions compared to other leadership theories. Spiritual leadership qualities focus on a leader's performance and how he performs his tasks with uniformity and consistency. In addition, by appealing to their most basic spiritual needs, leaders and their followers are more likely to invest in the success of the organisation they serve. Although Fry (2003) separates spirituality from religion or God, political leaders strive to take advantage of the beliefs and faith of the masses to some extent. The researchers in the current research also have tried to determine the existence of spirituality if found in the speaker's speeches that he delivered on international forums.

Fry (2003) defines spiritual leadership as a set of personal beliefs, attitudes, and deeds that inspire followers to feel a sense of spiritual vitality through their own calling and participation in a larger community of believers. Since the content or data of the present research consists of speeches made by IK on different occasions on the international level, the researchers have gone through the content analysed to fulfil the research's aim(s) and objective(s). According to the spirit of the theoretical framework, the leader prevails in the meaningfulness of his goals and involvement of their followers in their communication beyond the self (selfishness) possessing the elements (spiritual leadership characteristics) discussed briefly below.

**Vision / Inspired Vision:** Leadership requires vision, the ability to look beyond the present and into the future, to see in novel ways, to see with single-minded intent, to see under the surface and into the heart of things, to see the big picture and not just the parts (Hatcher, 1991) specifically while vision communication (Venus, 2019).

**Centering and Focus:** Focus can be easily diverted by minor emergencies, pressing deadlines, muddled details, and other distractions (Mcwatt, 2021). Fast and steady vision is made possible by this focalisation. Leaders often report feeling most inspired and effective when they can bring their attention centring and focus on a task. According to Hatcher (1991), even the most centred and focused leaders are human and susceptible to fear, discomfort, and frustration. The focus leader is driven by urgency, like a homing pigeon or a migrating bird. 'Homing sense' is an inspired vision that a leader uses to guide the team home.

**Integrity:** Vision and focus inspire integrity. It means 'truth' (i.e., to one inspired vision). Integrity implies being honest and living your truths (Fry, 2003). Our work and higher selves lack focus, vision, and alignment (Fry, 2003). When considering integrity, we automatically believe how one would handle a moral problem, such as sacrificing one's principles to succeed professionally or keep one's job. A spiritual leader possesses specific virtues such as patience, kindness, lack of jealousy, forgiveness, humility, selflessness, self-control, trust, loyalty, and honesty. These virtues form the basis for this idea of integrity. These values may be operationalised through positive affirmations grounded in personal actions. The core of unconditional giving and receiving is separating love from need, which has significant emotional and psychological benefits (Fry, 2003).

**Desire and Courage:** The spiritual leadership style is not an easy victory (Khan et al., 2020). Leaders in the spiritual world are brave and determined enough to make their ideals a reality. They have grit and courage in spades. Wanting something requires taking a chance on yourself and others. This spiritual leadership requires bravery, enthusiasm, aim, and resolve. Anyone may create one of these traits since vision alone is insufficient. After that, 'desire' can drive leaders to pursue goals that seem out of their reach. Leadership is "an existential act of bravery and determination" (Ritscher, 1986, p. 66). This perspective conveys love, concern, emotional openness, and acceptance and helps unite people to pursue their shared goals (Fry, 2003).

**Empowerment of Others:** The ability to empower others is not a leadership trait but a characteristic of the empowered individual. Leaders can stifle or facilitate employee development by shaping the workplace into a supportive setting for reaching individual goals creating an empowering workplace (Kitscher, 1986). Leaders must believe in the vision, cultivate the desire and will to realise the goals in a grounded, responsible, nonreactive, focused manner, and be prepared to go the distance to empower others (Hatcher, 1991).

**Hope / Faith:** According to Webster's Online Dictionary (n. d.), faith is the conviction of things not seen and the assurance of things hoped for. Wishful thinking and confidence in the absence of evidence are hope. Hope has anchored in faith, an unproven belief. Hope is faith, as its values, ideas, and actions prove that the desired outcomes will be achieved confidently (MacArthur, 1998). Faith is shown through deeds. Comparing religion to humans is common (ibid). Therefore, having faith necessitates confidence in a vision, which drives effort and fuels dynamic faith (Fry, 2003; MacArthur, 1998).

To summarise the causal model of spiritual leadership from Fry (2003), according to this theory of spiritual leadership, if a leader gives his followers a reason to believe in the organisation's future (followers and political party in the present case), they will be more committed to it on their own accord, driven by their desires and expectations. Giving and receiving selfless love in the name of a shared mission helps members feel understood and valued while simultaneously dispelling the negative emotions associated with stress, anxiety, wrath, jealousy, selfishness, failure, and guilt. Thus, the vision (performance), altruistic love (reward), and hope/faith (effort) cycle of intrinsic motivation improves both spiritual well-being (e.g., a sense of calling and belonging) and organisational success (via things like increased performance) (Fry, 2003).

In the spiritual realm, leaders steer, inspire, and uphold, taking the lead through discussion and debate, believing that people can make good choices and be accountable for their own lives if they are involved and given all the relevant information (Powers, 1979).

### 3. Methodology

The present study studies communication within a qualitative paradigm. The current investigation aimed to determine the deductive elements of spiritual leadership (based on the specific theoretical assumptions described in the theoretical framework and Table 1), so in light of previous communication research, the researchers found the content analysis approach suitable for the present study. After that, the researchers decided to implement qualitative content analysis observing the nature of the study. For instance, without quantification, QCA codes communication, text (verbal or written), statements, phrases, words, images, and documents (Kibiswa, 2019; Mayring, 2000). Experts/researchers apply QCA deductively, inductively, or summative (Mayring, 2000, 2014; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Speech/text is the unit of analysis in this study (Table 1). Thus, the researchers of the present research derived categories from the spiritual leadership theory, focusing on Hatcher (1991) and Fry (2003). This activity assesses a hypothesis/theory based on theory (Rasool et al., 2022). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) remark that "The researchers use existing theory or prior research to develop the initial coding scheme before the data analysis" (p. 1286). The directed QCA perspective was used to deduce and integrate this strategy according to the needs of the present paper; however, the precise method can be read from Kibiswa (2019).

Develop operational definitions and the study frame: 'Reading and contemplating theory' was the first step of the Directed QCA process to deduce categories based on the employed theory's themes. In the present research, the researchers defined each code and subcode in an operational coding frame that includes phases (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2000; Rasool et al., 2023a). Therefore, in the present research, five main categories/themes (see Table 1.) were developed, adapting Hatcher's (1991) and Fry's (2003) theories of spiritual leadership.

**Table 1:** Coding Protocol

Main Categories (subcategory)	Operational themes/categories	Operational Definitions/Meanings
Elements of Spiritual Leadership in Political Communication	Vision / inspired vision (Hatcher, 1991; Fry, 2003)	Speech/text or writing suggests a tendency of communication with followers to reach out and embrace something more expensive than themselves. - by clarifying the general direction of change, simplifying more detailed decisions
	Centering and Focus (Hatcher, 1991)	Speech/text or writing suggests a tendency of Centering and Focusing on the vision.
	Integrity (Fry, 2003)	Speech/text or writing suggests a tendency of communication to remain on the path, regardless of where it leads, and communication as the vehicle of change.
	Desire and Courage (Hatcher, 1991)	Speech/text or writing suggests a tendency of courage and drive to manifest desires and vision in the world.

Main Categories (subcategory)	Operational themes/categories	Operational Definitions/Meanings
	Empowerment of others (Hatcher, 1991)	Speech/text or writing suggests a tendency to ‘give away power’, making others feel powerful.
	Hope/Faith (Fry, 2003)	Speech/text or writing suggests a tendency to hope and faith in the vision.

Source: adapted and recreated from Kibiswa (2019)

Table 1 shows a coding frame with columns for each element to facilitate the study. It includes (1) short statement/s drawn from/about the theory/ies to be tested, (2) categories/themes/codes applied by the researchers from theory/ies. Similarly, (3) testing subthemes/subcategories/subcodes; (4) the role of operational definitions for themes and subthemes; and (5) then operationalised them in Atlas. ti (Version 23) for each code/subcode to attach to each meaning unit in the read texts. Graneheim and Lundman (2004) define ‘theme’ as a thread of an underlying meaning through condensed meaning-based units, codes, or categories, on an interpretative level... an expression of the latent content of the text” (p. 107). Patterson and Williams (2002) defined a meaning unit as “an idea complete and coherent enough that it can be focused on separately” (p. 47) inside the text. Operational definitions indicate when a text passage or chunk can be grouped into a category/subcategory during theme identification.

Determining the unit of analysis and sampling materials to be analysed: After defining the central concept of the study and the theory/aspects to be tested, the present researchers picked/selected what to analyse to achieve the purpose of the study. This decision entails choosing the unit of analysis and the appropriate sample of all data sources. Units of analysis are identifiable, discrete elements of the sample of speech content to be analysed one by one by the researchers to achieve the goals of the current study, while units are parts of the study content (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The researchers focused on the political communication of IK (delivered in international forums) as a text study for analysis. Deductive analysis requires deliberate, theory-guided, case-confirming/disconfirming sampling (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Patton, 2002). Thus, it is necessary to determine whether the data resources somehow fit or challenge the categories/topics based on the theory and subthemes that lead the present research. Text (s) speeches in written form have been collected that support or contradict the purpose of the study and validate or disprove the researchers’ beliefs.

Getting a sense of the data: The researchers read the first batch of materials literally (Mason, 2002; Miller & Crabtree, 1999), immersed in the data, and made meaning of them (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Kyngäs, 2020; Patton, 2002). In the first reading, all the data fragments whose latent or manifest contents matched the theories-based themes and subthemes provided in the study coding scheme (Table 1). Then, in the second reading, all text passages that express or include the same ideas as themes/subthemes from theories were anchored to each devised theme or subtheme through Atlas.ti (Version 23). Since the process is iterative, the researchers reviewed the text (s) with repeated readings to decide if more materials were required (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). This process of repeatedly analysing the reading should produce a text or document with the meaning units of those texts highlighted with the coding deduced by the researchers (Table 1) for each theme/subtheme based on theory.

Data coding and organising: To organise readings for treatment, the researchers reread the text interpretively and reflexively, as Mason (2002) suggested. They applied operational coding agenda codes and subcodes (see Rasool et al., 2023a; Rasool et al., 2023b) for more details on the operationalisation of coding agenda). They followed operational coding agenda codes/subcodes while coding these meaning-based units. Atlas.ti produced (a) document/s with (a) page/s that created codes of text sections with a code/subcode category/ies that matched its operational description inside the operational coding agenda (see Table 1) for each resource read, transcribing all highlighted and coded portions.

Making connections, interpreting them, and drawing conclusions: Here, the researchers generated meanings, made inferences from dispersed data at their disposal, and dug deeper into what data were suggested by building a logical chain of evidence, contrasting/comparing text passages with theory-based themes/subthemes and between them at both manifest and latent content levels, and offering explanations consistently with settings from which data were derived (Patton, 2002). This process can also involve identifying/refining themes/subthemes from highlighted sections that do not fall into any established category/subcategory (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) and enriching/refining theories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Verifying the plausibility of the interpretation and ensuring trustworthiness. The researchers discussed the study’s findings, process, and strengths and weaknesses. They supported interpretations and conclusions with quotations, etc. According to Merriam (2001) and Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), these allow the reader to evaluate the findings’ transferability, reliability, and confirmability. However, the reader decides whether qualitative study results are reliable (Merriam, 2001; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Consequently, when data were drawn primarily from documented transcripts, researchers ensured that each sampled material was communicated by the identifiable speaker/author in the preparation phase. The communicator (IK) can be

considered identifiable as a well-known speaker and author, even a Chancellor at The University of Bradford, United Kingdom. He also served as Prime Minister of Pakistan (18 August 2018 – 10 April 2022). Furthermore, the targeted communicator of the current study has been included in the top 500 Muslim political leaders of the Muslim world for consecutive 5 years, which also ensures trustworthiness.

#### 4. Findings

##### 4.1 Inspired Vision

A spiritual and political leader constantly narrates his past decisions to prove his political vision and struggle. He inspires his supporters by dreaming of a great future for his nation. He believes that a bright future promises progress for his nation. As a political leader, the speaker (IK) presents models of religious doctrines and behaviour by using the prevailing situation and mentality of Pakistani people who seem inclined to spiritual aspects. Unlike other Pakistani political leaders, he seems to claim to be sympathetic to the public that has been deprived of their fundamental rights. He advocates for the deprivations of the lower-status people of the world, especially Muslims, who are generally looked down upon due to their so-called involvement in terrorist acts. He also sees the condition of the people of his own country, Pakistan, and announces that he will take action to improve the conditions, as shown in his speaking acts. He knows an isolated community can be attracted and motivated if the leader reads their minds and trends. The community's people have their own strengths and weaknesses, so they act accordingly. Since IK belongs to the Muslim community and knows the ideology and mentality of the nation, he touches on the issues that can ease the way to achieve his goals. Therefore, he raises a voice that favours the real identity of Muslims and fundamental rights. First, he shows his concern about Islamophobia and then terrorism linked to Muslims. It appears that he does so to get the favour of the Muslim community, especially the Pakistani community, to strengthen his political status. Consequently, he represents Islam and the Muslim community, stressing the need to eradicate the misconception that prevailed regarding Islamophobia.

“I feel that it causes Islamophobia because we, the heads of Muslim states, have not been able to explain to the West, not powerful enough, that Islam has nothing to do with terrorism” (Khan, 2019).

“Because terrorism has nothing to do with any religion. This Islamic terrorism, Islamic radicalism and is sadly used by leaders. This has been the main reason for this Islamophobia and has caused pain among Muslims” (Khan, 2019e).

Assuring the world that Islam rejects terrorism at all depicts the inspired vision of a leader. Contextually, it means that there is no link between Islam and terrorism. It is his vision through which he perceives the effects and consequences of terrorism. To avoid any mishap linked with Muslims or humanity overall, the communicator tries to attract the audience towards grave issues of the time, such as causes of terrorism, poverty, injustice, and brutality, supporting with religious context. All his communication manifests that as a political leader, he also goes ahead to build up a spiritual atmosphere where an individual or the whole community may lead a comfortable life.

##### 4.2 Centering and Focus

‘Centering and focusing’ on the target and mission is an essential trait of spiritual leaders without worrying about the consequences. Transformational spiritual leaders focus on their vision despite mistakes, fear, perplexity, or dissatisfaction. Spiritual leaders ‘transform’ their ideas into others’ minds to assist each other. Such category leaders expect their followers to show mutual admiration, trust, loyalty, and honour. They also seem willing to work harder than expected. Spiritual leaders must be meticulous in observing and presenting facts; thus, they employ careful language. A spiritual leader always tries to overcome worries and trouble rather than being feared. The same qualities of a spiritual leader can also be observed in IK’s personality when he speaks and addresses meetings.

“Meanwhile, growing intolerance and Islamophobia are threatening to accentuate religious fault lines. For its part, Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including state terrorism against people under illegal occupation” (Khan, 2019c).

“The rich countries have no incentives or compulsion to return this poor wealth. And this ill-gotten wealth belongs, remember, to the masses of the developing world. I foresee in the not-too-distant future that a time will come when rich countries will be forced to build walls to keep out economic migrants from these poor countries” (Khan, 2021).

In this speech act, the communicator again condemns terrorism connected to Islamophobia. Knowing religion, he convinces the world leaders that no religion, especially Islam, allows the act of terror. Human beings, regardless of their cast, colour, and religion, have some common and shared traits of spirituality. They want to live and work in a society that makes their fundamental rights, i.e., secured life, faith, creed, best future, etc. Every person has his/her own faith or creed on which he establishes social norms and values. A spiritual leader first qualifies his own character according to the demands of society and then becomes able to lead it. People listen to and follow him when he gives them hope for a better future. Consequently, IK exploits the current

situation and repeatedly focuses on the problems of the moment. For instance, his speech condemns the act of money laundering, thus drawing attention to the world. Having a robust, futuristic vision, IK makes the world aware of the economic situation that may be faced by developing countries shortly.

### 4.3 Integrity via Altruistic Love

Leaders are ethical, and they should be ethical. As a leader, he values people, keeps his promises, and follows the rules. Charity, altruism, and integrity go together. Loyalty, unselfishness, unconditional compassion, adoration, and self-and-other-care demonstrate it. Spiritual leadership defines altruistic love as harmony, wholeness, and well-being derived from concern, care, and admiration for yourself and others. In integrity, elements such as no jealousy, kindness, humility, forgiveness, selflessness, self-control, trust, loyalty, and truthfulness are included. IK has always modelled honesty, as it is a spiritual leader's trait. Although the speechmaker has been a cricketer, he later learnt politics. He studied great personalities, especially Muhammad (PUBH). With his integrity, he entered politics to help a nation whose leadership was known as corrupt, bribed, and even terrorist-labeled. Touching on serious issues and concerns of society, he convinces the masses that he is the only leader who can relieve them from their miseries.

“And willfully, they have equated Islam with terrorism or radical Islamic terrorism? I think this has done a tremendous disservice to the Muslim community. Religion has nothing to do with terrorism” (Khan, 2019b).

“We were playing a double game. So, in my opinion, it was the worst phase relationship between the US and Pakistan. I was one of those. And I came here, I think, in 2009, and I tried to explain to people here that there was no military solution in Afghanistan” (Khan, 2019d).

IK proves his integrity when he honestly confesses to the role of past Pakistani rulers, who, according to IK, played a double role with the US in the Afghan war. IK, from the very beginning, urged a peaceful solution to the war issues in Afghanistan.

“So, I wonder, what do you think would be a solution to this sort of moving forward? Look, let me say that who is concerned about the freedom of the press if I am breaking the law or if I am a crook? I am a head of state, and I'm worried that I'm making a lot of money” (Khan, 2022).

### 4.4 Desire and Courage

Leaders need power. They seem more determined to reach their goals with solid decisions and an accurate comprehension of believability. They want their followers to be creative and brave. Spiritual leaders prefer religious references because they know people follow their beliefs and goals. A spiritual leader analyses followers' minds, monitors their inclination, and then influences and captures them to achieve a goal.

Courageous leaders communicate, influence, and make decisions in complicated situations with significant consequences. It sets the foundations for nation-building. Courageous leaders manage the mission while caring for the people. It also may happen that leaders sometimes overcommit publicly, damaging the mission or harming people unnecessarily for the agenda and goal. Courageous leaders bridge tactical-strategic gaps and pursue the mission while considering the past, present, and future. IK, being a spiritual leader, knows that visions do not come true and implements the vision through managerial discipline.

Grand visions require immense discipline in implementation and execution. Brave leaders recognise the complexity of danger and realise that decisions can fail. IK can also be called a courageous leader who persevered despite threats and danger. His verbal and spiritual authority shows his fearlessness under challenging situations and before his opponents. For instance, on the one side, he condemns money laundering, which became possible due to the help of powerful countries. On the other side, he creates courage and desire among his followers that they will sweep in the next election.

“So action must be taken against them. They were openly stealing money, laundering money out of the country, and living in these palatial palaces or huge luxury flats in London. Money stolen from this country and never giving any money trail or source of income” (Khan, 2022).

“But we are in court, and I am confident that the court will ignore them. But there is desperation. They have just done another terrorism case on me, so, God knows, they might try something else” (Khan, 2022).

“And it certainly would not be the position where Tehreek-e-Insaaf is today poised. And I am making a prediction in front of you all. The next election will be swept by Tehreek-e-Insaaf” (Khan, 2013).

### 4.5 Empowerment of Others

Empowerment lets people/groups use their power, authority, and influence to interact with others, institutions, and society. Empowering leaders helps them reach goals that help the nation succeed. To be widely trusted, leaders promote their goals for success by sharing power and equality. Spiritual leadership transforms followers

and leaders through a spirited lifestyle. Spiritual leaders perceive the need of time and meet it. Holy Spirit-connected people advance the organisation's goals and launch positive transformational movements.

Although IK concerns himself as a political and spiritual leader, he can inspire others. IK has struggled to engage the public since becoming Pakistan's prime minister. Due to his vast vision, he works at national and international levels to enhance the lives of the masses to a fascinating level where they may be without depression or oppression and with wonderful finances. Find new pipes and tunnels to expand the nation's ideology. The oratory of IK also urges foreign leaders to evaluate and resolve Pakistan's problems. He exhibits his country's potential despite the failures of past leaders. He welcomes foreign investment and businesses to Pakistan.

"If people don't go into business for charity, they go into business to make money. So, the more they can make money, the more people come and invest. So, this is what we have done. We have started working on making it easier for people to do business and easier for investors" (Khan, 2019a).

"At least there should have been a word of appreciation. But rather than appreciation, imagine how we feel when we are blamed for the turn of events in Afghanistan. After 2006, it became apparent to everyone who understood Afghanistan's history that there would be no military solution in Afghanistan" (Khan, 2022).

The public statements of IK demonstrate his commitment to peace and prosperity. Empowering the masses makes him a trustworthy national leader. Pakistani political parties have neglected public needs just due to prevailing corruption. They squandered time on shared issues instead of employing national resources. In contrast, IK encourages and empowers his nation to participate in his country's progress, Pakistan.

#### 4.6 Hope/Faith

IK has always inspired optimism but still loves to remind people of his task of establishing a strong and modern Pakistan that can confidently compete with other nations. He convinces people and children that criminals whose only qualifications for the position are self-preservation, protection from the police, and money gain should stop now. Therefore, Pakistanis think of IK as a custodian and enabler of their hopes as more people join his struggle to create a cohesive, incorruptible, sovereign and independent Pakistan. Thus, IK as a leader, protects, empowers, and unites his nation with the help of his political views, having hope and faith. His impulsive remarks quote the Islamic history of rule that had proper principles for running a government. IK also mentions Islamic civilisation with proper allusions from history. Moreover, an impressive political leader invites foreigners to invest in Pakistan to earn money, promote interfaith harmony, and create good relations with other nations.

"The growth of Muslim civilisation. So, this is in Pakistan where we want the same basis of our state, the rise of what I believe is the way our country will rise, it will go back to those principles. We must, number one, have a rule of law" (Khan, 2019a).

"This is the time to come to our country. And for me as the Prime Minister, I can assure you that the Prime Minister's office will deal with all major investors in our country and that CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) will be dealt with again from the Prime Minister's office" (Khan, 2019f).

"We hope that the Secretary General's report will focus on these new threats to terrorism posed by Islamophobes and right-wing extremists. I call on the Secretary-General to convene a global dialogue on countering the rise of Islamophobia. Our parallel efforts at the same time should be to promote interfaith harmony, and they should continue" (Khan, 2021).

These acts of speeches reflect the comprehensive approach of IK to different issues that are commonly found in the world. It proves that he can create hope and faith among nations, especially with regard to the improvement of the condition of humans suffering from several problems. To face the challenges, he also gets the support of spirituality by quoting faith-based ideologies.

#### 5. Discussion

Using the 'search strategy' within the string 'spiritual,' 'leadership,' and 'communication,' the researchers found that recent research on spiritual leadership focused mainly on organisational psychology, organisational results and performance, organisational spirituality, and religious aspects (Knoetze, 2022; Sapta et al., 2021; Maryati & Astuti, 2022; Usman et al., 2021). Likewise, the present research also discussed communication elements of language, not purely in communication. Therefore, previous research argued that leaders could inspire followers, foster a culture of virtue, foster trust, strengthen professional relationships, and advance organisational objectives. Furthermore, politically motivated spiritual leaders influence and make relationships with their followers (Eddy, 2021), focusing and centering on vision through desire and courage along with integrity and empowering others with hope/faith (Fry, 2003, 2005; Hatcher 1991).

In light of the present research findings, it can be argued that the consistently outstanding communication choice and tone of the communicator restrict his vision from clarifying the general direction of change,

simplifying more detailed decisions (Fry, 2003; Hatcher, 1999). His communication seemed centered and focused on his vision (Hatcher, 1991), convincing the world to support his country socially and economically. IK as a political leader has long been recognised as a prominent political leader, yet it remains within the local definitions of spiritual leadership. However, he may not fit into the theoretical descriptions of global leadership as suggested by Hatcher (1991) and Fry (2003). For example, Ritscher (1986) argued that religion is an organisation that professes to provide spiritual experiences to a group of people. Spirituality is a more individual matter; it does not depend on an external organisation. Rather, spirituality is an experience of depth of life; it is living with the heart rather than superficiality.

Similarly, Fry (2003) discussed that spirituality and God should be eliminated. However, the present leader selected by the researchers used religious elements at a considerable level, unconsciously drawing this research toward religious content in the data to clarify the context. Hence, this fact may also make IK controversial globally too. For instance, although he maintains integrity and elements of hope/faith, he would only be able to work on the local level (within Pakistan). At the global level, the type of desire and courage that IK maintains, using many religious and spiritual elements, would faint his political communication if aligned with religious spirituality. Finally, it can be argued that the communicator, IK transmits his ideas through his speeches to the communities on national and international levels, yet he seems a spiritual leader as well as tries to generate honesty, truth, vision, and inspiration in his listeners. For instance, he talks about corruption and money laundering acts. On a universal level, the public is taught to avoid such types of vices; training to avoid such acts is called character building. An organisation necessarily considers character purification a part of life with beliefs.

## 6. Conclusions

After the directed qualitative content analysis of the content (IK's speeches), the research concludes with a few aspects of the research soul and spirit. Firstly, IK's speeches represent that he may be considered a political leader who keeps an inspired vision as he can perceive the grave issues with possible solutions, yet primarily for his loyal followers. Secondly, he has the potential to captivate the audience/followers by creating hope, desire, and courage in them. He assures followers of future success through his impressive oratory skills. His speeches empower the listeners and viewers to create. He gives examples from the religious point of view, knowing the psychology of the local community, especially Pakistanis. Third, as a spiritual (though apparently political) leader who is enthusiastic and passionate about his mission, he creates hope for a better future for the nation. Similarly, IK being an effective political and spiritual leader produces hope and faith in the listeners' minds. Although the theoretical model emphasises not depending on religion while discussing the issues related to religion, he explains the matters with spirituality in context. He discusses the problematic matters of past Pakistani history and the failure of different governments in several aspects of daily life routines. Since Pakistan is an Islamic state, most of the population is Muslim; therefore, IK chooses religion-related ideologies to persuade the masses on national and international levels. In his speeches, local spirituality is a prominent element that helps IK to prove himself a sincere leader to his nation, that inclines to the aspects of spirituality. For instance, while making speeches, he condemns the past Muslim leaders (reflected in his speech acts given in the analysis section) who could not resolve the vital issues faced by the world, such as terrorism and misconceptions about Islamophobia. This he does to attract the attention of the world leaders to take the problems seriously. He also clarifies the misjudgments made by non-Muslims about Islam. In IK's speeches, he tries to prove himself as a corruption-free leader who always takes care of the fundamental rights of the masses/nation. He also talks about honesty in his speeches and standing against corruption and money laundering, so that the world may consider him a highly prominent leader of Muslims. All this shows that the communicator in his speeches tries to build up a character beneficial to humanity. Character purification is a part of spirituality that a spiritual leader must possess. Summing up the discussion, it can be concluded that the communicator is struggling to persuade the audience to some extent when his speeches are filtered through the specific elements of spiritual leadership suggested by Fry (2003) and Hatcher (1991). However, he may not fit into the theoretical descriptions of spiritual leadership offered by Hatcher (1991) and Fry (2003). They advised not to include religious elements in spiritual leadership. For example, Ritscher (1986) argued that religion is an organisation that professes to provide spiritual experiences to a group of people. Spirituality is more individual; it does not rely on external organisation. Rather, spirituality is an experience of depth of life; it is living with the heart rather than superficiality.

## 7. Limitations

The current research is delimited to IK's delivered speeches on an international level only. The data of the delivered speeches were collected through the said coding scheme in the method. Whereas the limitations of the research concern that no other source of data has been chosen to collect the material. No interview or critical writing on the communicator has opted to analyse the content material related to the current research. Since the main focus of the study was to analyse the content and find the elements of spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003, Hatcher, 1991) in the IK speeches, the researchers focused only on the data gathered by the source or the schema mentioned in the method. It is the reason that previous research in spiritual leadership mainly focused on organisational psychology, organisational outcomes and performance, organisational spirituality and religious aspects. Researchers have argued for the portability of the SL concept and organisational practices outside the Western arena, despite the fact that spiritual leadership theory is deeply embedded in Western culture (Wang et al., 2019). Haque et al. (2021) state that spiritual leadership should boost organisational productivity.

Organisational spirituality is associated with an increased sense of transcendence and connectivity, psychological comfort, psychological well-being, productivity, and high retention (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013).

Additionally, spiritual leadership has a good relationship with psychological empowerment in the work setting (Usman et al., 2021). However, the present research focused on finding the elements of spiritual leadership in the political communication of a leader from a Muslim country. Therefore, the operational definitions deduced from the theory may differ from the local definitions of spirituality, which consider religion as a spiritual element. After that, the readers may find religious aspects in the findings; however, this also affects the global communication of the selected/targeted communicator (IK). The present research is conducted far from the existing processes of the previous studies that mainly focused on fields other than politics, so the research design and method may seem distinctive from the earlier designs, yet utilising a proper methodology deduced the primary elements from the past research.

## 8. Implications

The researchers in the current research adapted the theoretical framework suggested by Fry (2003) and Hatcher (1991) to analyse the data based on political speeches by IK. The study aimed to discover the elements of spirituality in political leadership by giving a touch of spirituality in political speeches, which were found to some extent. However, other researchers in different research fields can adapt the same theoretical framework to get the same/different results. This theoretical framework would help them understand how a political leader gets an advantage by motivating the followers and audience in some political field for the betterment of their political institution/party within the range of the suggested model.

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