



A Review of Authentic Leadership and Workplace Spirituality & Campus Sustainability in Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Universities need to create a sustainable campus environment to achieve a welcoming green environment. The top management in universities should, therefore, develop sustainability awareness among community members. The reliably authentic leadership of the management crew is crucial to achieving the desired sustainability goals. A professional and integrated environmental management approach aims to reduce the consumption of resources and mitigate the negative impacts of various campus operations, thereby promoting campus sustainability. Workplace spirituality can affect individuals' ethical decision-making. The organization can be seen as a spiritual setting as many employees spend most of their time in the workplace. Moreover, spirituality at work encourages employees to explore and apply spiritual values. This paper investigates the authentic leadership style, workplace spirituality knowledge, and its practices to achieve campus sustainability in educational institutions. Authentic leaders' self-awareness and internal moral perspectives are influential factors in the employee's meaningful work within the spirituality of the workplace. This consequently assists organizations in reflecting on the type of leadership, which leads to an employee's workplace spirituality and achieving campus sustainability. Further studies should investigate the influence of authentic leadership on campus sustainability and workplace spirituality as a moderator factor in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia.

Disciplinary: Educational Management and Leadership, Sustainability Management and Policy.

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1 Introduction

Creating a sustainable campus environment is essential within universities to achieve a green and supportive environment. However, campus sustainability has become a global concern for planners and policymakers because it exerts a considerable environmental effect on planning and university activities on campus. The implementation of sustainability into education institutions is, therefore, fundamental to achieving a sustainable campus awareness among employees towards creating a sustainable future and maintaining a green environment. The top management of the organization is required to take the right decision and develop a sustainability awareness among the communities of organizations. Vigorous and reliable leadership of the management crew is accordingly essentially required to achieve the desired sustainability goals.

In an organization, authentic leaders are those individuals, who take action to create the environment they want and encourage their followers to effectively act in the same manner. Authentic leadership aims to develop the organizational moral philosophy, harness the employees' potential, instill necessary self-awareness skills among employees, shoulder the responsibility for any individual mistakes or failures, and be one's real self (Opatokun et al., 2013).

Workplace spirituality is key in management and acts as a universal phenomenon that can influence individual ethics and behaviors in decision-making to achieve and maintain sustainability. To put into a more comprehensive perspective, Rezapouraghdam et al. (2019) highlighted that the spirituality concept in sustainability mirrors the individuals' relationship with each other towards achieving a spiritual workplace in the institution. The dimensions of workplace spirituality, such as meaningful work, the sense of community, and effective alignment with the organization's values has been widely open to research and debate by identifying the effect on how those employees look after and sustain the surrounding environment, thus fostering their sense of connectedness to other living objects, including people and nature. In line with what has been mentioned in the introduction, this study primarily aims to outline an array of available sustainability concepts. The study also aims to investigate the authentic leadership style, workplace spirituality knowledge, and its practices to achieve campus sustainability in educational institutions.

2 Theoretical Framework of Sustainability

The sustainability concept was initially introduced to the world of international education in 1972. This concept was released at the United Nations (UN) conference on the Human Environment. Since its establishment, national and international declarations in relation to sustainability have been progressively issued (Wright, 2004). Sustainability can be broadly described as a process and not an ending goal. The sustainability concept stipulates that the present generation and upcoming generations can efficiently meet and sustain their social and environmental needs. Sustainability is seen from another perspective, according to Dade (2010) as the process, in which, an organization endeavors to upgrade the quality of life effectively and efficiently for the surrounding community.

2.1 Campus Sustainability

Campus sustainability is the sustainable development of a given higher educational institution regionally or globally, the minimization of negative environmental economic, social, and health effects triggered by the overuse of available resources to fulfill various functions, including teaching and research activities, and partnership (Alshuwaikhat & Abubakar, 2008). Thus, a bright example of a sustainable university campus should mirror a healthy and green environment with a prosperous economy through energy and sensible conservation of resources, waste management, and a well-organized educational environment. The essence of sustainable development can be achieved when universities strive to implement a green campus, effectively encourage, and support sustainability practices on campus. More importantly, sustainability should be regarded as a pillar in the planning and development of campuses at universities worldwide. Countless advantageous aspects can be achieved by implementing a sustainable campus, striking a balance between economic, social, and environmental factors. Sustainability leaders must accomplish certain tasks, always seek alternative approaches, and come up with new ideas (Leal Filho et al., 2020). An operative physical strategic plan for the university campus can, therefore, be a useful means of shaping campus life, particularly among students, to develop a sustainable living community. Consequently, campus sustainability is a crucial platform for conducting and developing a progressive sustainability mindset among the employees on campus.

2.2 Five Capital Model for Sustainability

There is a progressively overwhelming range of tools and techniques available to any institution or organization, which has embarked on the sustainable development journey. Among many methods, the most effective approach is based on the five capitals model. Sustainable organizations need to actively manage five types of assets that they rely on and contribute to all organizations (Martin & Jucker, 2003). As shown in Figure 1, five types of sustainable capital are suggested based on this model, whereby goods and services are derived, and the quality of our lives needs to be improved.

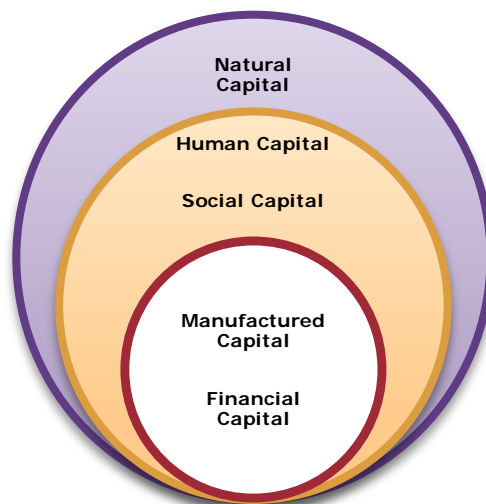


Figure 1: Five Capital Model for Sustainability (Sigma, 2003).

Natural Capital is the energy and materials or the flow that produces a product. Based on the natural capital, humans generate a diverse range of benefits that make human life possible, often called ecosystem services. Human capital encompasses individuals' health, knowledge, skills, and encouragement. Developing human capital through education and professional development is fundamental to a successful society. Human capital refers to the educational achievement with productivity growth (HE) or intangible residual capital (HR), which is the difference between the actual economy of the nation and the total amount of produced and natural assets (Markandya & Pedroso-Galinato, 2007).

Social Capital relates to the institutions that help maintain and develop human capital in partnership with others, such as families, communities, businesses, trade unions, schools, and voluntary organizations. Following the physical, financial, and human capital, social capital is the fourth capital recognized. Social capital is developed within lifestyle and culture. Social capital has been recognized by individuals as a resource that has many positive benefits for the well-being of societies. Manufactured capital (fixed assets) comprises material goods or fixed assets, which contribute to the production process, for example, tools, machines, and buildings. In the case of transport power stations, distribution systems, and machinery, the capital generated is all manufactured capital. Financial capital, on the other hand, plays a key role in the economy, allowing other forms of capital to be owned and traded. However, unlike other types of capital, it does not have any real value; it is symbolic of actual, individual, social, or manufactured resources like shares, bonds, or notes (Zappalà et al., 2019).

2.3 University Sustainability

University sustainability is characterized by social and economic operational activities, thereby supporting the long-term viability of environmental and social structures (Abd-Razak et al., 2011). The sustainability concept affects every area of the university. The relationship between economic, social, and environmental aspects is inseparable. There are three main aspects, which are inextricably linked, and they are crucial to accomplish the quality of a sustainable university.

- 1) Environment sustainability
- 2) Social sustainability
- 3) Economic sustainability

2.4 Campus Sustainability Model

This model is a campus sustainability assessment as a systematic initiative to evaluate any elements related to the eco-cultural environment of a higher education institution. To implement the process of sustainability in higher education institutions, universities are paramount change drivers by establishing themselves as role models and nurseries for sustainable development to create a culture of sustainability in society. The process involves introducing sustainability into policies related to awareness issues and integrating it into schools' curricula and the media alike.

In this study, there are three main dimensions of campus sustainability, including Energy Management System (EMAS), Public Participation and Social Responsibility, and Sustainability Teaching and Research. These three dimensions are key components for the integration of sustainability into environmental management and the development of quality management towards sustainability (Alshuwaikhat & Abubakar, 2008).

The first dimension of campus sustainability is the “Energy Management System” (EMAS), which is related to the energy management system, using renewable energy technologies, and enhancing energy generation technologies. EMAS involves planning and implementing a sustainable environment among campus students. To achieve sustainable corporate development, enterprises must define and implement a pragmatic strategy.

The second dimension of campus sustainability is “Public Participation and Social Responsibility”, which signifies public participation and social responsibility. According to Aly and Amer (2011), the process of participation includes four stages. The first is motivating the community to participate by encouraging the individuals’ engagement. The second stage involves strengthening the consistency of decisions, whereas the third stage is integrating values while deciding. The fourth stage involves understanding the community participation in environmental decision-making among the government officials, organizations, and NGOs.

The third component of campus sustainability is the “Sustainability Teaching and Research” dimension. According to Brito et al. (2018), sustainability competence will only be achieved if there is an effective senior management involvement, the integration of sustainability in all the activities at the institution level, continuous sustainability training to encourage the implementation and emphasize the role of academics’ awareness about the importance of sustainability.

In addition, university students are the main component as their awareness is key in the engagement of on-campus environmental sustainability initiatives because they need to be equipped with adequate knowledge to deal with sustainability problems more effectively. University students exhibit diverse knowledge and attitudes and, therefore, it is essential to enhance the introduction of sustainability to create more supportive perceptions. According to the United Nations’ sustainability guidelines, education is the best means ever for improving the quality of life and achieving society’s sustainable development (Morelli, 2011). Therefore, to create adequate awareness among university students, the most important component is to integrate a learning element, i.e., integrating sustainability as a module of research in the teaching and learning process at the university level.

3 Authentic Leadership: Theory, Definition, and Model

Leadership is generally defined as an act of an individual, team, or organization to guide another individual, team, or organization. Authentic leadership primarily deals with the notion of being firm with its original belief. Authenticity is the act of displaying one’s character, thoughts, innermost desires, emotions, and overarching beliefs (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). The main function of leadership involves making changes to achieve the desired organizational goals, while the main

function of organization management is to provide order and consistency for the organization. Although there are several conceptualizations of authentic leadership, experimental research is planned by many as the knowledge, which started to attract more attention in the last decade.

Authentic leadership is a comparatively new concept in the realm of leadership styles, compared to the inherently more established concepts of leadership. Authentic leadership cannot be explicitly defined although there are multiple interpretations from leading scholars, who have been interested in this emerging field. As a concept, authentic leadership was introduced by (George, 2003), who projected the meteoric rise of leadership concepts into practice and scholarly interest. In his model, George presented five dimensions of authentic leadership. These include (1) pursuing purpose with passion; (2) practicing solid values; (3) leading with the heart; (4) establishing enduring relationships; and (5) demonstrating self-discipline.

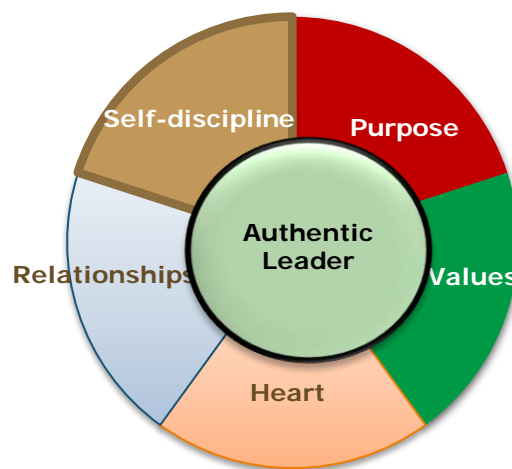


Figure 2: Authentic Leadership Model (George, 2003).

When leaders show a quality of character, they will become authentic leaders and their followers will respond positively; the organization will benefit from such leaders. Figure 3 shows the dimensions of authentic leadership, including purpose and patience, values and behaviors, relationships, self-discipline, and consistency, as well as heart and compassion. In this sense, authentic leaders always strive to set their moral standards very high. They do not seek affirmation from subordinates or even from the higher-ups, they sincerely want the organization to succeed. Their allegiance is directed toward the organization’s mission, not toward achieving personal gains. In this regard, four main dimensions of authenticity have been discussed by Ashbihani (2013). The four dimensions are self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency, as shown in Figure 3.

In Figure 3, the first dimension of authentic leadership is self-awareness, which necessitates the leader’s understanding of one’s strengths and limitations and how others perceive themselves. This dimension embraces knowledge and belief in one’s thoughts, feelings, motives, and values. The internalized moral perspective is the second dimension of authentic leadership, which explains the leader’s orientation towards achieving high moral standards and ethical activities. The third

dimension refers to the balanced processing dimension, which designates the ability to analyze information and data objectively and accurately by a leader before deciding (Ashbihani, 2013).

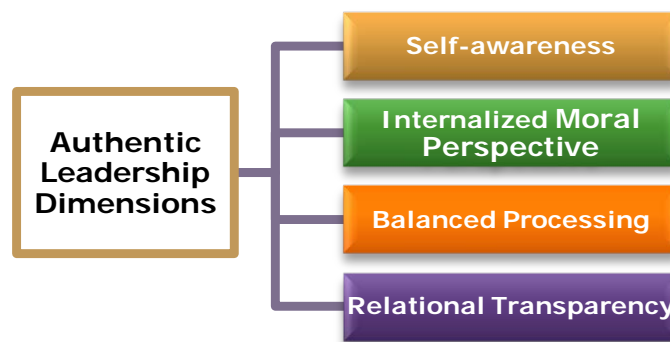


Figure 3: Dimensions of Authentic Leadership (Avolio et al., 2007).

Balanced processing involves a systematic collection of knowledge and information sources in organizations and their potential conversion to help students and employees in creating a sustainable campus environment. The fourth dimension refers to the relational transparency of authentic leadership. This dimension involves a transparent sharing of information and the expression of one's true feelings to minimize inappropriate emotions.

3.1 Authentic Leadership in Education

Over the past two decades, progress has been achieved towards defining and refining the concept of authentic leadership. Gardner et al. (2011) stated that authenticity is a crucial trait in identifying what is taking place in leadership. Among other reasons, the loss of trust and a down spin of confidence in leaders directed more attention towards the development of authentic leadership studies in numerous organizations, including higher education.

There is a universal demand for good leaders, who serve the community. In this regard, George (2003) emphasized the compassionate characteristic in every leader, who embraces the authentic leadership style. Such leaders often possess a selfless dedication to serving others. They illuminate passion in everything they do and put others' needs above their personal gains. They develop empathy by putting themselves into their followers' shoes and acting upon their own grouses. They create empathy by putting themselves in the shoes of their followers and acting on their complaints.

The principles of authentic leadership bode well with the educational setting and learning environment. Begley (2003) indicated that education is not immune against social or managerial decadence and, therefore, good management and true leadership is essentially required. In the higher education context, for example, elaborate expectations and demanding external evaluations have led to increasing pressures to perform to a certain unmanageably high level. As staff and workers in education face rising challenges, especially concerning transparency and accountability, transparent administrators with true connections with staff and faculty members will act as a cog in a machine to service their uneasiness.

3.2 Previous Studies of Authentic Leadership in Education

A specific leadership style, which is applied by a leader, will influence the success of the organization in providing a supportive environment for its employees. Authentic leaders are those who are aware of their values or others' principles or morals and are aware of their personalities. In Malaysia, Opatokun et al. (2013) collected data from the administrative staff of the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM). They investigated the authentic components or predictors of authentic leadership among the top administrative positions in IIUM. Among these tested components are self-awareness, balanced processing of information, the internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency. The results showed that authentic leadership enables individuals to be more sensitive to the needs and orientations of others, thereby achieving the person's leadership quality. Authentic leaders tend to have a thorough knowledge of principles and beliefs, act faithfully and reliably. Authentic leaders are also portrayed as optimistic, hopeful, developmentally oriented, and have high moral values. Authentic leadership promotes positive mental aspects and a principled environment, which fosters self-awareness, an internalized moral viewpoint, healthy processing of knowledge, and a clear relationship (Rukh et al., 2018).

According to Ilies et al. (2005), authentic leadership mirrors the life of a person through the specific values expressed in society and the social environment by applying those values. From another perspective, Feng (2016) defined authentic leadership as the leadership behaviors that create an atmosphere of positive psychology and ethics in an organization. Oh and Han (2017) examined the connection between authentic leadership and the workplace's learning-related outcomes. Evidence of a connection was found between the four major components of authentic leadership and adult learning from a learning-oriented perspective. In another study, Pavlovic (2015) investigated whether authentic leadership was present in the administration of primary and secondary schools in former Yugoslav republics: Serbia, Montenegro, and the Republic Srpska. Pavlovic used factor analysis to develop his four factors of authentic leadership (communication, self-consciousness, self-discovery, and self-concept). These factors are insignificant individually, but they formed a basis for authentic leadership in educational institutions when implemented together.

Gardner et al. (2011) reported that authentic leaders maintain open channels of communication and cooperation with their subordinates, which contributes to positive results. In addition, it stimulates the motivation and self-esteem of followers, resulting in confidence in the leader, job satisfaction, and dedication. Authentic leadership theories permeate a variable scope of studies and methods, but in specific, they indicate that authenticity is produced by authentic leaders through self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-knowledge, and interaction.

3.3 Impact of Authentic leadership on Campus Sustainability

Recognition of the self-referential nature of authenticity is crucial to understanding the concept as it is commonly mistaken for sincerity. Trilling (2009) described sincerity as an individual

outward expression of feelings and thoughts that are aligned with the reality experienced by oneself, which is also defined as a balance between affirmation and actual feelings.

Some of the earliest implementations of the concept of authentic leadership emerged within the field of sociology and education. Authentic leadership in an organization is demonstrated by its leader, whereby the leader's moral capacity to align responsibilities to oneself, to the followers, and the public to achieve and sustain cooperation within and outside the organization Novicevic et al. (2006). An authentic leader is assertive, confident, resilient, moral-ethical oriented, and inspires development and productivity. Sustainability-oriented leaders can foster beneficial externalities in the market and within businesses. Students, who learn about sustainability culture, will become tomorrow's sustainable leaders. They can direct organizations through an integrated learning experience towards a more sustainable state, sufficient of improving the effectiveness and objective conflicts between the social, economic, and environmental aspects (Filho et al., 2020).

However, in recent years, campus sustainability issues have become more complex and interconnected. Therefore, an integrated and systematic approach is needed for effective decision-making, investments, and management. A professional and integrated environmental management approach must reduce the consumption of resources and mitigate the negative impacts of various campus operations, thereby promoting campus sustainability. However, this approach is limited and insufficient in most universities in achieving campus sustainability.

4 Workplace Spirituality

Spirituality is a universal issue, which can affect the ethical decision-making of individuals. The organization can be seen as a spiritual setting because many individuals spend lots of their time in the workplace. Ashmos and Duchon (2000) described three main definitions of workplace spirituality. These include the workplace understanding of personal meaning and satisfaction, an awareness of the relationship with others, and an alignment with workplace standards.

Spirituality in the workplace requires the effort to find one's goal in life to develop a strong relationship with a colleague and other individuals associated with work. It also requires having continuity or alignment between one's core beliefs and organizational principles. In the same vein, the spirituality of the workplace can be divided into two levels: an individual level and an organizational level. The individual level is the values that encourage people in the work process and enable them to establish a meaningful relationship with the organizational community. Based on Gupta et al. (2014), workplace spirituality differs from the traditional definition of spirituality. It concerns people who have a common connection, magnetism, and togetherness in their work unit and the whole organization. However, the concept of spirituality is different in each organization. Rajappan et al. (2017) suggested that organizational culture is supported by the leadership and practices of socially responsible and value-based organizations, recognizes the contributions made by employees, and supports the development of spirituality and personal well-being. On the other hand, the practice of spirituality is influenced by the level of job satisfaction that the employees have in the organization.

There are benefits for an organization by applying spirituality in the workplace. Spirituality in the organization inspires greater innovation, decreases absenteeism and attrition, strengthens relationships, creates productive work, emotional intelligence, employee engagement, and loyalty. Also, workplace spirituality helps maintain and encourage an individual to express themselves and build relationships with their colleagues. There are three main dimensions of workplace spirituality. The first dimension is meaningful work at the individual level, which relates to how the individual enjoys working, the energy received from his/her work, a sense of purpose of work. The second dimension refers to a sense of community. Duchon and Plowman (2005) indicated that a sense of peace occurs from collaboration with a group of others to share the same goal. Employees usually spend most of their time at work. Therefore, at the workplace, they choose to satisfy their needs through a sense of community. The third dimension refers to organizational values and mission. In this regard, Gupta et al. (2014) stated that organizational values are acceptable ethical expectations that every employee of the organization meets. Additionally, the alignment between the dimension of individual and organizational values has a major beneficial impact on the commitment to consistency.

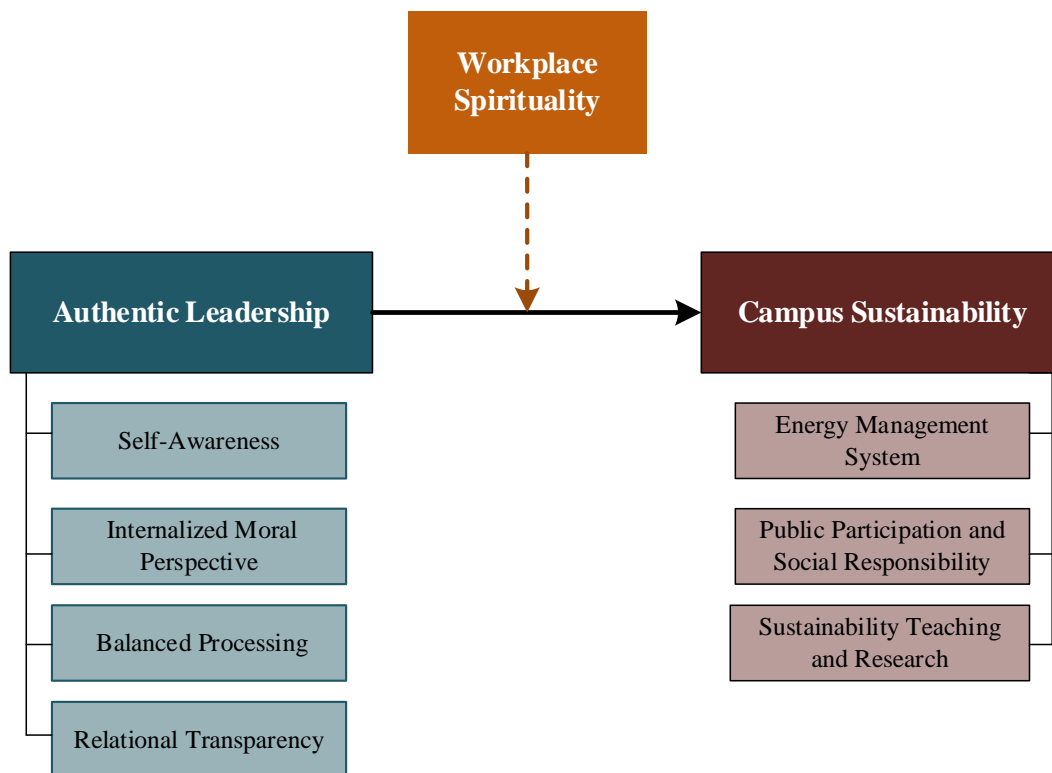


Figure 4: Conceptual model of authentic leadership, campus sustainability and workplace spirituality

Thus, workplace spirituality brings about positive outcomes for employees at the individual level, such as increased happiness, peacefulness, job satisfaction, and motivation. Workplace spirituality acts as a fundamental need for self-improvement, especially for employees, who have multiple roles to play in their families and communities. Further, the application of spiritual values in leadership should be emphasized so that leaders can make it a regular practice at work. Spirituality in leadership refers to the individual’s feelings about who they are, what they do, and

their contribution. According to Meng (2016), spirituality in leadership plays a key role in fostering ethics and values that can enhance personal, group, and organizational values. Moreover, leadership and ethics are related to spirituality because leadership can ensure that ethics and values are a priority in leadership. The leadership and the need for followers to participate can help achieve the goals and form relationships between the two parties.

5 Conclusion

This paper reviewed the authentic leadership style, workplace spirituality knowledge, and its practices to achieve campus sustainability in educational institutions. The reviewed studies showed considerable significance in an authentic leader's self-awareness and internal moral perspectives as these factors positively influence the employee's meaningful work factor in workplace spirituality. This consequently assists organizations in reflecting on the type of leadership, which will lead to employees' workplace spirituality and achieving campus sustainability. Nowadays, a sustainable campus environment in universities is needed to achieve a welcoming and supportive environment. Sustainability awareness needs to be developed among the university's community by the top management. A professional and integrated environmental management approach will, in turn, reduce the consumption of resources and mitigate the negative impacts of various campus operations, thereby enhancing campus sustainability. Besides, workplace spirituality can affect the ethical decision-making of individuals. The organization can be seen as a spiritual setting as many individuals spend lots of their time in the workplace. Moreover, spirituality at work encourages employees to explore and apply spiritual values. This study advanced recommendations, including more comprehensive research on the impact of authentic leadership on campus sustainability and workplace spirituality as a moderator factor in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia as illustrated in Figure 4.

6 Availability of Data and Material

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding authors.

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