



## Spiritual employee engagement as a mediator between strategic leadership and turnover intention: Evidence from Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

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The study investigates how strategic leadership affects millennials' turnover intention, with spiritual employee engagement as a mediator. According to the social exchange theory, employees will be devoted and loyal to leaders who treat them well. The study explores how leadership influences employee retention through meaningful engagement. The SmartPLS 4.0 is used to analyze data (n= 345) using the structural equation model with partial least squares (SEM-PLS) method. Findings of the study show that strategic leadership has no direct impact on turnover intention; however, it significantly improves spiritual engagement, employees' sense of meaning, purpose, and alignment with organizational values, which in turn lowers the intention to leave the organization. This result indicates that spiritual employee engagement, as a novelty, completely mediates the connection between strategic leadership and turnover intention. This study integrates spiritual dimensions into retention frameworks by promoting a theoretical understanding of turnover dynamics among millennial employees. To foster millennial employee retention, leaders should develop a value-driven purpose to enable meaningful work and implement flexible working policies. The results of this study have broader relevance for millennial talent management in other industries that struggle to retain millennials. Additionally, this study bridges the gap between spirituality and organizational behavior, offering actionable methods to improve engagement. Future research should confirm these findings across diverse cultural, industrial, and national contexts, particularly in developing countries.

**Contribution/Originality:** This study enriches the social exchange theory by introducing spiritual employee engagement as a mediation of strategic leadership and turnover intention. It provides a novel perspective on employee retention by integrating a spiritual aspect, humility factors, meaningful work, and engagement factors to reduce turnover intention, while offering practical guidance for managers.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The workforce is gradually being dominated by millennials; by 2021, millennials will account for about half of the global workforce (Mabaso & Mathebula, 2025). The millennial employee also dominates the Indonesian workforce; however, the millennial generation has a high turnover intention rate (Ardi & Anggraini, 2023).

Employee turnover intention (ETI) is the willingness to change jobs within a company voluntarily, thereby affecting company performance and ultimately leading to employee turnover (Le et al., 2023). Voluntary turnover

negatively impacts organizational success, especially among millennials seeking more satisfying work. Factors such as flexibility and work-life balance influence turnover decisions, necessitating effective management (Ting, Tan, & Ting, 2024). ETI is quite important issue for researchers, company leaders, and HR management practitioners (Climek, Henry, & Jeong, 2024; Laulié, Pavez, Martínez Echeverría, Cea, & Briceño Jiménez, 2021). However, increasing ETI among millennials can have a negative impact on productivity, motivation, team cohesion, and organizational stability, leading to financial losses and reputation damage. Building a strong sense of loyalty among this generation is crucial to increasing employee retention (Qadri et al., 2022; Uğural, Giritli, & Urbański, 2020). Understanding ETI motives, including job stress, responsibility, and financial insecurity, can help organizations reduce employee turnover intention by allocating workload, securing tasks, and fostering a pleasant environment (Ketkaew, Manglakakeeree, & Naruetharadhol, 2020). In regard to lowering the level of turnover, a strong and sustainable organization needs both devoted employees and the appropriate business strategy (Benraïss-Noailles & Viot, 2021; Climek et al., 2024).

A key deterrent against ETI is employee engagement, especially when it meets the values and millennials' expectations (Roman-Calderon, Gonzales-Miranda, García, & Gallo, 2019; Wan & Duffy, 2022). Employee engagement (EE) is a crucial parameter that measures the enthusiasm and dedication employees show towards their work, influencing organizational efficiency, creativity, and competitiveness, and can also lead to employee withdrawal and reduced commitment (Alam, Kartar Singh, & Islam, 2021).

Effective leadership that aligns with millennial values can motivate, inspire, and reduce turnover, thus increasing the success of the company in the current competitive labor market (Rašticová & Hinzmann, 2024). Strategic leadership (SL) effectively leads the organization to reach the long-term targets by thinking strategically, adaptively, and converting strategy into action, synergizing human and organizational resources (Davies & Davies, 2006). The finding of the study by Cerutti, Macke, and Sarate (2020) demonstrates that strategic leadership practices significantly affect employee retention. However, the impact of SL on ETI, especially for the millennial generation, has not been extensively studied or remains limited. This research explores the correlation between SL and ETI to address this gap through spiritual employee engagement (SEE) using social exchange theory.

This study investigates how SL affects millennials' intentions to leave Indonesia's agrochemical sector. It identifies SEE as a mediator of the indirect effect of SL on ETI. The results serve as a guide for organizations to promote sustainability by managing employee turnover through spiritual employee engagement.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory (SET), first introduced by Homans (1958), serves as the grand theory for the research framework. In 1959, experts like Thibaut and Kelley (1959) coined the term "group social psychology," and in Blau (1964) popularized the idea of "exchange and power," which illustrates how one party can affect another (Ahmad, Nawaz, Ishaq, Khan, & Ashraf, 2023).

Understanding human behavior through social structures, group dynamics, and interpersonal relationships is the main goal of the SET approach (Cropanzano, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017). According to SET, interpersonal relationships should be founded on cost-benefit analysis, giving reciprocity and equality top priority. This approach seeks to maximize benefits while minimizing costs in order to find mutual relationships that provide greater benefits (Cook, Cheshire, Rice, & Nakagawa, 2013).

According to SET in strategic leadership, leaders develop loyal and engaged followers by fostering relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and productivity (Xuecheng, Iqbal, & Saina, 2022). This theory can be used to understand how millennials behave in relation to career development, job expectations, and organizational expectations (Park, Chen, & Cheng, 2021; Rivers, 2018). This will further establish a culture that makes millennial workers feel appreciated and encouraged, which will boost engagement and output at work (Wu, Sun, Ye, Kwan, &

Yang, 2021). Finally, because of employees' expectations to be treated fairly for their performance contributions to the company, SET is essential to understanding the factors influencing their intentions to leave. Chaudhuri & Ghosh, 2011; Holtschlag, Masuda, Reiche, & Morales, 2020).

## 2.2. Employee Turnover Intention

The thought of ETI switching jobs is closely linked to the theory of motivation, which highlights the value of hard work to support employees in performing well (Na-Nan, Kanthong, & Dhienhirun, 2021). ETI is the desire of an employee to leave an organization within a given time frame, and it has a real effect on the company's finances, performance, and productivity (Fattah, Yesiltas, & Atan, 2022). ETI can be categorized as either involuntary or voluntary. When an employee decides to pursue a better opportunity outside the company, this is known as voluntary turnover, and involuntary turnover occurs when the company plans to dismiss the employee for reasons such as performance that does not meet the company's expectations (McCarthy, Moonesinghe, & Dean, 2020; Warden, Hughes, Probst, Warden, & Adams, 2021). Employees who are dissatisfied, feel alienated from the organization, or receive inadequate compensation are more likely to look for other opportunities outside the organization, whereas dedicated, involved staff members who have prospects for professional growth are less likely to leave their jobs regularly (Obeng, Zhu, Quansah, Ntarmah, & Cobbinah, 2021). Employees are typically more devoted to their organization and should have a broad and strong network of commitments throughout the workplace environment (Kellerer & Süß, 2025).

The antecedents of employee turnover intention based on previous research are very complex, including work-life balance (Ahmad et al., 2023; Yu, Lee, & Na, 2022); employee engagement (Aman, Rafiq, & Dastane, 2023); Career growth (Al Balushi, Thumiki, Nawaz, Jurcic, & Gajenderan, 2022; Huo, 2021); job satisfaction (Kanchana & Jayathilaka, 2023); knowledge sharing (Fattah et al., 2022); compensation (Owusu & Gregar, 2021); leadership style (Elçi, Şener, Aksoy, & Alpan, 2012; Tian et al., 2020) etc.

## 2.3. Strategic Leadership

Originating from Socrates' ideas and ancient Greek military leadership, strategic leadership (SL) became a leadership concept in the 1970s when Adair (2010) highlighted its link to strategic management (Singh, Lim, Jha, Kumar, & Ciasullo, 2023; Sivili & Boateng, 2023). SL, a development combining strategic management and leadership, was coined by John Adair in the 1970s, which encompasses seven functions: setting direction, strategic thinking, planning, forming alliances, and nurturing future leaders while adjusting to change (Davies & Davies, 2006). According to the 1984 upper echelon theory developed by Hambrick and Mason (1984), top managers' distinct origins, experiences, values, and personal preferences influence how they view issues and, consequently, how they decide on a course of action (Vera, Bonardi, Hitt, & Withers, 2022). The SL theory of Finkelstein and Hambrick (1996), which is a further evolution of upper echelon theory, views top managers' psychological makeup as affecting how they process information to arrive at strategic decisions (Abatecola & Cristofaro, 2020). SL involves top-level individuals in the organization, including general managers, the board of directors, the upper management group, and strategic business unit leaders, aiming to accomplish strategic outcomes via information management, resource management, stakeholder engagement, decision-making, and ethical issues (Schaedler, Graf-Vlachy, & König, 2022; Thys, Vandekerckhof, Steijvers, & Corten, 2024). SL is crucial for adaptive organizations, enabling the implementation of flexible business models to maintain value and profit in uncertain and disruptive conditions (Adobor, Darbi, & Damoah, 2021). Meanwhile, Kriger and Zhovtobryukh (2013) define SL as encompassing shared or distributed leadership in addition to top management teams by taking into account economic factors like internal organizational costs and competitive forces, which are the primary drivers of business performance.

#### 2.4. Spiritual Employee Engagement

The phrase "personal engagement" was first used in the 1990s by Kahn (1990) to describe the genuine expression of oneself at work as opposed to disengagement, which occurs when people "detach" from their role and thus have lesser engagement. EE is defined by Kahn as the capacity of workers to maximize their "full self" at work; it is a psychological link between work performance and motivation, encompassing physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, and is linked to work performance (Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2019; Jiang & Shen, 2020).

Workplace spirituality promotes a spiritual culture, enhances ethical decision-making, promotes work-life balance, aligns values, and fosters inner connection, necessitating integration into corporate culture and policies (Dubey & Singh Bedi, 2024). Aboobaker, Edward, and KA (2020) define workplace spirituality as a holistic approach that promotes purpose, meaning, and community through meaningful work, community building, alignment with organizational values, and strong colleague relationships. Spirituality at work and employee engagement are interconnected, with transcendence, community, and spiritual ideals affecting engagement through four psychological states: availability, safety, and purpose in work (Saks, 2011). According to a study done in China by Rashidin, Javed, and Liu (2020), workplace spirituality is a crucial component in raising employee satisfaction and engagement.

The research of Lee, Chong, and Ojo (2024) shows that EE significantly affects an organization's performance and productivity, and that workspace and functional flexibility positively influence this engagement. However, in business practice, most good companies always conduct employee engagement surveys among their employees. The results can be guessed that the average score of engagement among employees in these established companies is quite high. Surprisingly, these millennial employees keep switching jobs, so there are doubts that engagement alone is not enough.

Spiritual employee engagement (SEE), as a novelty from this study, is developed from the synthesis of the variables of employee engagement and spirituality at work. The concept of SEE describes employees who are not only tied to the organization professionally but also find spiritual meaning in their work, express personal values, demonstrate high productivity, and build a strong relationship of commitment with the organization. Employees will be more engaged and loyal to the organization. This creates working conditions that are meaningful, purposeful, and allow employees to express themselves fully.

#### 2.5. Hypothesis

The study of leadership style shows a significant effect in reducing the ETI by previous researchers, such as Xiong, Wu, and Sui (2023) and Moon and Park (2019). However, the effect of SL on ETI has not been extensively studied or remains limited. Therefore, based on the description above and previous studies, one of the research hypotheses formulated is that the effect of SL on ETI warrants further investigation in this study.

*Hypothesis 1: SL gives a significant negative effect on ETI.*

Research specifically explores SL on SEE; it does not yet exist because SEE is a new variable. However, a few proxies from earlier research indicate that SL and a number of other leadership philosophies significantly impact employee engagement (Bhardwaj, Mishra, & Jain, 2021; Ehrnrooth, Barner-Rasmussen, Koveshnikov, & Törnroos, 2021; Lai, Tang, Lu, Lee, & Lin, 2020; Ozturk, Karatepe, & Okumus, 2021; Thanh & Quang, 2022). It is anticipated that the influence of SL will be able to improve SEE based on those earlier studies; hence, one of the research hypotheses developed in this study is.

*Hypothesis 2: SL significantly has a positive effect on SEE.*

From various research results conducted by Zhu, Wang, Xu, Ma, and Luo (2023); Sinisterra, Peñalver, and Salanova (2024); Kim and Kim (2021); Boccoli, Gastaldi, and Corso (2023); Sahni (2021) and Obuobisa-Darko and Sokro (2023) show that employee engagement can reduce ETI. However, the effect of SEE on ETI has not been studied or is still limited. Therefore, based on past studies and the description above, one of the research hypotheses formulated in this study is.

*Hypothesis 3: SEE gives a significant negative effect on ETI.*

Due to its novelty, there is limited research on how SEE affects the link between SL and ETI. The influence of leadership style on ETI mediated by EE was demonstrated by prior researchers, including Lee, Shin, Park, Kim, and Cho (2017); Decuyper and Schaufeli (2019); Shah, Csordas, Akram, Yadav, and Rasool (2020); Quek et al. (2021) and Lacap (2019). The relationship between SL and ETI is anticipated to be mediated by SEE. Based on previous studies and the description above, one of the research hypotheses formulated in this study is.

*Hypothesis 4: SEE mediates SL's impact on ETI.*

## 2.6. Conceptual Framework

Based on the theories and literature consulted for this study, the conceptual framework that follows was created. As seen in Figure 1, the study's conceptual framework designates ETI as the dependent variable, SEE as the mediating variable, and SL as the independent variable. The conceptual framework that follows was developed using the theory employed in this investigation, as well as the literature that was reviewed.

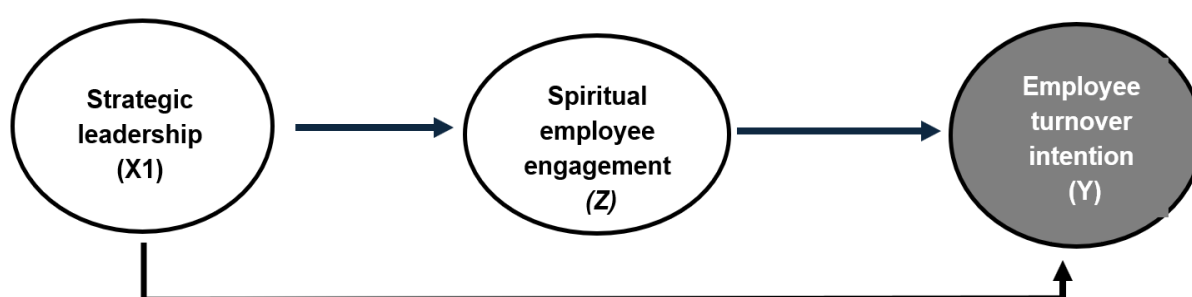


Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the study.

## 3. METHODS

### 3.1. Expert Judgement dan CVI Index

This study utilized expert judgment and content validity index (CVI) testing to validate SEE as a new variable. Management and senior managers were among the six experts who administered the test. The study's findings indicate the validity of the SEE variable by demonstrating strong relevance and clarity for each of the indicators examined.

### 3.2. Sample and Procedure

This study employed stratified random sampling and a closed questionnaire. It was disseminated via Google Forms in two phases: a pilot study with 30 participants in February 2022 and the main study with 375 participants from March to May 2025. The latter produced 345 usable responses. Table 1 presents the profile of 345 respondents

Table 1. Presents the profile of 345 respondents

Profile	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	318	92.2
	Female	27	7.8
Age	28-32 years	146	42.3
	33-37 years	89	25.8
	38-42 years	110	31.9
Experience	3-5 years	147	42.6
	5-10 years	96	27.8
	>10 years	102	29.6
Marital status	Not married	36	10.4
	Married	309	89.6
Education	High School	44	12.8

Profile	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	3rd Diploma	17	4.9
	Bachelor	268	77.7
	Master Degree	15	4.3
	PhD	1	0.3
Region	West Java	88	25.5
	Central Java	102	29.6
	East Java	155	44.9
Total		345	100

Source: Primary data processed (2025).

### 3.3. Measure

#### 3.3.1. Strategic Leadership

In this study, a number of indicators from Belias and Trihas (2022) and Bhardwaj et al. (2021) were combined to measure employees' perceptions of SL. Strategic orientation, putting strategy into action, adaptability, team collaboration, and inspiring trust are some of the SL indicators. Five items and five indicators make up SL. The Cronbach's alpha value for this SL is 0.76.

#### 3.3.2. Spiritual Employee Engagement

SEE of this research was measured using a combination of indicators, meaningful work (Aboobaker et al., 2020); spiritual values (Zhang, Huang, & Shen, 2023); vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002), and also, spiritual humility as a new indicator. As a new construct, SEE consists of 11 items and 6 indicators. The measurement used in this study had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.84.

#### 3.3.3. Employee Turnover Intention

In this research, indicators were used to measure employees' perceptions of ETI from Chavadi, Sirothiya, and MR (2021) and Skelton, Nattress, and Dwyer (2020). ETI indicators are: thinking about resigning, intention to seek alternatives, and intention to leave the organization. ETI consists of three indicators and three items. For this measurement in this study, the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.80.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

Partial least squares structural equation modeling (SEM-PLS) was used to test the proposed model. All analyses were conducted using SmartPLS 4.0 software. Hair and Alamer (2022) state that convergent validity was evaluated using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE); values greater than 0.50 were deemed adequate. For every construct with AVE values above the cutoff, adequate convergent validity was verified. The Fornell-Larcker criterion was used to verify the discriminant validity. Each construct's off-diagonal association with other constructs was less than the square root of its AVE (diagonal values), as seen in Table 2. This result demonstrates the distinctness of the notions, supporting discriminant validity.

**Table 2.** Discriminant validity by using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Construct	ETI	SEE	SL
Strategic leadership (SL)	0.086	0.654	<b>0.848</b>
Spiritual employee engagement (SEE)	0.005	<b>0.809</b>	
Employee turnover intention (ETI)	<b>0.837</b>		

Source: Primary data processed (2025).

The square root of each construct's AVE value is greater than the other correlation values, indicating the validity of the discriminant test used in this investigation. Convergent and discriminant validity tests, which employ the



square root of the AVE value, outer loading, and AVE value on the indicators and research variables, further support the validity of this model. Reliability analyses were conducted using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability; values above 0.70 denote acceptable internal consistency (Zhang et al., 2023). Results summarized in Table 3 confirm that all constructs meet this criterion.

**Table 3.** Result of AVE and the reliability test.

Variable	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha	Remark
<i>Strategic leadership (SL)</i>	0.719	0.928	0.902	Reliable
<i>Spiritual employee engagement (SEE)</i>	0.654	0.954	0.947	Reliable
<i>Employee turnover intention (ETI)</i>	0.701	0.875	0.786	Reliable

Source: Primary data processed (2025).

The model's ability to explain dependent variables was assessed using the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ).  $R^2$  values were categorized as weak ( $<0.19$ ), moderate ( $0.33$ – $0.67$ ), or very strong ( $>0.67$ ) in accordance with Hair and Alamer (2022). The  $R^2$  values for SEE and ETI are shown in Table 4, which demonstrates the model's strong predictive ability. The R-squared value results for the SEE and ETI variables are displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Value of  $R^2$ .

Construct	Value of $R^2$
Spiritual employee engagement	0.489
Employee turnover intention	0.045

Source: Primary data processed (2025).

The SEE model has a decent explanatory value, accounting for almost 49%. The ETI model explains a very small fraction, about 4.5%, indicating low model fit or missing variables.

## 4. RESULTS

By displaying the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) assesses the explanatory power of the model (Hair & Alamer, 2022). As shown in Table 4, the model accounts for 48.9% of the variance in SEE ( $R^2 = 0.489$ ), indicating a moderate to strong explanatory power. In contrast, the model shows only 4.5% of the variance in ETI ( $R^2 = 0.045$ ), reflecting a weak explanatory power. This indicates that there are other variables besides SL and SEE that need to be explored further to better understand and explain ETI. Most of the variation (95.5%) in turnover intention is not explained by this model, so it is important to conduct further research to identify other factors that contribute to employee turnover intention, such as work-life balance, job satisfaction, career growth, etc.

The study employed bootstrapping techniques to test hypotheses concerning latent variables within a sample. The analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0, with a significance level set at a p-value of less than 0.05. The path coefficient was utilized to assess the effect size. Based on the bootstrapping results, the hypothesis testing outcomes, considering the path coefficient and p-value, are summarized in the following table.

**Table 5.** Results of the hypothesis test.

Hypothesis	Construct	Path coefficient	p-value	Conclusion
H <sub>1</sub>	SL → ETI	0.064	0.250	Rejected
H <sub>2</sub>	SL → SEE	0.265	0.001	Accepted
H <sub>3</sub>	SEE → ETI	-0.238	0.007	Accepted
H <sub>4</sub>	SL → SEE → ETI	0.063	0.027	Accepted

Note: \*) Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

With a path coefficient of 0.064, the findings shown in Table 5 suggest a weakly positive correlation between SL and ETI. This implies that SL by itself is not sufficient to have a major impact on ETI. The rejection of hypothesis H1 is indicated by the p-value of  $0.250 > 0.05$ .

With a path coefficient value of 0.265 and a p-value of 0.001 below the 0.05 cutoff, the study discovered a positive correlation between SL and SEE. This suggests that when SL practices increase, SEE tends to increase as well, supporting the validity of hypothesis H2. The study also shows that SEE and ETI have a negative association. With a route coefficient of -0.238, ETI was shown to decrease. The p-value was 0.007, which is a highly statistically significant result because it is significantly below the 0.05 threshold. According to the results, the SEE application may lower ETI. Therefore, hypothesis H<sub>3</sub> is accepted.

The study found that effective SL increases SEE, which in turn reduces ETI. The t-statistic value of 1.924 and the p-value of 0.027 indicate that this indirect effect is statistically significant. Strong statistical significance is indicated by the p-value of 0.027, which is less than the traditional cutoff of 0.05. This suggests that the link between SL and ETI is strongly mediated by SEE, supporting the acceptance of hypothesis H<sub>4</sub>.

## 5. DISCUSSION

The primary goal of the research is to use SEE as a mediator variable to examine the link between SL and ETI. The study's data came from 345 useful responses from millennial field staff in Indonesia's agrochemical industry. The study reveals that SL does not significantly impact ETI. However, internal factors like effective teamwork and external factors such as the turbulent nature of the global agrochemical industry post-COVID-19 losses and the Russia-Ukraine war can influence ETI. Millennial generation field staff, who acted as respondents, may not respond positively to SL due to external factors, including global agrochemical companies experiencing severe losses in 2023-2024, leading to decreased company efficiency and massive employee reductions. Regardless of the effectiveness of SL, employees perceive their positions as unsafe and exposed to termination.

Research on the effect of SL on SEE is interesting because it has never been studied empirically before, even though it has been applied in practice in the field. The results showed that SEE is significantly and favorably impacted by SL. These results are in line with several previous studies. Bhardwaj et al. (2021); Ehrnrooth et al. (2021); Lai et al. (2020); Ozturk et al. (2021), and Thanh and Quang (2022), which shows that EE benefits from SL and other different leadership styles. The application of good SL can increase SEE in millennial employees who work as field staff in the agrochemical industry. This shows that the application of effective SL not only focuses on achieving organizational goals but also on developing SEE. Leaders may enhance employees' loyalty, job satisfaction, and SEE by motivating and giving their work purpose. Particularly for millennials who are looking for purpose in their jobs, a strategic and spiritual leadership style fosters a sense of connection between employees and the organization. Employee motivation, job satisfaction, and SEE all rise as a result, particularly in positions that benefit the environment and society. SEE has a negative and significant effect on ETI. This finding suggests that when millennials feel spiritual engagement at work, their intention to leave their job decreases. Millennials tend to value work that provides meaning and positive contributions, both for themselves and for society. When they feel that their work has a greater purpose and aligns with their personal values, this can increase their engagement with the organization and reduce their intention to leave. SEE provides meaning and purpose in work, spiritual values, and humility, which are very important to millennials who often seek more value than just a salary. The results of this study are also consistent with previous studies Zhu et al. (2023); Sinisterra et al. (2024); Kim and Kim (2021); Boccoli et al. (2023); Sahni (2021) and Obuobisa-Darko and Sokro (2023) that high levels of EE can reduce ETI.

The study reveals that SL does not significantly impact ETI. However, the finding that SEE serves as a full mediation between SL and ETI suggests that the effect of SL on ETI occurs through increased SEE. In other words, effective SL is able to increase SEE, which in turn will reduce the intention of millennials in the field staff to leave the organization. These findings emphasize the importance of organizations to focus on developing leadership that is not only strategic but also able to build spiritual engagement among employees. Training leaders to understand and apply



the principles of SEE can help create a more positive work environment. This can be done through programs that provide space for employees to share personal experiences and values, wellbeing initiatives, and team activities that reinforce shared values, creating a work environment that supports spiritual employee engagement.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

These findings are specific to Indonesia's agrochemical industry and may not generalize to other sectors or cultures. The cross-sectional, self-reported survey design limits causal inference and may introduce response bias. The study also focuses mainly on SL and SEE, omitting other relevant factors. Ultimately, SL at the supervisor level is analyzed, which may differ from top executive leadership in its impact.

A notable limitation of this study is the relatively low explanatory power for ETI, as indicated by the  $R^2$  value. This suggests that the integration effect of SL and SEE accounts for only a limited proportion of the variance in ETI among millennial field staff. Consequently, it is likely that other unobserved factors have a significant impact on turnover intentions. Future studies could consider including additional factors such as work happiness, organizational culture, or external economic conditions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing ETI in similar contexts.

This study explores the mediating role of SEE in the relationship between SL and ETI. It suggests that future studies must be carried out across a range of businesses, cultural contexts, and countries, especially in Asian countries. The study could also incorporate variables such as organizational culture, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and external labor market conditions. Qualitative or mixed-methods research could also enhance understanding of millennials' spiritual engagement and leadership practices.

In order to foster a sense of purpose and align work with personal values, organizations should support leaders in implementing practices that foster SEE. Employees can express their values and discover a greater sense of purpose in their work with the support of initiatives like sharing sessions, wellness programs, and team-building exercises. The role of spiritual humility as a leadership trait could provide deeper insights into employee retention mechanisms. Flexible work arrangements can lower millennials' intention to leave their jobs. Particularly in industries with high turnover, like agrochemicals, fostering a culture that prioritizes holistic well-being can boost loyalty and lower turnover. Effective leadership strategies require regular evaluations of engagement and turnover intention.

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**Transparency:** The authors state that the manuscript is honest, truthful, and transparent, that no key aspects of the investigation have been omitted, and that any differences from the study as planned have been clarified. This study followed all writing ethics.

**Competing Interests:** The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

**Authors' Contributions:** All authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

**Disclosure of AI use:** The authors used QuillBot's free edition as a tool for this study. To make the manuscript preparation process clearer and more succinct while maintaining the scholarly content as the authors' original work, QuillBot was used for grammar checking and summarizing lengthy sentences.

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