Innovations

Entrepreneurial Spirituality in an Emerging Economy: Linking Faith, Self-Efficacy and Entrepreneurial Performance

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Abstract:

The study examines how spirituality influences the entrepreneurial performance of small and medium enterprises (SME) owners in South-East Nigeria, focusing on the mediating role of self-efficacy. Gleaning from the Resource-Based View and Upper Echelons Theory, the paper disaggregates spirituality into three dimensions: meaningful work, sense of community, and inner life. With a structured questionnaire, data were collected from 393 SME owners and analysed through structural equation modelling and Hayes PROCESS macro. The results indicate that meaningful work and a sense of community have significant positive effects on performance, while inner life does not. Self-efficacy significantly mediates the relationship between meaningful work and performance, but not between inner life and performance. Surprisingly, the sense of community showed a negative indirect effect through self-efficacy. The findings underscore the context-specific influence of spirituality on entrepreneurial outcomes and suggest that purpose-driven and socially embedded spiritual practices enhance SME performance in resource-constrained environments.

Introduction

The intersection of spirituality and entrepreneurial performance has garnered increasing scholarly attention, especially in emerging economies characterized by dynamic socio-cultural and institutional complexities (Dubey & Singh Bedi, 2024; Singh & Awasthy, 2025). In Nigeria's South-East region, a hub of entrepreneurial vibrancy and innovation, Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are essential to job creation, economic growth, and the fight against poverty (Iqbal et al., 2019;

Mishra & Khulbe, 2024). However, many SMEs confront significant obstacles, including resource limitations, inconsistent regulatory environments, and high rates of business failure, even in the face of favourable policy frameworks and a deeply ingrained cultural tendency toward enterprise (Chukwuanu & Ajibo, 2024). Given these systemic barriers, researchers and practitioners are investigating additional factors that may boost performance, with spirituality emerging as a key contributor.

Different from institutional religiosity, spirituality includes a transcendent aspect of human experience that influences ethical direction, relevance, purpose, and interconnection in business operations. In entrepreneurial contexts, spirituality has been linked to heightened resilience, enhanced risk tolerance, ethical decision-making, and greater stakeholder engagement (Astrachan et al., 2020; Sarif & Ismail, 2023). Particularly in high-uncertainty environments, entrepreneurs' spiritual orientation may influence their motivational systems, strategic thinking, and flexibility (Ganzin et al., 2020; Kauanui et al., 2010). This phenomenon is especially salient where indigenous spiritual beliefs and Christian doctrinal values coexist and are often deeply integrated into business conduct.

Theoretical frameworks such as the Upper Echelons Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV) posit that intangible psychological and spiritual assets of firm leaders can significantly impact strategic orientations and firm outcomes (Mailani et al., 2024; Neely et al., 2020). In this context, particular aspects of workplace spirituality, such as meaningful work, sense of community, and inner life, have received academic focus due to their impact on entrepreneurial and organizational performance. Meaningful work has been linked to enhanced intrinsic motivation, task engagement, and innovation capacity among entrepreneurs operating in volatile environments (Bawuro et al., 2019; Milliman et al., 2003; Saks, 2011). Likewise, a sense of community has been associated with stronger interpersonal collaboration, social cohesion, and collective problem-solving, which are key factors in resource-constrained SME settings (Petchsawang & Duchon, 2012; Petchsawang & McLean, 2017). A quality inner life of business owners improves stakeholder trust and organizational integrity by promoting moral decision-making and cultural coherence (Cunha et al., 2019; Tongo, 2016).

Still, there are several gaps in the body of existing material. First, the majority of research has focused on spirituality from an organizational standpoint, ignoring its manifestation and influence at the human level, especially in entrepreneurship, where personal values and motivations of owner-managers are frequently intimately linked to business choices and achievement. This is a critical oversight in highly indigenous and developing contexts, where entrepreneurial activity is often a

deeply personal and value-driven endeavour. It has been established thatmost SMEs are owner-managed, with owners actively engaged in both strategic decision-making and daily operations (Cowling, 2003). This structural reality makes owner-managers not only the economic drivers of their enterprises but also the primary vessels through which personal values, including spiritual beliefs, are transmitted into business practices. Owner-managers frequently represent the company's identity, influencing its ethical standards, resilience, stakeholder involvement, and innovation routes through their spiritual perspective, in contrast to employees who might function under the impact of imposed corporate principles. Second, the construct of spirituality is frequently treated as a monolithic or generalized concept, with limited empirical scrutiny of its multidimensional structure and how distinct facets interact to influence owner-manager performance outcomes. Third, while existing studies acknowledge the positive association between spirituality and performance, the psychological mechanisms underlying and mediating this relationship remain underexplored.

In response to this gap, the present study introduces *self-efficacy* as a potential mediating variable in the spirituality-performance nexus. Self-efficacy, as a core self-evaluation trait, shapes how individuals perceive their efficacy, worth, and agency, which are factors that directly impact entrepreneurial perseverance, risk tolerance, and decision-making quality. By offering existential meaning, internal harmony, and a feeling of community, spirituality can boost self-efficacy. As a result, entrepreneurs would find it simpler to overcome challenges and build profitable businesses(Gábová et al., 2021). The relationship between spiritual capital and performance enhancements in SMEs can be better understood psychologically thanks to this mediation pathway. Therefore, by disaggregating spirituality into meaningful work, sense of community, and inner life, and by evaluating the mediating role of self-efficacy. This research provides a deeper, contextually based knowledge of how individual-level spirituality drives entrepreneurial outcomes in developing contexts.

Hypotheses Development
Inner Life and Performance

Individuals' inner lives show how closely their convictions align with the morals or cultural norms that their company upholds. This alignment promotes role congruence, normative commitment, and psychological safety, all of which are favorable to better performance outcomes(Bella et al., 2018; Daniel, 2015). According to Edwards & Cable (2009), workers who share the organization's values tend to exhibit more role clarity, behavioral consistency, and discretionary effort. Value congruence has been shown to improve goal-directed behavior, engagement,

and performance (Iqbal et al., 2019). Thus, the following hypothesis is postulated:

H₁: Inner life has a direct effect on performance.

Meaningful Work and Performance

A sense of purpose, personal significance, and connection with one's beliefs are characteristics of meaningful work, which has become a crucial indicator of engagement and success. Higher levels of commitment, intrinsic motivation, and sustained task performance are more likely to be displayed by workers who believe their work has purpose (Albuquerque et al., 2014; Steger et al., 2012). The psychological satisfaction that comes from doing meaningful work improves performance outcomes by strengthening emotional resilience and cognitive absorption. Meaningful work improves job involvement and role clarity, which increases individual productivity, according to empirical research (Allan et al., 2016). The following hypothesis is put out:

H₂: Meaningful work has a direct effect on performance.

Sense of Community and Performance

Perceived connections, support of one another, and a sense of identification with other members of the company are reflected in the workplace's sense of community. Cooperation, emotional safety, and prosocial behaviors are all improved by this communal tie and are necessary for peak performance (Anderson & Gaddefors, 2016; Jiang & Zhen, 2022). When people feel psychologically embedded in their workgroup, they exhibit stronger organizational citizenship behaviors and job dedication. Research confirms that a strong sense of community facilitates information sharing, reduces burnout, and improves performance stability (Garrett et al., 2017; Stevens et al., 2018). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H₃: Sense of community has a direct effect on performance.

The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

Inner life, the very personal and introspective part of spirituality, allows people to discover inner peace, purpose, and fulfillment in their job (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). By fostering a sense of inner harmony and congruence between one's ideals and actions, a well-developed inner life enhances self-efficacy and instils the confidence that entrepreneurs possess the necessary skills to capitalize on the advantages their spirituality offers them in the workplace. Meaningful work is a central dimension of workplace spirituality, referring to the sense of purpose and significance business owners derive from their job roles (Blustein et al., 2023). Workers who believe their work is meaningful are more likely to experience higher

self-efficacy due to the alignment between their personal values and professional activities. A feeling of community at work, which fosters a supportive and connected environment where workers feel valued and connected, is another crucial element of spirituality that could precipitate high confidence levels (Idorenyin & Needorn, 2022). Where a sense of community is high, this social support can increase self-efficacy by improving people's feelings of social acceptance and recognition(Garcia-Reid et al., 2013; Novara et al., 2025)

H$_4$: The relationship between inner life and performance is mediated by self-efficacy.

H$_5$: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between meaningful work and performance.

H$_6$: Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between sense of community and performance.

Methodology

Participants and data collection

For this study, copies of the questionnaire were administered to business owners in the South-East Nigeria Region. According to the report released by the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 9731 SMEs are registered with Nigeria's Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in the South-East Zone of Nigeria (SMEDAN/NBS, 2017). Simple random sampling was used to select 700 registered businesses with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) within the South-East region. A total of 700 questionnaires were distributed to the owners of these SMEs. After using list-wise deletion to eliminate data with incomplete responses, 393 valid responses, representing 56.1 percent, were received. Table 1 shows the participant profile and their associated means and standard deviations.

Table 1: Participant profile

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	S.D
Highest Educational Qualification	O'Level	55	14.0%	2.59	0.92
	OND/NCE/Equivalent	108	27.5%		
	B.Sc./HND/Equivalent	183	46.6%		
	PGB/M.Sc./MBA	38	9.7%		
	Ph.D.	9	2.3%		
Gender	Male	255	64.9%	1.35	0.48
	Female	138	35.1%		

Work Experience	Less than I year	36	9.2%	3.53	1.39
	1-5 years	51	13.0%		
	5-10 years	110	28.0%		
	11-15 years	97	24.7%		
	16-20 years	64	16.3%		
	More than 20 years	35	8.9%		
Age Distribution	18-24 years	37	9.4%	36.97	9.87
	25-31 years	97	24.7%		
	32-38 years	94	23.9%		
	39-45 years	83	21.1%		
	Above 45 years	82	20.9%		

Note: S.D = Standard Deviation; OND = Ordinary National Diploma; HND = Higher National Diploma;

Measures
The measures for the variables were designed on a 5-point Likert scale format, ranging from "strongly agree" to strongly disagree," which was used to elicit data from respondents.

Independent Variable: Spirituality
The spirituality construct comprises three main variables, whose question items were adopted from Duchon & Plowman (2005). For the inner life variable, there were 5 question items. A sample item was "My spiritual values influence the choices that I make". The reliability score using composite reliability was 0.844. For the meaning ofthe work variable, there were 7 question items. A sample item was "I feel hopeful about life". The reliability score using composite reliability was 0.917. For the sense of community variable, there were 9 question items. A sample item was "At work, we work together to resolve conflicts positively". The reliability score using composite reliability was 0.916.

Mediating Variable: Self-Efficacy
Question items for the self-efficacy construct were adopted from the 5-question items used by (Monteiro et al., 2022). Sample items include "At times, I think I am no good at all" (reverse coded). The reliability score using composite reliability was 0.896.

Dependent Variable: Performance
Question items for the performance construct were adopted from the five-item scales used by Pradhan & Jena (2017). A sample item includes "I know I can handle multiple assignments for achieving organizational goals". The reliability score using

composite reliability was 0.874.

Control Variables

The control variables used for this study were age, gender, highest educational qualification, and experience (Fatima et al., 2018; Villani et al., 2019).

Results

To evaluate the latent construct validity and confirmatory factor analysis, AMOS (version 24) was utilized, with the James Gaskin plugin for reliability indices and other model diagnostics. To investigate the suggested mediation hypotheses, the study used SPSS's Hayes PROCESS macro (version 3), utilizing Model 4 to evaluate indirect effects.

Construct Diagnostics

Following standard protocols, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed as a preliminary step to assess the measurement model and determine whether the latent construct representations were adequate (Table 2), which shows standardized estimates loaded above 0.5 for all constructs(Schreiber et al., 2006). Additionally, these constructs' average variance extracted (AVE) was higher than the 0.5 cut-off (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schreiber et al., 2006). However, one item in the inner life (IL) construct was an ultra-Heywood case, with a standardized estimate above 1. Thus, it was obfuscated from the model.

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted

Variables	Validity	C.R	AVE
Inner Life		**0.844**	**0.583**
I care about the spiritual health of my co-workers	0.961		
My spiritual values influence the choices that I make	0.787		
I consider myself a spiritual person	0.665		
Prayer is an important part of my life	0.587		
Meaning at Work		**0.917**	**0.621**
I experience joy in my work	0.967		
I see a connection between my work and the larger social good of my community	0.902		
I believe others experience joy as a result of my work	0.874		
The work I do is connected to what I think is important in life	0.786		
My spirit is energized by my work	0.746		
I understand what gives my work personal meaning	0.593		

I look forward to coming to work most days	0.558		
Sense of Community		**0.956**	**0.710**
My supervisor encourages my personal growth	0.998		
I am encouraged to take risks at work	0.931		
When I have a concern, I report it to the appropriate person	0.913		
At work, we work together to resolve conflicts positively	0.900		
I am evaluated fairly here	0.871		
When I have fears, I am encouraged to discuss them	0.787		
I am valued at work for who I am	0.782		
I feel part of a community in my immediate workplace (department, unit, etc.).	0.682		
I have had numerous experiences in my job that have resulted in personal growth	0.653		
Self-efficacy		**0.896**	**0.647**
All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure	0.995		
I take a positive attitude toward myself	0.930		
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	0.873		
At times, I think I am no good at all*	0.581		
I feel I do have much to be proud of	0.527		
Performance		**0.873**	**0.537**
My colleagues believe I am a high performer in my organization	0.815		
I know I can handle multiple assignments for achieving organizational goals	0.802		
I use to maintain a high standard of work	0.773		
I used to complete my assignments on time	0.732		
I am capable of handling my assignments for achieving organizational goals			
I am very passionate about my work	0.556		

Discriminant Validity

A robust measurement model must demonstrate both convergent and discriminant validity. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was examined to assess discriminant validity, as shown in Table 3. Following the threshold recommended by Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt (2015)and Hu & Bentler (1999), HTMT values should ideally remain below 0.90, as seen in Table 4.

Table 3: HTMT Analysis (Discriminant Validity)

	IL	MAW	SE	SOC
IL				
MAW	0.088			
SE	0.071	0.049		
SOC	0.007	0.153	0.324	
PERF	0.101	0.408	0.151	0.487

Source: James Gaskin plug in, AMOS (v.24)

The model fit was assessed using structural equation modelling (SEM). Initial analysis revealed potential areas of model misspecification. Thus, we covariated the error terms of certain items within the same latent construct. This was done based on high modification indices (MIs) suggested by AMOS and supported by theoretical and/or empirical justification(Hair et al., 2021; Ullman & Bentler, 2013). IL2, IL3, and IL4 were covaried; MAW6, MAW7, MAW8, and MAW11 were covaried; SE1 and SE3 were covaried; SOC2, SOC7, and SOC8 were covaried, and PERF1, PERF5, and PERF6 were also covaried. The addition of these covariances resulted in a significant improvement in model fit indices: χ^2/df ratio = 1.871; IFI = 0.965; TLI = 0.961; NFI = 0.928; RFI = 0.919; GFI = 0.890; AGFI = 0.868; RMSEA = 0.047; and RMR = 0.048. Overall, the evaluation of model fit indices was guided by the criteria outlined in (Hair et al., 2021).
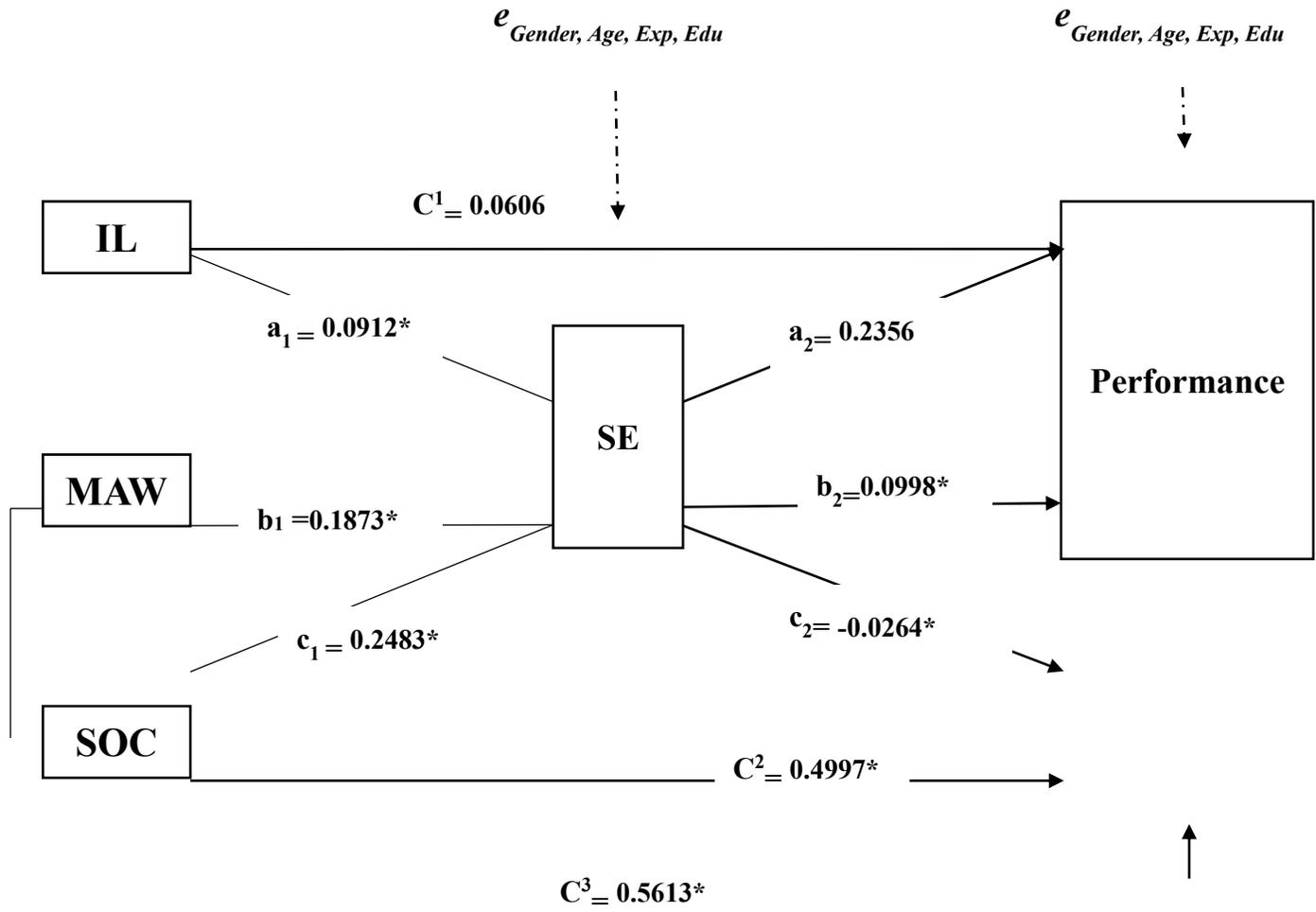
Common Method Bias

To check for common method bias, we employed the single-factor test developed by Harman, which Craighead, Ketchen, Dunn, & Hult (2011) recommended. After doing a CFA and restricting the entire model to one factor, the findings indicated a poor fit (X^2 to *df* = 6.5; RMR = 0.104; AGFI = 0.594; IFI = 0.592; TLI = 0.561; CFI = 0.590; NFI = 0.552; RMSEA = 0.119). This means that common method bias does not exist in the model (Kock et al., 2021).

Table 5: Results of Hypotheses Tests

Outcomes	M (SE)			Performance					
	a_1	a_2	a_3	b_1	b_2	b_3	C1(IL)	C2(MAW)	C3(SOC)
Constant	18.7737	14.4714	10.5790	20.6786	10.1971	5.4868	25.1016	11.6418	5.2078
Controls:									
Gender	-0.1440	-0.1257	-0.1886	0.0031	-0.0221	-0.1782	-0.0309	-0.0347	-0.1732
Age	-0.0612	-0.0946	-0.1004	0.1255	0.0141	-0.0071	0.1111	0.0047	0.0104
Edu. Qual.	0.0798	-0.1214	-0.1646	0.0236	-0.0815	-0.1798	0.0048	-0.0936	-0.1755
Experience	0.6031*	0.5955**	0.4548***	0.1512	-0.0357	-0.0761	0.2933	0.2133	-0.0881
Predictor									
IL	0.0912*			0.0391			0.0606		
MAW		0.1873*			0.4814*			0.4997*	
SOC			0.2483*			0.5679*			0.5613*
Mediator									
SE				0.2356*	0.0998**	-0.0264			
R^2	0.0236	0.0663	0.1248	0.0629	0.2020	0.2183	0.2000	0.3890	0.5825
F	1.8728	5.4964	11.4026	4.3201	12.6108	13.1964	15.006	49.2755	107.9876
ΔR^2	0.1301	0.1912	0.2290	0.1879	0.1511	0.0163	0.0183	0.2347	0.1807
P	< 0.1	< 0.05	< 0.05	< 0.05	< 0.05	< 0.05	< 0.05	< 0.05	< 0.05

Note: *=p<0.05; **=p<0.01; ***=p<0.1; GEND: Gender; Edu. Qual.: Educational Qualification of Respondents; EXP: Experience of respondents; IL: Inner Life; MAW: Meaning at Work; SOC: Sense of Community; SE: Self-Efficacy; PERF: Performance.

Figure 1: Summary of Effects

$e_{Gender, Age, Exp, Edu}$ $e_{Gender, Age, Exp, Edu}$

IL

$C^1 = 0.0606$

Performance

$a_1 = 0.0912^*$ $a_2 = 0.2356$

SE

MAW

$b_1 = 0.1873^*$ $b_2 = 0.0998^*$

$c_1 = 0.2483^*$ $c_2 = -0.0264^*$

SOC

$C^2 = 0.4997^*$

$C^3 = 0.5613^*$

Hypothesis Testing

Evidence from Table 6 and Figure 1 showed the hypothesized effects. For the direct effects, there was no statistically significant direct effect of inner life on performance of SME owners in South-East, Nigeria ($C_1{}^1=0.0391$; n=393; $p>0.05$); thereby refuting **H₁**. There was a statistically significant direct effect of meaning at work on performance of SME owners in South-East, Nigeria ($C_2{}^1=0.4814$; n=393; $p<0.05$); thereby confirming **H₂**. There was a statistically significant direct effect of sense of community on performance of SME owners in South-East, Nigeria ($C_3{}^1=0.5679$; n=393; $p<0.05$); which corroborates **H₃.** Further analysis on the direct effects showed a significant effect of inner life on self-efficacy ($a_1=0.0912$; n=393; $p<0.05$); a significant direct effect of meaning at work on self-efficacy ($b_1=0.1873$; n=393; $p<0.05$); and a statistically significant effect of sense of community on performance ($c_1=0.2483$; n=393; $p<0.05$).

For the mediating effects, we found that there was no significant indirect effect of inner life on performance through self-efficacy ($a_1{}^1$=0.0215;-0.0018≤Cl≤0.0527); an indirect significant effect of meaning at work on performance through self-efficacy ($b_1{}^1$=0.0183;0.0008≤Cl≤0.0424); and a negative indirect significant effect of sense of community on performance through self-efficacy ($c_1{}^1$=-0.0065;-0.0275≤Cl≤0.0136).

Discussion

The findings reveal a clear distinction in how different dimensions of spirituality influence SME performance in South-East Nigeria. While meaning at work and sense of community show significant positive effects, inner life does not, underscoring that external, socially embedded, and purpose-driven spirituality has more direct performance relevance than introspective practices in challenging environments. It makes sense that there would be no direct effect of inner life on performance, given the socioeconomic reality of developing nations, where there is a lack of official assistance, unstable policies, and inadequate infrastructure(Daniel, 2015). In such settings, inward spiritual activities like meditation or prayer may enhance personal well-being and moral grounding, but do not automatically translate into improved business metrics. Conversely, the significant effect of meaning at work is in line with spiritual leadership theory and previous empirical work, which demonstrate that perceiving one's work as purposeful activates intrinsic motivation, sustained effort, and strategic focus(Afsar et al., 2016; Milliman et al., 2003). These psychological processes are particularly important for small business owners who are dealing with uncertainty and limited resources because they allow for perseverance and values-based decision-making, which directly improves individual performance.

Similarly, a sense of community emerges as the strongest predictor, reflecting the African communitarian tradition emphasized by Mbiti (1969) and Nwankwo & Gbadamosi (2013), where relational capital and mutual support are central to economic activity. Consistent with Lechner & Dowling (2013), entrepreneurs embedded in strong networks enjoy better access to resources, information, and reputational capital. More recent studies like Tlaiss & McAdam (2021b) and Tlaiss & McAdam (2021a) show that community-oriented spirituality improves innovation, collaboration, and resilience in emerging economies with weak institutions. Although concerns exist about over-embeddedness limiting innovation (McKeever et al., 2014; Uzzi & Gillespie, 2002), such risks are minimal in collectivist settings where social capital substitutes for formal support.

On the mediation results, while inner life lacks a significant indirect effect on performance through self-efficacy, meaning at work positively influences performance via self-efficacy, and sense of community negatively affects

performance through self-efficacy. These findings align with and extend existing literature on spirituality and self-efficacy in entrepreneurship. The absence of a significant indirect effect for inner life suggests that in developing economies, where infrastructural challenges and policy instability persist, introspective spiritual practices may not enhance self-efficacy or performance. This result is supported by recent studies (Albuquerque et al., 2014; Baker, 2003), which find that inner spirituality improves personal well-being but rarely translates directly into business outcomes without behavioural activation; although Afsar et al., (2016) and Mineva (2024) disagreed with this finding.

In contrast, meaning at work strengthens self-efficacy, which then positively influences performance. This aligns with Bandura (1997)theory of self-efficacy and other empirical evidence (Afsar et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2016; Idorenyin & Needorn, 2022) demonstrating that perceiving one's work as meaningful boosts entrepreneurial confidence and persistence, leading to improved firm outcomes. The negative indirect effect of sense of community on performance through self-efficacy presents a paradox. Although community ties often provide resources and emotional support, they can impose social pressures or conformity demands that undermine individual confidence. This resonates with recent critiques of network over embeddedness (Andersen, 2013; Mozumdar et al., 2019; Pieters et al., 2012), showing that in collectivist cultures like Nigeria's, strong communal ties may suppress entrepreneurial autonomy, thereby weakening self-efficacy and hindering performance.

Conclusion, Managerial Implications, and Suggestions for Further Studies
The effect of spirituality on the performance of small business owners in South-East Nigeria has been examined in this study, with a focus on the mediating function of self-efficacy. According to the findings, spirituality has a significant beneficial influence on entrepreneurial performance. One important psychological process that links spirituality to improved business success is self-efficacy.SME owners can develop more self-assurance, resiliency, and motivation by incorporating spirituality into their entrepreneurial frameworks. These traits eventually lead to better business success. Since spiritual beliefs have a prodigious effect on social and economic actions in Nigeria, our findings contribute to the growing body of research on the connection between spirituality and entrepreneurship. Practically, the study recommends that policymakers and business support organizations should consider spirituality and psychological empowerment strategies when designing interventions aimed at fostering SME growth and sustainability.

To optimize the influence of spirituality on SME performance in South-East Nigeria, managers should implement strategies that harness its most impactful dimensions: meaning at work and sense of community. Entrepreneurs need to integrate workplace spirituality into their business operations by fostering meaning at work. Daily tasks that are in line with more general ethical and societal objectives increase intrinsic motivation, enhancing decision-making and resilience in unpredictable situations.SME owners must develop solid interpersonal networks that foster cooperation, trust, and group problem-solving. However, excessive dependence on close-knit networks should be moderated to preserve entrepreneurial autonomy and adaptability.

Given the mediating role of self-efficacy, managers need to prioritize programs that reinforce entrepreneurial confidence and competence. Structured mentorship, skills training, and recognition systems can enhance self-belief, translating spirituality into tangible business performance. While meaning at work and a sense of community drive performance, inner life alone does not yield direct business benefits. Managers should ensure that introspective spiritual practices complement, rather than replace, action-oriented and socially embedded strategies. Business development initiatives should integrate ethical and spiritual leadership training. Policymakers and business support organizations should design frameworks that reward purpose-driven entrepreneurship while enabling access to critical resources.

Future research could explore longitudinal effects and investigate additional mediators or moderators, such as social capital or cultural factors to deepen understanding of the complex pathways linking spirituality and entrepreneurial success. Future studies could also explore sectoral differences, looking at how spirituality affects different businesses, including manufacturing, retail, and services.

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