BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND PRACTICES IN LITERATURE: A SOLA SCRIPTURE-THEMATIC SYNTHESIS

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Abstract
Traditional leadership theories lack significant Biblical evidence that leadership is a gift from God. Consequently, the theories do not factorize stewardship, accountability, integrity, and justice into their conjectures. This study evaluated leadership theories and practices through the lens of sola scriptura. This was to identify any biblical justification for traditional leadership theories. The methodology covers the study design, data sources, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques. The design of this study is qualitative; it is based on themes from traditional leadership theories and from the Bible within a sola scriptura framework. This design provides a platform to interpret textual data and themes. The primary data source for the study is the Bible. The secondary source is from leadership literature. Relevant Bible texts related to leadership were selected. This specification is necessary to include only themes that are comparable to the secondary data. The sources of the secondary data are themes derived from the leadership theories included. The data for the study were elicited through a documentary search of leadership literature, identification of relevant Bible texts, and finally, the presentation of consonant themes from the theories and the Bible. The identified textual data sources were used for analysis. Findings reveal that self-dependence will lead to naturalism, self-confidence, and sufficiency. Based on Sola Scriptura, leadership has authority. However, its power is under the control of compassion and love. Hence, tyrannical leadership and authoritarianism are anti-Bible doctrines of humility, responsibility, and free will. Traditional Leadership theories were framed in secular contexts, which can be mediated by biblical principles to deconstruct them. The methodological implication was that the relevant leadership themes became direct derivatives of the Bible. In practice, leadership can apply Bible values in the workplace.

Keywords: Biblical Evaluation, Leadership Theories, Practices and Sola-Scriptura, Literature

1. Introduction

In academic literature, leadership theories dominate a significant part. This scholarship covers business management, theology, organizational behavior, faith-based institutions, and politics. (Gorka et al., 2025). A basic tenet of leadership theories is that leaders must influence followers, achieve organizational objectives, and keep the organization afloat. The main relevant theories are transformational, transactional, servant, ethical, and authentic. These theories are empirically relevant in secular and religious organizations, but they are based on secular frameworks. The concern in this study is the epistemological framework of these leadership theories. There is a need to investigate how these theories align with the

Bible. Thus, it has become necessary to re-examine them in light of the Bible's doctrines alone. Which has been referred to here as sola scriptura-thematic synthesis. To this extent, Jordan (2022) argues that they should be subordinate to Bible principles. This implies that the Bible takes the center stage at every point of divergence (Geister & Mackenzie, 2009).

Within Christian contexts, there has been scholarly interest in integrating faith into leadership research. This interest stems from the desire to integrate spiritual principles into leadership. In support of this phenomenon, servant leadership has become widely accepted as a theory that contextualizes the moral values of meekness, sacrifice, and selflessness (Craun & Henson, 2022). The theory provides ethical implications in faith-based firms, which drive organizational culture, citizenship, and well-being (Shula, 2026). On the contrary, other traditional leadership theories have not followed the path of servanthood (Wiyono et al., 2024). They are still reliant on presence, power, influence, and transactional trade-offs in the process of leadership.

Consequently, support for servant leadership theory requires evaluating traditional leadership theories against biblical principles (Baker, 2023). This is because, beyond theoretical conjectures, the Bible should be central to assessing leadership theories. The essence is to shift attention away from hero leadership and toward God. The idea is that, no matter how well-intentioned, any leadership theory that is not based on and practiced in the word of God will not lead to good ends in the long run. A focus on profit alone will remove attention from value-based outcomes. The idea of *what works* is not more important than *what ought to work*. Performance alone does not imply progress if it focuses only on bottom lines (Cwiakala et al., 2025). There are many more important and enduring outcomes in the context of obedience, responsibility, justice, equity, and accountability.

Traditional leadership theories run in opposition to biblical doctrines. Therefore, this study is based on a thematic synthesis, grounded on sola scriptura (Geisler & Mackenzie, 2009). Textual themes were identified from the literature in the context of traditional leadership theories. These are compared with Bible principles. This attempt provides a deep reflection aimed at identifying areas of convergence and divergence. In a world where leadership failure is synonymous with organizational downturn, it is relevant to argue for leadership that not only demonstrates hands-on competence but also proves faithful in moral character (Jordan, 2022). Otherwise, the outcome is the prevalence of evil genius leadership. Traditional leadership theories offer guidelines that, when mediated by Biblical principles, yield results necessary for sustainable organizational growth. This is significant for a business as a going concern, achieving organizational goals, sustaining stakeholders' investment, and ensuring employee satisfaction (Tangen, 2023).

Enough has not been achieved in the attempt to integrate faith values into traditional leadership theories. According to Yukl (2010), despite the empirical contributions, contemporary leadership theories are not deeply entrenched in theology. As a result, their moral expressions are shaped by culture and context. This practice is not in consonance with the fact that leadership is a gift of God. Despite the theories that may subsist, leadership is ordained and gifted by God to humanity. To Adam and Eve, he gave leadership of the earth: *"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.*" (Genesis 1:28, KJV). The implication of this is that theories do not create leadership. Rather, theories should be crafted in accordance

with God's gift of leadership and in obedience to his will and word. This conceptual explanation is not an apology to leadership theorists; it is a normative correctness of what ought to be. Consequently, though it is excluded from traditional theories of leadership, every leader is a steward, responsible to, and accountable first to God and then to the organization and its followers. Except for the evil ones, every leader in the Bible recognized God as the ultimate giver of leadership rights. This was the case with Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ (Rankin, 2026).

The concept of sola scriptura is a Protestant doctrine that holds that the Bible is the basis for the rules of belief, doctrine, and behavior (Geisler & Mackenzie, 2009). In extension, leadership theories should be formulated and practiced in accordance with divine revelations. The knowledge source of traditional leadership theories must be qualified within the framework of biblical truth. Even servant leadership needs a deeper exegesis of the Bible texts that define it (Snead, 2021). This is because servant leadership is currently essentially a social facade for its pragmatic definitions. Thus, a leadership theory should not be biblical in name only, but rather in meaning and practice. Clark (2018) reports a finding from a meta-analysis in which Servant leadership was defined using specific scriptural passages, but the meta-analysis did not reveal a Bible-based theory (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Such contradictions are anti-sola scriptura because they neglect the Bible as the primary source of their knowledge.

Ideally, some of the textual data by which the Bible describes leadership include stewardship (Rankin, 2026), service, humility, sacrifice, forgiveness, patience, and free will. Which means the leader leads in the stead of Jesus (Snead, 2021). In contrast, traditional theories refer to concepts such as ownership, control, pride, manipulation, vendetta, anxiety, impatience, and coercion. The Bible clarifies this distinction between Bible leadership and secular leadership in Mark 10: 42 – 44 (KJV):

> But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

White (2005) emphasized that leaders in secular positions lead for self-aggrandizement. The followers are to serve the leaders. They controlled the people for their own good and pleasure. Nevertheless, the Bible instructs that humanity is not called to authority and power, but to the service of the strong for the weak. In essence, those in positions of power, with education and talent, should serve their fellows.

2.1 Review of Bible Bases

Leadership is a gift from God. The term ‘dominion’ in Genesis 1:28 implies that humanity was to be the head and leader of the universe. But this leadership was to be based on service and not ‘lordship’ (Joyce, 2006). A biblically based leadership approach, servant leadership places a strong emphasis on service, humility, selflessness, and putting others' needs first. The idea, popularized by Greenleaf (1977), aligns with Scripture, which emphasizes helping others for the greater good rather than control or power. As written in Mark 10:42-45. According to contemporary research, servant leadership entails ethical responsibility, empowerment, stewardship, and altruism—all of which have their roots in biblical teachings (Northouse, 2018; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002).

As noted by Joyce (2006), "even though the Bible was not written as a management manual, it offers many principles and models to help leaders evaluate themselves in the process of leadership. Consequently, leadership theories can be evaluated based on the Word of God. The best manual for all forms of leadership, particularly servant leadership, is found in the Bible. However, this is only possible if leaders understand what leadership is. Leadership is traditionally defined as influence. But in this study, leadership is service. No matter the leadership theory, Greatman, Trait, Behavioural, Servant, Transformational, Transactional, Authentic, Charismatic, Ethical, etc, all are grounded on service. This a sola-scriptura stance. If the leader is not serving the followers, he or she cannot positively influence them.

While grounded in service, the evaluation of leadership theories also includes other factors, such as biblical principles and values, which are required in the leader-follower relationship. These principles affirm followers' well-being (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). To this extent, Northouse (2018) notes that leaders should emphasize followers and help them grow. Moses, Solomon, and Paul were good examples of care for followers. This was because, according to Banks & Ledbetter (2004), Hall (2023), and McKee (2021), they emphasized service and the good of others. The current leadership theories should be assessed on those bases. These are not just inspiration and motivation, as contemporary theories specify (Bass & Riggio, 2006), but also insight, foresight, and discernment that promote organizational change.

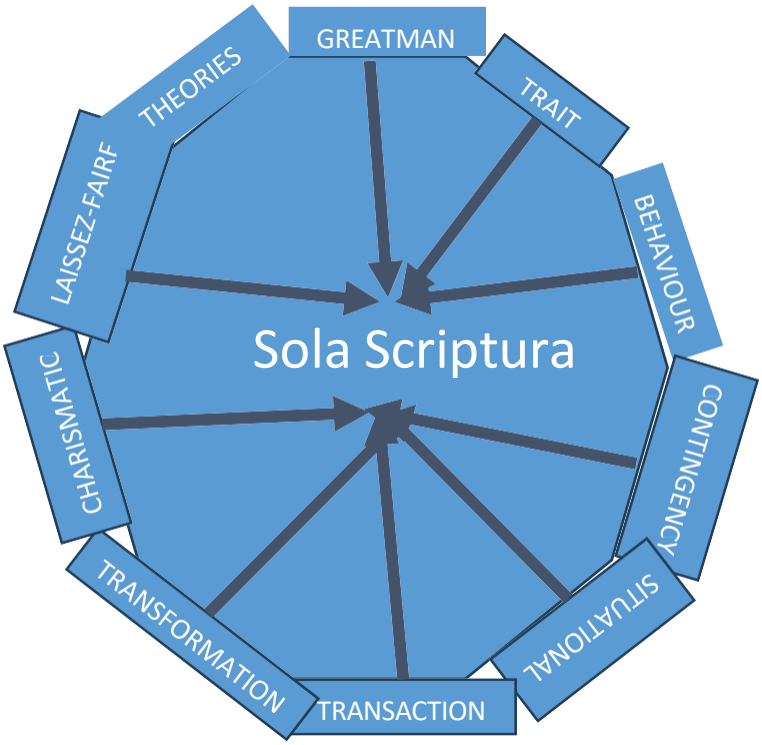
From a biblical standpoint, moral accountability, integrity, and obedience to God are the foundations on which leaders should align their theories. That is with divine principles rather than self-interest. Though they did not lead by the bases of any leadership theories, no contemporary leader can compare with Joshua, King Hezekiah, and David etc. These leaders were authentic and genuine, not in theory, but in practice and action (Din & Zhang, 2023; Baquero, 2023). This aspect confirms the fact that leadership does not fail on account of theory, but the instance of attitudes adopted in applying the theory (Gardner et al., 2021; Alilyyani et al., 2022). Also, according to Avolio & Walumbwa (2023) leaders suffer loos of confidence and trust, which declines organizational performance at the instance depending on theory for action, instead of the other way round.

2.2 Conceptual definitions and framework

There are at least twelve traditional leadership theories. They are Great Man, Trait, Behavioral, Contingency, Situational, Path-Goal, Transactional, Transformational, Charismatic, Bureaucratic, Laissez-faire, and Leadership by Exchange (LMX) (Bennura & Agboola, 2021; Yukl, 2006; Dickson, 2023; House, 1971; Akin, 2022; & Liden et al., 2025). From these, nine are selected in this study. The great man theory describes a leader as one who is born as a leader (Bennira & Agboola, 2021). As an alternative to the Great Man theory, the Trait theory defines a leader as someone with specific qualities and characteristics (Bennira & Agboola, 2021; Yukl, 2006). The Behavioral theory sees a leader as someone who behaves like one towards tasks and people. In specific situations, the Contingency theory defines a leader as a person who provides services and solutions (Dickson, 2023). In Situational theory, a leader is shaped by situations and followers' behavior (Dickson, 2023). In leadership, there are needs for rewards and punishments. The Transactional theory posits that one uses either the carrot or the stick (Liden et al., 2025). The Transformational leader motivates followers to improve performance. The Charismatic leader relies on personal charm and personality to lead (Irianti, Syarifuddin, & Haerani, 2024). Avant (2011) defines a laissez-faire leader as one who does not intervene in the process of work, service, and administration. These nine leadership theories have been used to design the following conceptual framework. According to this

concept, the Bible is the foundation of all leadership theories. Leadership is a gift from God to humanity. Its theoretical construction and practice find relevance in relation to Him. Hence, leadership theories cannot stand alone outside of God.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for the Sola Scriptura evaluation of leadership theories in literature.



3. Methodological Techniques

This technical section covers the study design, data sources, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques. Overall, the methodology covers the process of this study from the blueprint to the textual data analysis. The design of this study is qualitative; it is based on themes from traditional leadership theories and from the Bible within a sola scriptura framework. This design has standard goodness-of-fit because it provides a platform for interpreting textual data and themes. This process has been carried out in hermeneutic studies, exegesis, and pattern analyses (Boaheng, 2024). Further, sola scriptura grounds the qualitative design on the Bible as the final authority in leadership theory and practice (Jordan, 2022). Thus, the design adopts the Bible as the primary source of data. Ilesanmi (2025) presents sola scriptura as the investigation of biblical doctrines through the analysis of themes and the validation of findings by comparing scripture with scripture (Geisler & Mackenzie, 2009). Hence, leadership theories are not comparable to the word of God; rather, they are founded on it. The methodological implication is that the relevant leadership themes become direct derivatives of the Bible. They are not imposed on the scriptures, so that the credibility of the Bible is not in question (Köstenberger, 2024).

The primary data source for the study is the Bible. The secondary source is from leadership literature. Relevant Bible texts related to leadership were selected. This specification is necessary to include only themes that are comparable to the secondary data. The sources of the secondary data are themes derived from great man, trait, behavioral, contingency, situational, path-Goal, and transactional theories. These

theories are based on their prominence in scholarship & their adaptability to faith. The data for the study were elicited through a documentary search of leadership literature, identification of relevant Bible texts, and finally, the presentation of consonant themes from the theories and the Bible. The identified textual data sources were used for analysis.

4. Thematic-sola scripture and leadership textual data presentation

Table 1: Thematic sola-scripture and counter leadership meaning.

	BIBLE TEXT	CODE	BIBLE MEANING	LEADERSHIP PRACTICE
1.	Matthew.20:26-28; John 13:12-17	Servant	Meekness, service, sacrifice	Coercion, manipulation and domination
2.	Luke 12:42-48; 1 Corinthains. 4:2	Steward	Accountability, stewardship, Faithfulness	Possession, inheritance mentality.
3.	Proverbs 11:3; Titus 1:7-8	Transparent	Morality, upright, integrity	dishonesty, Corruption.
4.	Exodus 18:21; Prov: 9:17-18	Awe	Obedience, relevance, justice	Iniquity, injustice, disrespect.
5.	James 1:5; 1 Kings 3:9	Discern	Understanding Judgement, wisdom	Acquired intellect
6.	Micah 6:8; Ps.82:3-4	equity	Defense of the weak; impartial	intimidation and partiality
7.	Romans 14: 12	Accountable	Responsible for actions, ethical; Behaviour	carelessness, rude
8.	Phil. 2:3-8; Prob. 22: 4	Meek	Submissive, dependence	selfish, self-sufficient
9.	Prob. 29: 18 ; Habakkuk 2:2	Vision	Divine guidance, God- focused	self-help, self-confidence
10.	Joshua 1:7,8; Deut. 28:1	Faith	The will of God	The will of human beings
11.	1 cor. 13:1-7; Colossians 3:12	Compassion	Selfless love, empathy	performance, results
12.	Matt. 25:21; Prov. 27:23	Faithful	Consistent, diligence	Inconsistent, indolence
13.	Josh. 1:9; 2 Tim. 1:7	Courage	Bold, trust	fear, compromise
14.	Eze. 34:2-4; John 10: 11,12	Responsibility	Shepherd, cave protection	hirelings, careless
15.	Eze 34:8-10; 3 John 9-10	Service	Supportive, democratic	Exploitation, authoritarian
16.	Ps. 127:1;	Dependence	Divine reliance, trust	naturalism, Dependence on self

	John 15:5			
17.	2 Tim. 2:15; Titus 2:1	Doctrinal	Truthful, faithful	lies, inconsistent
18.	Mt. 5:9; Rom. 12:18	Peacemaker	Peaceful	crises
19.	2 Tim. 2:2; Matt 28:19,20	Disciple	Development of others, mentorship	deception, duplicity
20.	Joshu 15:13; Rom. 12:1	Self-giving	Self-sacrifice	Manipulations and the sacrifice of others.

These codes, meanings, and the implications for alternate leadership are derived from the scriptures. They serve to affirm that theory does not contradict Bible doctrines. In fact, leadership theories should have normatively been conjectured as functions of the word of God. This would have drastically reduced the tension between Bible values and leadership theories.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Findings

Leadership is fundamentally centered on God and not on human beings. Hence, leadership power and authority are gifts from God and must be theorized and practiced in obedience to the Sola Scriptura. In leadership, competence is important. But such character traits as honesty, integrity, and meekness are necessary for leadership to achieve a good end. Hence, competence is necessary but not sufficient for leadership's optimum performance.

Leadership practice grounded in service and sacrifice will lead to the multiplication of those same values among followers. The citizenship behavior prevalent in the organization will sustain performance and productivity. As stewards, leaders are accountable to God in the management of the resources under their watch. This leadership context is not addressed in secular leadership theories and practices.

Based on Sola Scriptura, leadership has authority. However, its power is under the control of compassion and love. Hence, tyrannical leadership and authoritarianism are anti-Bible doctrines of humility, responsibility, and free will. No matter how competent, leadership should depend on God. Self-dependence will lead to naturalism, self-confidence, and sufficiency. Such leaders will not serve others and will not grant them opportunities to manifest their leadership potential.

Casting a leadership vision based on the word of God has a sustaining impact on the organization, the leader, and the followers. This is because such visions are dependent on God to succeed. He will see it to fruition. No matter how strong a leadership theory may be, partiality and neglect of the poor and needy negatively affect the growth of followers and the organization. The pain and sorrow of this class of followers cast a negative atmosphere over the entire organization.

6. Discussion

At the core of leadership theory is the implication to establish effectiveness and efficiency. At the foundation of this lies the drive for performance and productivity. Leadership theories differ in how they address the above objectives to benefit the organization and all stakeholders. This study explains that sola scriptura should be foundational to all leadership.

In theory or in practice, leadership is powerful. Its power is not inbuilt in the leader (Benmira & Agboola, 2021) but is derived from God, who gives the gift and power of leadership (Rankin, 2026). The leader should not lead to the subjection of followers. Instead, the leader must be a servant-leader. The leader must model meekness and sacrifice for the good of the led. Tyrannical behaviors such as coercion, manipulation, and domination should be avoided (Snead, 2021). To set this example of servant leadership, Jesus washed his disciples' feet (John 13:12-15). This is a novel example for contemporary leaders at all levels

In the spirit of service and stewardship, leaders are not owners of people or materials under their watch (Rankin, 2026). The faithful and wise leader is the person who takes care of both the organization and the subordinates working under him or her. Such a leader is loved and respected by the followers. Further, the leaders' rewards are not only temporal but also eternal. Sometimes leaders assume their work is earthly. They forget that the Lord who gave the leadership power will call for accountability of every word and action. Leaders are not owners. So, a possession-and-inheritance mentality is foreign to value-laden leadership practice. This requirement is not to be a stochastic behavior; instead, 1 Corinthians 4:2 insists on faithfulness. Transparency undergirds stewardship (Jordan, 2022). If a leader is upright and moral, responsible accountability will be seamless. The leader will be guided by integrity, justice, sobriety, and temperance (Proverbs 11:3 and Titus 1:7-8). The alternative practice of secular theory is founded on dishonesty, corruption, and self-will.

Leaders owe to God the deep expression of reverence and obedience. These are derivatives of the awe for His majesty and transcendence. The fear of God requires that a leader shuns covetousness but be persuaded by contentment and satisfaction (Cwiakala et al., 2025). The lack of these values will lead to malpractice and corruption, which, in the short run, yield financial and material profits. However, in the long run, they become thorns in the mouth and bore holes in the pockets (Prov. 9:17-18). Leadership theories can be practiced in either a positive or negative way. To engage in iniquity, injustice, and disrespect, the leadership will multiply the same kind in the organizational culture. To avoid this trajectory, the leader should manifest discernment (Jordan, 2022). This will lead to an understanding of its relevance and how to apply the right judgment. Like Solomon, the leader requires the prayer to distinguish between good and evil (1 Kings 3:9). Any leader who relies on personal intellect will not climb far up the leadership ladder. This does not mean that the wicked are not prospering. Their prosperity is sandy and shifting.

Leadership is at its strongest in its defense of the weak and vulnerable. It is easy for leadership to gravitate towards persons of personality and charisma (Irianti, Syarifuddin, & Haerani, 2024), relegating the common and weak. This is injustice and partiality. Such classless people require mercy. They should be protected, defended, and delivered (Psalm 82:3, 4). The leaders' responsibility to act is more relevant to this class of people than to their well-to-do counterparts (Rom. 14:12). Being careless, rude, and transactional (Liden et al., 2025) toward such followers is theoretically functional but not practically impactful for the organization and its constituents. This calls for meekness, submission, and dependence on the Holy Spirit's leading. This

may cause the leader to see value in the followers and, hence, work for their good. According to Proverbs 22:4, this will bring riches, honor, and life to the leader.

To see far, a leader must cast a vision. This must stem from divine guidance. This is because any vision that is devoid of obedience to the law of God ends in crises. For visions to be established, they must not be instigated by self-help and self-confidence. Such visions do not have eternal value (Habakkuk 2:2). A vision that has not been developed is the basis of self-will, which lacks faith in God. As a leader in the wilderness, the prosperity of Joshua was a result of his faithful obedience to "thus saith the Lord." Hence, in Deuteronomy 28:1, God promised prosperity on the condition of "... hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy GOD..." Such faithfulness is consistent with diligence against indolence and procrastination. Reward for leadership is offered to good and faithful leaders (Matt. 25: 21 and Proverbs 27:23). As a shepherd, the true leader is responsible for their followers. He or she cares for and protects them. The Shepherd serves the organization and the followers in a supportive and democratic way. He or she neither exploits nor becomes authoritarian (Craun & Henson, 2022). They do not see leadership as a position of authority and control. But rather, as a service point to prosper the organization and the led (Shula, 2026). But the hireling is profitable only to himself. They make prey of the followers. They work for their benefit (Ezekiel 34: 2-4 and John 10: 11, 12).

A leader who depends on themselves will not rise above their personal abilities. Psalm 127:1 reminds such a leader that building a house without God and a security watch without Him are in vain. While the leader is encouraged to work hard, the success of leadership still depends on the God factor in the leadership theory and practice (John 15:5). Dependence on God requires courage, boldness, and trust. The absence of these values will result in fear and compromise (2 Tim. 1:7). Further, it takes courage to show compassion to the needy and the weak. This is because peer pressure runs in the opposite direction of subjugation, domination, and intimidation (Wiyono et al., 2024). Hence, to be compassionate, the leader needs to love self-less, place empathy above performance and outcomes. (Colossians 3:12) This requires self-abnegation that the leader gives self for the good of others. (John 15:13). This is not on account of death, but to spend one's time and energy to give others a chance of upward mobility (Yukl, 2010). This leadership attitude is the best practice of a leader making disciples of the followers. People learn better by example than by verbal instructions. Thus, the leader will multiply practices of peacefulness, truthfulness, and faithfulness in the led. For leadership theory to be morally tangential to its practice, it must be mediated by Sola Scriptura.

6.1 Implications for Contemporary Leadership

Based on the findings and discussion, we identified several implications. Key among them is that leadership must be God-centered, grounded in Scripture rather than personality or position. Bailey (2021) argues that if leaders consider God their sole proprietor, they ought to prioritize their relationship with God by spending quality time with Him. Through Bible reading and fervent prayer, leaders learn to trust in God and remain God-centered. Trusting in God and prioritizing Him will help the leader forget their position and focus more on service, thereby avoiding self-sufficiency and exclusivity. Hurried devotional experiences are simply quantity moments and not quality moments. Johnson (2022) corroborates the same by rooting leadership in God to gain answers to leadership questions. These views highlight that when communion with God is practiced, it informs and enhances decision-making and leadership practice.

Once the leadership is God-centered and grounded in Scripture, the vision must be biblically anchored to ensure sustainability and long-term impact. Leaders who are Biblically anchored will set a divinely inspired vision, thereby driving clear, purposeful foresight (Fufa, 2025). According to Milton (2024), "weighed on the scales of scripture" is imperative in finding a vision. The Bible is the immutable and inconvertible voice of God. Thus, grounding the vision in the Bible will shape the leader with nobility while providing a stable and enduring sense of purpose; consequently, it will model selfless service, loving sacrifice, faithful stewardship, and foster a culture of responsibility.

Another implication is that character is as critical as competence for effective leadership. Newstead et al. (2021) posit that the world does not need more leaders but more good leaders. Leaders with good character are trustworthy—no wonder Seijts et al. (2023) connected character to trust and leadership effectiveness. Two elements are significant in unraveling character, integrity, and humility. Beyond aptitude and personality, humility and integrity are among the central virtues of this era. In most cases, humility begets integrity (Kelemen et al., 2023). Humility in receiving advice and in apologizing when wrong gives the leader integrity. However, humility alone is insufficient; it must be accompanied by conviction and moral courage to ensure integrity is consistently upheld, especially in the face of pressure, competing interests, and difficult leadership decisions.

Implementing policies that protect and uplift vulnerable groups within the organization (Kersten et al., 2023) is an implication that cannot be ignored. Hamweene and Mokgwane (2024) call for a "living concern" for the vulnerable. Jesus exhibited care for the defenceless, weak, and vulnerable, including the underprivileged, sick, castaways, children, and marginalized. Throughout His ministry, He sought to bring social equilibrium so that all His children may benefit from level ground at the foot of the cross. In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus likened caring for the "least of these" to caring for him. A God-centered leadership will do what Jesus did – have an inclusive approach.

A related implication to the one above is that authority must be exercised with love, compassion, and respect for human dignity, and that authoritarianism must be rejected. Huijser and Nullens (2024, p.223) introduce "a relational anthropology to draw attention to another way of grounding human dignity, one pointing to the social nature of human beings and our inherent capacity for love." We are increasingly convinced that love for God and humanity is a fundamental framework for leadership. Authoritarianism militates against love, compassion, and respect for human dignity. According to Osborne et al. (2023), authoritarianism has psychological causes and societal consequences. Therefore, it must be rejected for two reasons. Firstly, it erodes trust, stifles initiative, and creates fear-based environments that limit long-term effectiveness. Secondly, replaces teamwork or partnership, and accountability with control and domination, ultimately weakening both people and organizational sustainability.

7. Conclusion

Leadership is conceptualized as fundamentally God-centered, with authority and power derived from divine agency and exercised in obedience to *Sola Scriptura*. While competence remains essential, it is insufficient without character virtues, particularly integrity, humility, and honesty, which ensure ethical and effective leadership outcomes. This framework advances a model of servant leadership grounded in stewardship, accountability to God, and sacrificial service, fostering organizational cultures marked by responsibility, trust, and sustained performance.

Furthermore, leadership authority is to be moderated by compassion and love, rejecting authoritarian and coercive practices as inconsistent with biblical principles. Effective leadership requires dependence on God, as self-reliance limits both spiritual depth and the empowerment of others. Biblically grounded vision provides enduring direction and legitimacy, while justice-oriented leadership, especially the protection of the vulnerable, emerges as a critical determinant of organizational health. Overall, this paradigm challenges secular leadership models by integrating spirituality, ethics, and mission into leadership theory and practice.

8. Recommendations for Leadership

Effective leadership development must be anchored in spiritual formation and a strong biblical foundation, ensuring that leaders are guided not only by competence but also by deeply formed character. This requires intentionally integrating character assessment and growth alongside skills training, while establishing clear safeguards against the abuse of power and promoting compassionate leadership. Leaders should also create systems that empower others and intentionally develop emerging leaders, nurturing shared ownership of the mission. At the same time, leadership vision and strategy must remain rooted in Scripture and sustained through prayer, providing clarity and direction. Finally, policies should be implemented to protect and uplift vulnerable groups, warranting that leadership reflects justice, dignity, and care for all.

Recommendations for further research include exploring biblical leadership frameworks as substitutes or complements to secular theories or investigating the relationship between spirituality, character, and organizational outcomes. For practice, we recommend embedding biblical principles in daily leadership decisions and organizational culture. In addition, enable participatory leadership environments that encourage collaboration, teamwork, and partnerships. Furthermore, regularly evaluate leadership through spiritual, moral, and relational metrics. For influence, we recommend that leaders model Christ-centered leadership as a witness to broader society and advocate for justice, dignity, and care for the marginalized. If leaders consistently contributed to shaping a faith-informed leadership discourse in contemporary contexts, the Bible would be a more common reference in a world that is slowly relegating it. Lastly, use leadership stages to endorse the values of service over power.

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