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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Space for Religion and Spirituality in Business, Management, and Entrepreneurship Education: Reflections on the Main Contributions and Tentative Directions

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Abstract
The business, management, and entrepreneurship (BME) education provided by universities is believed to influence the way in which organisations are managed in the business world. In recent decades, it has been criticised for its focus on profit and short-term goals, while new approaches inspired by the humanities, particularly religious and spiritual traditions, have been proposed. Although research in this area is growing, it is scattered. In this study, we systematically review the existing literature to deepen our understanding of this emergent stream of research. From a sample of 216 papers, 51 articles from 1996 to 2023, selected from the Web of Science and Scopus databases, are analysed. Overall, the findings highlight that the literature on this topic is predominantly theoretical and suggest that some of the wisdom embedded in religion and spirituality might be considered to inform different discussions in BME courses, with a prominent application of sacred and ancient texts in the teaching of business ethics. Future research avenues are discussed in relation to a variety of themes and pedagogical and empirical approaches that can benefit scholars and advance this area of study.

Keywords Religion · Spirituality · Systematic literature review · Business education · Management education · Entrepreneurship education

Introduction

In the realm of higher education, the significance of the business, management, and entrepreneurship (BME thereafter) programmes offered by universities and business schools has become increasingly prominent (Hoppe, 2016; Karakas, 2011; Kirby, 2004; Matlay, 2005; Nabi et al., 2017). The managerialisation, and more recently the entrepreneurialisation, of all spheres of society has become a prerequisite for a professional career in all areas (Beyes et al., 2016; Michels et al., 2020), such that business courses, including those more directly related to the field of management and entrepreneurship,[1] have been integrated into the undergraduate and graduate curriculum of many different careers (e.g., engineering, cultural studies, and physical education) (Canziani & Welsh, 2021; Graybeal & Ferrier, 2023).

In the last decade, however, what BME courses entail and how they are enacted have become a matter of profound concern (Hardie et al., 2020; Russo et al., 2023; Sadler-Smith & Cojuharenco, 2021; Schlegelmilch, 2020). The successive global crises, in which financial, ethical, health, and ecological issues have been intertwined, have led academic scholars, businesses practitioners, and societies at large to doubt the knowledge, practices, and worldviews that have been conveyed through BME educational programmes (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003; Elembilassery & Chakraborty, 2021;

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[1] While there is an overlap between business, management, and entrepreneurship education, there are some nuances that distinguish them, preparing students for playing different roles withing the business world. For example, business education provides a broad view of the entire business environment, management education mainly focuses on managerial or leadership principles and practices, and entrepreneurship education concentrates on developing the skills and mindset for starting a new business.

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Laasch et al., 2020). Moreover, on some occasions, students themselves have raised critical voices against the unilateral perspective provided in the curriculum and have demanded the integration of different kinds of knowledge and methodological approaches (ISIPE, 2014).

In the current debate on the theories, approaches, and sensibilities that might be found wanting in contemporary BME education, the quest for inspiration has extended to the domain of humanities, including what can be learnt from religious and spiritual traditions (Dyck, 2014; Laasch et al., 2020; Landfester & Metelmann, 2020; Smith et al., 2023). Indeed, a growing number and variety of scholars have been pointing towards religion and spirituality to capture the amalgam of cultural change and value creation required for 21st-century firms (e.g., Epstein, 2002; Ghosh & Mukherjee, 2020; Kumar et al., 2022; Marcic, 2000; Van Buren III et al., 2020). The rise of openly faith-based organisations and purpose-led organisations has been provided as an indicator that religion and spirituality are playing a role in organisational life, offering intuitions on the pursuit of higher moral purposes and humanist practices that emphasise ethical conduct and social responsibility (Askeland et al., 2019; Jeavons, 2004; Rey et al., 2019).

Built on these realities, for some, there is no doubt that religion and spirituality have a space in a more humanistic BME formation. They are seen as proper tools to add to the conventional business course material to train economic actors with more ethical, social, and culturally intelligent business practices (e.g., Calkins, 2000; Dyck, 2014). For others, however, this issue remains controversial, especially in multi-faith environments in which BME education is provided, such as most public universities in the West (Dinham et al., 2009). Indeed, in higher education institutions, teaching initiatives that integrate religion and spirituality into BME education, albeit growing, are not a common practice (Drive, 2007; Sullivan & Myers, 2022; Toledano, 2020, 2021; Williams & Allen, 2014). The slow advancement can be partially attributed to some institutional and ideological barriers, notably stemming from the entrenched neoliberal ideology which prioritises instrumental rationality and profit maximisation at the expense of spiritual or religious principles (Gog et al., 2020; Webster, 2022). As a research topic, beyond isolated experiences, the investigation is scattered, despite calls having been made to address and illuminate this issue (Kumar et al., 2022; Narayanswamy, 2008). This study's aim is to fill part of this gap.

Specifically, our goal is to advance and refine knowledge concerning the integration of religion and spirituality into BME education. Although the relationship between religion and spirituality remains ambiguous in the literature (Phipps & Benefiel, 2012), for this work we consider these distinct but overlapping constructs[2] (Hill et al., 2000). Concretely, the idea of spirituality as used in this article is consistent with the general descriptions provided in management literature, which includes a holistic integration of different aspects of life, a sense of growth and direction, and a kind of supra-conscious sensitivity or connectedness with transcendence (Ashforth & Pratt, 2010; Dyck, 2014; Hill et al., 2000; Tracey, 2012). When the spirituality is not tied to any particular religious tradition—non-religious based spirituality—the importance of personal explorations of meaning and fulfilment is stressed (Duchon & Plowman, 2005; Schaeffer & Mattis, 2012; Schutte, 2016). Moreover, the interpretation of transcendence is more associated with the idea of transcending the individual self than in terms of closeness to the sacred—a particular God or Higher Power—such as a religious-based spirituality typically assumes (Ananthram and Cham, 2016; Mthethwa-Sommers, 2014; Worthington et al., 2011).

On the other hand, our characterisation of religion extends to encompass spirituality (Hill et al., 2000; Lynn et al., 2009); however, it goes beyond it to include some form of cult or rituals and a set of beliefs that provide a theoretical underpinning for practice, at times referred to as doctrine or dogma (Carey, 2018). It is, therefore, an understanding of religion in a traditional sense, like the so-called the "great religions" (Carey, 2018, p. 267), including Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and others, which incorporate spirituality as a fundamental aspect of their teachings and practices, but an aspect that operates within a religious community or framework—a religious-based spirituality (Worthington et al., 2011).

Keeping this distinction in mind, and referring to the context of higher education, in this article we seek to answer the following research questions: How has the academic research on the integration of religion and spirituality into the BME education developed to date? What are the main topics in BME education that are illuminated by insights from religion and spirituality? What pedagogical proposals or experiences have been made for this area? To respond to these questions, we conduct a systematic literature review of the existent works to enhance the comprehension of the

[2] The relationship between religion and spirituality has been the subject of profound debate, with positions that range from those who see the two terms as mutually exclusive (e.g., Duchon and Plowman, 2005), to those who consider them synonymous (e.g., Mohamed et al., 2001). Intermediate positions see them sharing some content with variations as to which is considered the larger construct that includes the other—for example, for Sheep (2006), spirituality includes but is not limited to religion, while for Hill et al. (2000) and Lynn et al. (2009), spirituality is a subset of religion. In this paper, we agree with the perspective adopted by Hill et al. (2000) and consider religion as a wider construct that includes spirituality. For a deeper analysis of this issue see, for example, Hill et al. (2000) or Phipps and Benefiel (2012).

current state of knowledge within this area, considering its inherent diversity, and thereby helping not only to synthesise the literature but also to identify the main insights to move forwards and broaden the horizon of research and academic teaching. In doing so, our paper contributes to developing a shared understanding of how scholars can address the task of including innovative pedagogical means in the BME area when they come from the humanities and particularly from religious and spiritual traditions. This knowledge places scholars and teachers in a better position to engage in meaningful transdisciplinary BME education and research initiatives that deepen the understanding of organising a more complete BME formation with emphasis on the humanistic dimension.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. First, we introduce the discussions that contextualised and suggested our work, which involves the reconsideration of conventional BME education from a humanistic perspective in the light of insights rooted in religion and spirituality. We then present the methodological elements that guided our literature review. Afterwards, we offer our findings on the central areas of the research on the integration of religious and spiritual traditions into BME education. We then discuss the main implications of our study and conclude by acknowledging its limitations and stressing some final points.

Reconsidering BME Education in the Light of the Rise of the Theological and Spiritual Turn

The reconsideration of BME education has never mattered more. From both an academic and a practical perspective, it is widely acknowledged that the recent global crises are partially linked to the orthodox approach, often understood as synonymous with a neoliberal perspective (Fotaki & Prasad, 2015; Lackéus, 2017) and adopted in the teaching and learning of BME over the years (Beyes et al., 2016; Giacalone & Calvano, 2012; Laasch et al., 2020). In fact, BME education is, according to many assessments, in crisis for orienting future business leaders and entrepreneurs too narrowly and analytically (Clegg & Ross-Smith, 2003; Michels et al., 2020). Particularly hard has been the criticism of business schools where BME education is often developed and provided (Cavico & Mujtaba, 2009; Sadler-Smith & Cojuharenco, 2021; Schlegelmilch, 2020; Spicer et al., 2021), with some even suggesting their end (Giacalone & Wargo, 2009; Pfeffer & Fong, 2002). Specifically, business schools have been blamed for teaching wrong theories and topics that exclusively follow the neoliberal logic of the market, giving priority to short-term profitability and profit maximisation to the detriment of social and environmental interests (Sadler-Smith & Cojuharenco, 2021; Schlegelmilch, 2020).

One of the key issues in the ongoing debate surrounding the transformation of BME education is, precisely, the need to move beyond the materialist-individualist values that underpin a great part of the free market ethos embedded in many mainstream management theories and teachings (Dyck et al., 2011; Fotaki & Prasad, 2015; Lackéus, 2017). The narrowness of their focus on tangible outcomes—for example, financial gains, wealth, and possessions—as the measure of business success, although being essential for quantifying business performance, raises concerns, because it might lead to undermining long-term business sustainability and ethical integrity (Dyck & Caza, 2022; Dyck et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2019). Indeed, the reform of business education has been associated with the need to broaden students' intellectual horizons by recognising the potential dangers of being immersed in a single market logic with attitudes that can lead to questionable business practices (Beyes et al., 2016; Elembilassery & Chakraborty, 2021; Hardie et al., 2020; Russo et al., 2023).

New routes have been suggested to achieve a more balanced education, with new prominence given to the humanities (Giacalone & Calvano, 2012; Laasch et al., 2020). In the area of management, specific calls have been made for giving greater relevance to managing and leading ethically and to transcending the materialist values frequently linked with organisational life (Landfester & Metelmann, 2020; Landfester et al., 2016; Pirson, 2020). Similarly, recommendations have been made for the teaching of entrepreneurship, in particular to replace the traditional emphasis on static business plans with an emphasis on entrepreneurship's processual nature with an understanding of entrepreneurship as a generic human practice (Dodd et al., 2022; Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2020; Loi et al., 2022).

In general, the advice for equipping BME students with a more humanistic perspective involves developing educational approaches that enable multidisciplinary integration, holistic orientation, and training to deal with the interdependencies and ambiguities of the current world with a more socially and sustainably oriented perspective (Kappler & Fayolle, 2023; Laasch et al., 2020; Landfester & Metelmann, 2020). This also implies departing from the paradigm of the 'economic man' (*homo economicus*) that is still implicit within many contemporary economic principles stated in educational contexts, according to which business decision-making processes are based on perfect human rationality, self-interest, and the search for personal utility satisfaction (Ferber & Nelson, 2009; Garanzini, 2023; Johannisson, 2016; Lackéus, 2017). Furthermore, it entails acknowledgement of the positive contributions of considering higher-order goals as genuine business possibilities, in a context in which, despite the inherent

limitations of human nature, the reconciliation of self-interest with a sense of responsibility to others becomes viable (Loi et al., 2022; Ratten & Usmanij, 2021).

Despite some dilemmas and controversy among scholars (Locke & Spender, 2011; Mousa et al., 2023), within the scenario of more humanistic BME education, research has proposed a positive role for religion and spirituality to play (Azevedo & Jugdev, 2013; Dyck, 2014; Lozano, 2017) as notions such as the "theological turn" (Smith et al., 2021) and the "spiritual turn" (Drive, 2007; Ribera & Lozano, 2011) have gained acceptance in organisational and entrepreneurship studies. Specifically, the theological turn foregrounds the consideration of an altruistic deity or God to encourage a decision-making style rooted in moral responsibility and care for others (Dyck, 2014). Scholars who support the theological turn in BME, including its education, have stressed the benefits of this perspective to conceive, imagine, and theorise about concepts such as genuine benefaction, which have been demonstrated to be difficult to conceive within the conventional management paradigm (Calkins, 2000; Dyck, 2014; Epstein, 2002; Herzog et al., 2018). More broadly, its contribution to the development of so-called "soft skills", such as interpersonal skills, ethics, values, and corporate responsibility in society, has been recognised because of the legacy of knowledge embedded in ancient religious traditions and practices, which encompasses not only philosophical wisdom but the embodiment of faith in personal or communal expressions of people's everyday lives (Lozano, 2017; Manz et al., 2006; Razaki et al., 2022; Toledano & Karanda, 2017).

Likewise, with the spiritual turn in organisations, the literature has emphasised the benefits of spirituality in business, the workplace, and education, although there is also a danger that this could be used instrumentally (Case & Gosling, 2010; Drive, 2007; Ribera & Lozano, 2011). While there is a wide range of spiritualities,[3] the most commonly used typology distinguishes between spirituality associated with a religious belief (religious-based spirituality) and spirituality outside of religion (non-religious-based spirituality) (Hill et al. 2000; Ribera & Lozano, 2011; Worthington et al., 2011). Either way, when applied to business, the assumption is that the spirituality of leaders and entrepreneurs, as one of the fundamental aspects of the human condition (Henning & Henning, 2021), has a positive impact on their leadership style (Fry & Vu, 2024). Spiritual leaders are often associated with the positive light of an ethical leadership style, characterised by a heightened sense of responsibility towards the community, business stakeholders and the environment (Luu, 2022; Vedula & Agrawal, 2024). In this sense, the individual aspect of spirituality is not negated, but rather extended to the collective culture and values of the organisation as a whole (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

The increasing acceptance of religion and spirituality in the corporate culture of many organisations (Askeland et al., 2019; Rey et al., 2019) is a pressing reason to consider them in the context of higher education. To better understand their role in BME education, this study develops a systematic review of articles that consider the use of religious and/or spiritual traditions as academic tools in the teaching–learning process in any of these areas.

Method

As noted earlier, the aim of the present study is to review the extant literature systematically, addressing the issue of integrating religious and spiritual aspects into BME education. Systematic literature reviews can be defined as scientific studies as they allow researchers to review, analyse critically, and synthesise the relevant literature on a certain area or domain to obtain insights into the current trends and the research questions that remain unanswered (Hägg & Gabrielsson, 2020; Hassan et al., 2022; Nabi et al., 2017). This method has gained increased acceptance in social scientific research as it fosters rigour and promotes research progress (Dorn et al., 2016; Hassan et al., 2022) by tracking all the steps followed, which makes the research work auditable at any stage while generating results that can be considered objective and transparent (Tranfield et al., 2003).

Consistent with the procedures that previous scholars have adopted (e.g., Hassan et al., 2022; Obregon et al., 2022), we employed a sequential process. We began by planning the literature review, formulating the research questions, and defining the database(s) to be used and the search terms. Then, we identified inclusion and exclusion criteria, evaluated the quality of the chosen articles according to them, and identified the preliminary samples of documents. Finally, we analysed each paper in depth to answer the research questions (see Fig. 1).

Planning the Literature Review

In line with previous literature reviews (e.g., Hassan et al., 2022; Mongeon & Paul-Hus, 2016; Obregon et al., 2022), the search was conducted in the two main bibliographic databases, *Scopus* and *Web of Science* (WoS), which are recognised as being well suited to ensuring a comprehensive coverage of scientific journals across a range of disciplines

[3] Although there are several kinds of non-religious-based spiritualities (e.g. secular spirituality, humanistic spirituality, agnostic spirituality, cosmos spirituality), the articles included in our sample did not specify this distinction. For a deeper analysis on this issue see, for example, Clark (1999), Fritts (2020) or Worthington et al. (2011).

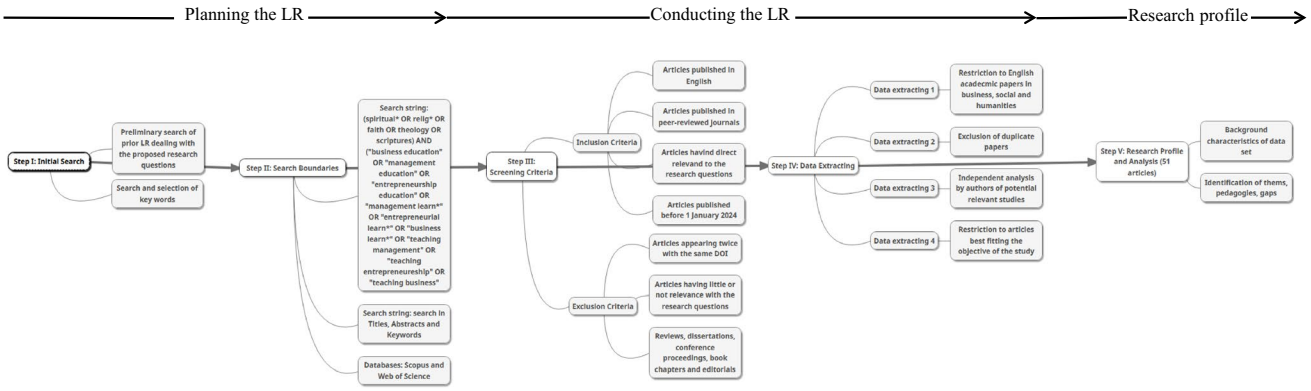

Fig. 1 Sequential process of the literature review

(e.g., science, technology, medicine, social sciences, and arts and humanities). Several search term combinations, either in the title or in the abstract, were used. We began with the key terms "spirituality" (spiritual*) and "religion" (relig*)" and diverse synonyms, such as faith, theology, and scriptures, to capture similar terms used across disciplines. To obtain articles that addressed their use in BME higher education, we used each of the above terms in combination with the following business educational and learning terms: "business education", "management education", "entrepreneurship education", "business learning" ("business learn*"), "management learning" ("management learn*"), "entrepreneurial learning" (entrepreneurial learn*)", "teaching business", "teaching management", and "teaching entrepreneurship".

Conducting the Review: Screening Criteria and Preliminary Sample

Our first search provided a list of 283 results for Scopus and 254 for WoS. These studies were filtered through two inclusion and exclusion criteria. The first inclusion criterion implied focusing only on academic articles published in the English language. Thus, all other scientific publications, including conference proceeding, books, and book chapters, were excluded. The second inclusion criterion involved concentrating on publications included not only in the business and social areas but also in humanities. These criteria left us with 291 articles for potential consideration (152 articles from Scopus and 139 articles from Web of Science), which, after removing duplicated items (76 articles), left our sample consisting of 216 articles.

For each of the 216 papers, each author conducted an independent reading of the title and abstract (and, when necessary, the introduction and methods) to identify the studies that were suitable for answering our research questions. In this step, two additional inclusion/exclusion criteria were applied, specifically i) only articles that referred to religious or spiritual components of BME higher education were included, while all those that referred to organisational learning or secondary education were excluded; and ii) only articles in which religious and spiritual components were a focus of the educational approach were included, while articles in which religion or spirituality were only a finding or a variable of the study (e.g., students' religious orientation) were excluded. After applying the exclusion criteria, 51 articles remained eligible for an in-depth analysis, with the oldest one dating back to 1996 and excluding year 2024, as it was still ongoing.

Data Extraction and Research Profiling

The 51 articles were read in depth and analysed independently by the two authors. To ensure that we did not ignore articles relevant to our concerns, we included journals that, despite their absence from traditional metrics of quality such as JCR rankings, often serve as platforms for diverse perspectives, providing voices from religions and spiritualities that are underrepresented in mainstream scholarship. However, in order to confirm the quality of our findings and suggestions, we considered only peer-reviewed journal articles (Kelly et al., 2014; Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

Focusing on our goal of knowing how religion and spirituality may inspire BME education, we used a combination of deductive and inductive coding methods to analyse our sample. The deductive coding started by categorising the religion and/or spirituality considered in each article using as starting point those belonging to the so-called "great religions" (Carey, 2018, p. 267). Then, during the course of analysing our sample and through an inductive approach we constructed our current classification by crafting categories, revising, and re-analysing previous categorisations in a comparative analysis (Dixon-Woods et al., 2006). The process

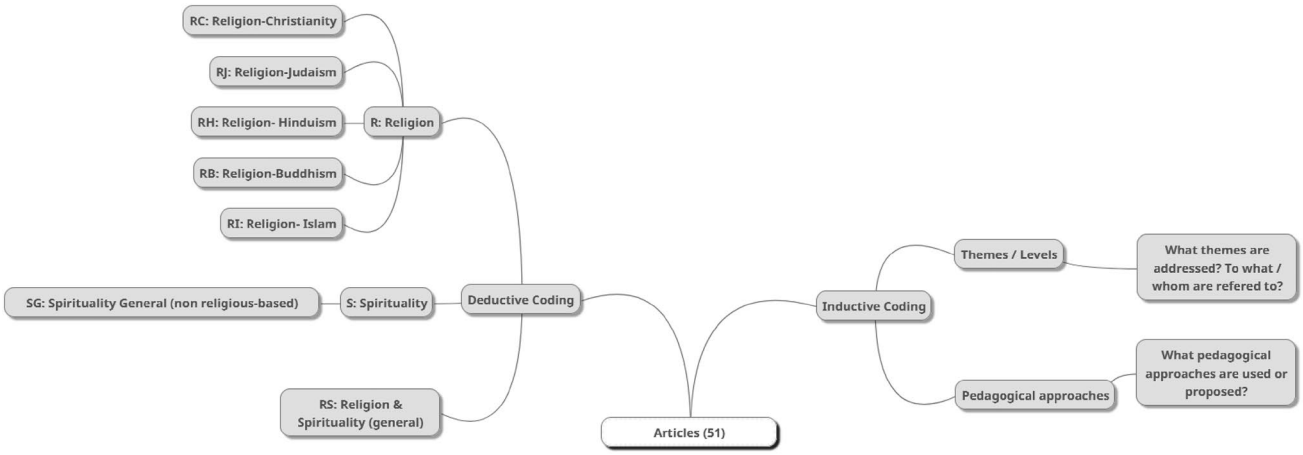

Fig. 2 Deductive and inductive coding approaches

resulted in a distinction between a) a thematic approach, and b) a pedagogic approach, which we will discuss in the subsequent sections (see Fig. 2).

Findings: Background Characteristics, Themes, and Pedagogical Trends

In this section, we present the results of our literature review by attending to our research questions. We begin by examining the background characteristics of our sample, which is useful for interpreting general patterns. These include the journal, year of publication, authorship, affiliation, geographical distribution, and paper typology. We then analyse our sample by considering the key BME themes and pedagogical approaches illuminated by religion and spirituality.

Background Characteristics of the Data Set

Our sample includes articles published in 23 academic journals (see Table 1). They are predominantly journals that belong to business and management disciplines (64%), while only a small percentage belong to the humanist and education areas (18% each). The most common journal publication is the Journal of Management Education (9 articles), followed by the Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion (8 articles), and the Journal of Business Ethics (7 articles).

As mentioned above, the literature review covered articles from 1996 to 2023. A basic overview of the annual scientific production of the articles in our sample is shown in Fig. 3. As can be observed, prior to 2000, no studies had been conducted on this topic except for the articles published in 1996 and 1997.

The increase in research in 2000 can be partly attributed to the corporate scandals that raised questions about the education provided by business schools (Kirby, 2004; Matlay, 2005) and the Special Issue published on the Journal of Management Education on this topic. From an academic point of view, it is also worth noting the influence of the formation by the Academy of Management in 1999 of the interest group called "Management, Spirituality and Religion", which signalled a relevant shift in the field of management by legitimising spirituality and religion as appropriate and valuable fields for both research and teaching in management (Tracey, 2012). Since 2004, there has been consistent interest in scholarly endeavours aimed at studying religion and spirituality within the context of BME education. The ongoing debate surrounding the redesign of education to be more humanistic and holistic (Kappler & Fayolle, 2023; Laasch et al., 2020; Landfester & Metelmann, 2020) and the increasing number of organisations considering spirituality in their corporate strategies and cultures (Askeland et al., 2019; Jeavons, 2004; Rey et al., 2019) may also be reasons for the current trend.

When examining the authorship composition, it is possible to detect the intensity with which researchers and their colleagues have been working on these themes over time. Table 2 shows the distribution of the textual corpus of our sample according to one single author and multiple authorship (two, three and four authors).

The sample consisted of 92 authors, with 24 publishing as sole authors, accounting for 47% of the sample. Additionally, 15 articles were co-authored by two individuals, representing 29% of the sample. Most of the articles written in collaboration by three or four authors were published at the end of our study period; in fact, partnerships between

Table 1 Academic journals and areas

Journals	Area	No. Articles
1. Journal of Management Education	B&M	9
2. Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion	B&M	8
3. Journal of Business Ethics	B&M	7
4. Journal of Management Development	B&M	4
5. Management Learning	B&M	3
6. Journal of Management Inquiry	B&M	2
7. Purushartha	H	2
8. Academy of Management Learning & Education	B&M	1
9. Business & Professional Ethics Journal	B&M	1
10. California Management Review	B&M	1
11. Global Business Review	B&M	1
12. International Journal of Organizational Analysis	B&M	1
13. Journal of International Education in Business	B&M	1
14. Philosophy of Management	B&M	1
15. The International Journal of Management Education	B&M	1
16. Society and Business Review	B&M	1
17. International Journal of Sustainability Education	E	1
18. Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice	E	1
19. Teaching in Higher Education	E	1
20. The Journal of Educational Thought	E	1
21. Humanistic Management Journal	H	1
22. Journal of Moral Education	H	1
23. Journal of Human Values	H	1

B&M Business and Management; *H* Humanities; *E* Education

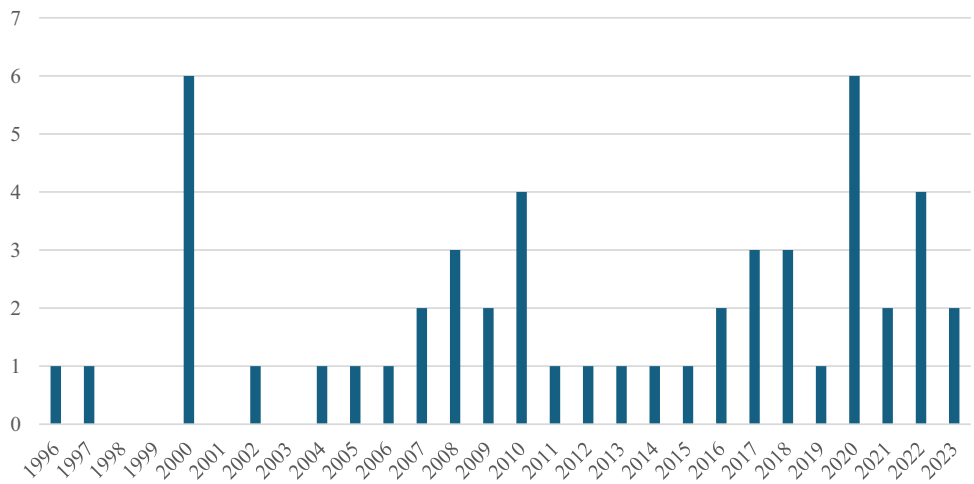

Fig. 3 Distribution of articles per year

authors and co-authors of articles have clearly increased since 2012, coinciding with the heightened interest in the topic among the academic community.

The analysis of geographic distribution was carried out considering the main institutional affiliation of the first author of the article. It is evident that North American academic institutions contribute significantly to publications on the subject of religion and spirituality in BME education with 26 articles (see Fig. 4). This prevalence may be derived from a variety of factors, including cultural, educational, and institutional differences among continents. Specifically, the United States is the country that has contributed most to the spread of the investigation into these topics (45% of papers; Canadian institutions only represent 6% of the total), which may be partly due to the historical influence of Protestant Christianity in the American culture and the presence of religiously affiliated universities and colleges with an organisational ethos that may have stimulated interest

Table 2 Distribution of articles for year and authorship composition

Year	One author	Two authors	Three authors	Four authors	Total
1996		1			1
1997	1				1
2000	4		2		6
2002	1				1
2004	1				1
2005	1				1
2006				1	1
2007	1		1		2
2008	2	1			3
2009	1		1		2
2010	3		1		4
2011	1				1
2012		1			1
2013		1			1
2014		1			1
2015		1			1
2016		1	1		2
2017	1	2			3
2018	1		1	1	3
2019		1			1
2020	2	3	1		6
2021	1		1		2
2022	2	1	1		4
2023	1	1			2
Total	24	15	10	2	51
Total (%)	*47*	*29*	*20*	*4*	*100*

in the study of these topics and, in particular, the study of particular religions among American scholars (see Appendix A). In second place, with 14 articles, are authors from the European continent, associated with institutions in six countries: Spain (10%), the United Kingdom (10%), France (2%), Switzerland (2%), Ireland (2%) and Belgium (2%). The last positions are held by authors from the Asian continent (14%), mainly from India, and from Oceania (8%), mainly from New Zealand.

Finally, assessing the type of work, we found that most of the articles adopted a theoretical perspective (60%), while empirical studies were in the minority (40%) (see Table 3).

This means that only some of the educational insights found in the papers have been tested in university classrooms—whether at the undergraduate, at the postgraduate, or at the executive level—while most of them have been presented as proposals based on the authors' reflections. Many of these theoretical papers (25%), however, illustrated the main arguments with examples or hypothetical life scenarios that resonated with practical educational situations (e.g., Comer and Schwartz, 2017), while others built their discussions premised on empirical evidence gathered from interviews with students and/or professors (e.g., Ghosh & Mukherjee, 2020; Williams & Allen, 2014). Table 4 presents the sample of articles analysed, considering the theoretical and empirical distinction, as well as the main aspects characterising the existing literature.

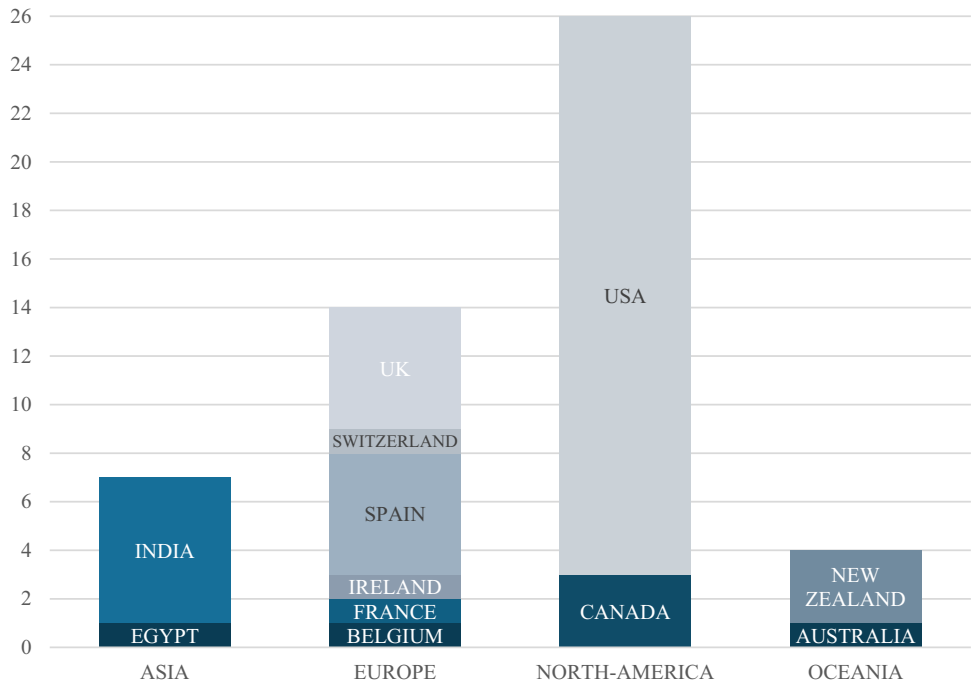

Fig. 4 Geographic distribution of articles

Table 3 Distribution of articles for year and type

Year	Theoretical	Empirical	Total
1996	1		1
1997	1		1
2000	1	5	6
2002	1		1
2004	1		1
2005	1		1
2006		1	1
2007	1	1	2
2008	2	1	3
2009	2		2
2010	1	3	4
2011		1	1
2012	1		1
2013	1		1
2014	1		1
2015	1		1
2016	1	1	2
2017	3		3
2018	2	1	3
2019	1		1
2020	4	2	6
2021		2	2
2022	4		4
2023	1	1	2
Total	32	19	51
Total (%)	*60*	*40*	*100*

Thematic Approach

Typically, the studies analysed share two fundamental ideas. First, conventional BME education needs to broaden its scope, adjust to diverse contemporary societies, and answer the question of how to educate future economic agents—leaders, managers, and entrepreneurs—to lead and manage organisations that are not only focused on profit but also point towards a more social and sustainable approach; and, second, religious and spiritual traditions have a logic that transcends time and space, which can be effective for purposes of the intellectual illumination of BME students, with application to everyday business relationships and practices.

Within these two premises, three main themes were identified in which religion and spirituality are viewed as a means of gaining humanistic insight that is useful in BME education: (a) personal ethics and humanism; (b) spirituality and organisational morality; and (c) social responsibility and global ethics.[4]

The articles that focused on the topic of personal ethics and humanism reported studies that considered the self-referential and ethical aspect embedded in business decision making (e.g., Ebaid, 2022; Lozano, 2017; Vu & Burton, 2020). At the heart of these studies is the assumption that BME education is also a matter of character and, therefore, requires humanistic training to which religious traditions and spiritualities can positively contribute. Particularly, the aim of integrating religion and spirituality into BME education is to provide students with opportunities to reflect on themselves, consider their personal strengths and weaknesses beyond those related to their profession, and to raise awareness of how their decisions and actions can have significant implications for their character. Vu and Burton's (2020) work is an example of a study included within this group. These authors emphasise the value of religious traditions to promote students' reflexivity and critical thinking. For Vu and Burton (2020), the humanistic dimension provided by these ancient traditions may enhance students' moral development and self-transformation and contribute to equipping them with some of the educational features needed to promote responsible management. Similarly, Lozano (2017) and Razaki et al. (2022) supported the use of religions for improving BME students' self-awareness and explained how some of their ideas can help to broaden the understanding of humanity, instilling a sense of ethical values as a valuable aspect of BME students' education.

In the second group of our sample, articles regard religion and spirituality as suitable instruments for elucidating two topics: spirituality in the workplace and the moral dimension of organisational cultures. On the one hand, several articles have highlighted the potential of religion and spirituality to explore themes related to spirituality at work and their impact on performance improvement (e.g., Marcic, 2000; Schmidt-Wilk et al., 2000; Steingard, 2005). Within this group, we find, for instance, Steingard's (2005) work, in which a preliminary spiritually informed management theory was provided and suggested to inspire new models of management inquiry and education. Other examples are Schmidt-Wilk et al. (2000), who presented

[4] This classification is not always perfectly distinct in each article, as some articles may refer to more than one theme (e.g. Epstein, 2002; Pava, 2007 and Lozano, 2022), and even use the same theoretical framework. For example, the literature on calling might be used as a framework to discuss all the themes identified in our classification, since it intersects with all these aspects by addressing questions of purpose and meaning from a personal angle, considering the importance of aligning them in the workplace or their greater impact on society.

Table 4 A summarised view of the extant research on religious and spirituality in BME education

Reference	Type	Themes	Religion/Spirituality categories	Pedagogical means
Naughton and Baush (1996)	Theoretical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Christianity	Not applicable
Simpson (1997)	Theoretical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Religion and spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Calkins (2000)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism	Religion (general)	Not applicable
Schimidt-Wilk et al. (2000)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Hinduism	Spiritual practices
Harlos (2000)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Spirituality (general)	Spiritual practices
Marcic (2000)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Religion and spirituality (general)	Spiritual practices
Barnett et al. (2000)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Spirituality (general)	Spiritual practices
Bento (2000)	Empirical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Spirituality (general)	Spiritual practices
Epstein (2002)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Religion and spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Lips-Wiersma (2004)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism	Spirituality (general)	Holy texts and ancient writings
Steingard (2005)	Theoretical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Manz et al. (2006)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Spirituality (general)	Spiritual practices
Pava (2007)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism/ Spirituality and organisational morality	Judaism	Spiritual practices
Kernochan et al. (2007)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Buddhism	Not specified
Cullen (2008)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Narayanswamy (2008)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Hinduism	Not specified
Crossman and Bordia (2008)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Quddus et al. (2009)	Theoretical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Judaism, Christianity, Islam	Holy texts and ancient writings
Groen (2009)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Shrivastava (2010)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism/ Social responsibility and global ethics	Spirituality (general)	Spiritual practices
Lenssen (2010)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Christianity	Holy texts and ancient writings
Tredget (2010)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Christianity	Holy texts and ancient writings
Cornuel et al. (2010)	Theoretical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Christianity	Holy texts and ancient writings
Karakas (2011)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Spirituality (general)	Not specified
Ben-Hur and Jonsen (2012)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Judaism	Holy texts and ancient writings
Azevedo and Jugdev (2013)	Theoretical	Social responsibility and global ethics	Spirituality (general)	Not applicable

Table 4 (continued)

Reference	Type	Themes	Religion/Spirituality categories	Pedagogical means
Williams and Allen (2014)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Allen and Williams (2015)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Varghese and Sunny (2016)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Spirituality (general)	Spiritual practices
Pathak et al. (2016)	Theoretical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Hinduism	Holy texts and ancient writings
Lozano (2017)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism	Christianity	Holy texts and ancient writings
Comer and Schwartz (2017)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism	Judaism	Holy texts and ancient writings
Toledano and Karanda (2017)	Theoretical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Christianity	Holy texts and ancient writings
Ryan (2018)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism	Christianity	Not applicable
Goodpaster et al. (2018)	Theoretical	Spirituality and organisational morality	Christianity	Not applicable
Herzog et al. (2018)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Religion and spirituality (general)	Not specified
Vu and Burton (2020)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism	Buddhism, Christianity	Not applicable
Allen and Williams (2020)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism/ Social responsibility and global ethics	Christianity	Not applicable
Mukherjee (2020)	Theoretical	Social responsibility and global ethics	Hinduism	Not applicable
Toledano (2020)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Christianity	Holy texts and ancient writings
Comer and Schwartz (2020)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Judaism	Holy texts and ancient writings
Ghosh and Mukherjee (2020)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism	Hinduism	Holy texts and ancient writings
Le and Fusco (2020)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism/ Social responsibility and global ethics	Christianity	Spiritual practices
Burton et al. (2021)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Daoism, Buddhism, Christianity	Spiritual practices
Ebaid (2022)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Islam	Not specified
Toledano (2021)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism / Spirituality and organisational morality	Christianity	Holy texts and ancient writings
Mukherjee and Ghosh (2022)	Theoretical	personal ethics and humanism & social responsibility and global ethics	Hinduism, Buddhism	Not applicable
Lozano (2022)	Theoretical	personal ethics and humanism & social responsibility and global ethics	Christianity	Not applicable
Razaki et al. (2022)	Theoretical	Personal ethics and humanism	Islam	Not applicable
Pio and Merelo (2023)	Theoretical	Social responsibility and global ethics	Religion and spirituality (general)	Not applicable
Phipps (2023)	Empirical	Personal ethics and humanism	Religion and spirituality (general)	Not specified

a model for management educators to introduce the topic of spirituality into the organisational context, and Marcic (2000), who emphasised the importance of diversity and spirituality training to manage modern organisations.

On the other hand, there are articles that consider religious traditions and learnings as a store of wisdom that can serve for teaching students how to face business moral and other challenges (e.g., Cornuel et al., 2010; Pathak et al., 2016; Quddus et al., 2009). Pathak et al.'s (2016) study

provides a good example of the articles included in this group. The authors discussed some religious attributes such as truthfulness and loyalty, contentment and integrity, and humility and mildness, for developing a generic model of ethical leadership. In addition, topics such as good governance practices, strategic management, and human resource management effectiveness were discussed from a religious ethics perspective, demonstrating its usefulness for general management practices and for guidance on organisational conflicts. Other works suggest considering additional religious principles, such as solidarity, subsidiarity, the common good and personal dignity, when organisations face moral dilemmas (e.g., bribery, fraud, deception, and employment compensation), or economic crises (e.g., Cornuel et al., 2010). Remarkably, an understanding of business as a vocation is often presupposed with a view of the leader or manager as the person who perceives work as a call and is committed to serving and caring for those under his or her responsibility (e.g., Allen & Williams, 2015).

Finally, social responsibility and global ethics constitute the third big topic identified in our sample. Articles included in this category proposed the integration of religion and/or spirituality into BME education as part of a holistic approach. The teaching and learning proposed aimed at enhancing the development of students' sustainable behaviours within industry and communities (e.g., Lozano, 2022; Shrivastava, 2010). The focus was thus on the importance of serving the world by training students so that they become better informed about business practices that embrace three pillars: economic, social, and environmental (e.g. Azevedo & Jugdev, 2013).

Pedagogical Approach

In this section, we discuss *how* the analysed literature has suggested the integration of religion and spirituality into BME education from a pedagogical point of view. Two main criteria were useful for categorising the articles: i) the religion and/or spirituality employed in the pedagogical approach; and ii) the "means" by which religion and/or spirituality may teach something to university students enrolled in BME education.

Attending to the first criterion, the review showed that slightly more than half of the studies relied on one religion-driven spirituality; that is, the inspiration, design, and/or materials provided in the courses were religion based, and more specifically based on a unique religion. Indeed, the majority of the articles focused on the Christian tradition (32%) (e.g., Lenssen, 2010; Tredget, 2010), followed by studies that concentrated on the learnings derived from Judaism (18%) (e.g., Ben-hur & Jonsen, 2012; Comer and Schwartz, 2017, 2020), Hinduism (10%) (e.g., Mukherjee & Ghosh, 2022), Buddhism (7%) (e.g., Kernochan et al., 2007), and Islam (4%) (e.g., Ebaid, 2022). However, some studies, perhaps in an attempt to facilitate diversity, discussed the topic from a broader perspective without being limited to one particular faith (e.g., Burton et al., 2021; Epstein, 2002; Lenssen, 2010). Burton et al.'s (2021) study provides a good example of an article that used multiple religious approaches. The authors employed the resources of Daoism, Buddhism, and Quakerism to explain some ideas in a business ethics course and to encourage reflexivity, group wisdom, and relational awareness among the students.

In addition, some papers have considered the use of spirituality in BME courses without directly contemplating religion (e.g., Harlos, 2000; Herzog et al., 2018; Karakas, 2011; Shrivastava, 2010). This is the case, for example, of Harlos's (2000) study. The author proposed a course on organisational analysis in which three spirituality-based professional values—humility, compassion, and simplicity—guide the business teaching and learning of undergraduate students. Harlos (2000) defined and explained the different spiritual values and examined their influence on decision making, emotions, and ethics. Another example can be found in the study by Shrivastava (2010), who shared his experience of a management course that included real-world pragmatic projects, holistic content, physical challenges, and the exercise of emotional and spiritual skills.

Conversely, considering the second criterion, we can identify in our sample two main ways or "means" to integrate religion and spirituality into BME education: the first way is via holy texts and ancient writings, and the second way is through spiritual practices. Concretely, in our analysis, we found that sacred and ancient texts were the most common means through which religion or spirituality was proposed to be integrated into BME education (40% of the sample). When sacred scriptures were used, they were considered from a literary perspective as ancient texts that concern wise religious leaders or that were written by these leaders, who are understood as prophets or heralds of God. The religious character of the texts thus turned out to be secondary, while their moral meaning became a subject of dialogue to facilitate discussions on some contemporaneous topics within BME education.

Sacred texts from Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, or doctrines developed from these texts, are popular pedagogical tools in this group. Ben-Hur and Jonsen (2012), Lenssen (2010), and Toledano (2020) are good examples of articles with a pedagogical approach based on scriptures from the Judea–Christian tradition. Concretely, Ben-Hur and Jonsen (2012) drew lessons from a reading of books 2–5 of the Old Testament to propose a model of leadership based on Moses' behaviours that may be applied to corporate leaders in challenged circumstances. Similarly, Lenssen (2010), making use of the Christian scriptures, provided empirical support for the argument that the practical wisdom

that can be derived from the exegesis of New Testament texts, such as the feeding of the five thousand, may be useful for management education at secular universities. Similar learning in the interpretation of Christian scriptures is evident in the study by Toledano (2020) but in the context of social entrepreneurship education. The author explored the possibility of using religious parables as narratives to encourage ethical reflective sensibility and to prompt discussions about ethical dilemmas in the social entrepreneurship environment.

Transcending the confines of canonical sacred scriptures, and equally common, are articles that derived BME teachings from diverse religious ancient texts. The study by Tredget (2010) is a good example; it drew several notions related to practical wisdom (e.g., prudence and discernment) from the Catholic Rule of Benedict to apply to management and leadership development. A similar line of argument is evident in the studies by Cornuel et al. (2010), Le and Fusco (2020), and Lozano (2022). Specifically, Lozano (2022) made use of a Jesuit educational framework by means of the writings of Father P.H. Kolvenbach (Superior General of The Society of Jesus from 1983 to 2008) to suggest the holistic development of business students. Cornuel et al.'s (2010) work proposed the use of Catholic social teaching to analyse ways of facing economic crises, considering the Catholic principles of solidarity, subsidiarity, common good, and personal dignity, while Le and Fusco (2020), in the context of the Jesuit educational approaches, utilised Andre Delbecq's writings to discuss ways of finding a balance between profit, as essential to the core of a business's purpose, and social mission. In a similar vein, within the Indian tradition, we found some evidence in Pathak et al.'s (2016) study. The authors drew leadership theories and practical wisdom for management practices from the Ramayana epic text—one of the major Sanskrit epics of ancient India.

Outside the use of holy and ancient texts, the literature reviewed incorporated—or suggested—spiritual practices as a pedagogical approach in BME education. A notable example is the study by Comer and Schwartz (2020), who relied on Jewish and Mussar spiritual practices to develop business students' awareness of their own character and the importance of identifying their virtues and deficiencies to apply correction if needed. Another example can be found in the study by Schmidt-Wilk et al. (2000), who used "the transcendental meditation programme" inspired by Hinduism and Vedic traditions to provide a model to introduce spirituality to business students' competences to help them with their cognitive, affective, and moral development.

Finally, in addition to the dichotomy in the pedagogy noticed in our sample—sacred scriptures and texts versus spiritual practices—we found some articles that focused on promoting social learning based on appreciative listening to or interviews with spiritual and/or religious leaders and professionals (e.g., Herzog et al., 2018; Williams & Allen, 2014). Moreover, several studies suggested the use of more conventional pedagogical tools, such as role play, videos, service learning, team building, and outdoor activities, with the aim of instructing students on spiritual dimensions that can be useful for managing organisational conflicts (e.g., Bento, 2000; Varghese & Sunny, 2016).

Discussion

Our analysis yields three key observations derived from the systematic structuring and synthesis of the extant literature. First, concerning the thematic aspect, our review indicates that there are several streams of research addressing the integration of religion and spirituality into BME education premised on what they can inspire and how they can work in the realm of business ethics. They have mainly focused on the ethical learnings that can be drawn from religion-based ethics or from the ethics embedded within a spiritual worldview at the individual, organisational, and global levels, but insufficient attention has been paid to establishing how religion and spirituality can contribute to students' BME learning in areas that extend beyond ethics.

Second, the religious and spiritual teachings suggested to be incorporated into BME education are rather specifically tailored to one religion or spirituality, and only a few articles have considered more than one faith or spiritual tradition in their analysis. Nonetheless, while it is enriching to delve deeper into the teachings that can be derived from one particular religion or spirituality, it would also be fruitful to research across traditions, seeking similarities or differences even between secular philosophies or organisational theories. Moreover, of the two ways identified in the review for integrating religion and spirituality into BME education, research focusing on sacred and ancient texts is more common than research concentrating on spiritual practices, such as prayer and meditation. Thus, future research might benefit from greater consideration of spiritual traditions and practices as a pedagogical approach, which can also align better with the experiential learning that has been promoted in business schools in recent years.

Third, our systematic review reveals a predominance of non-empirical work. While this can reflect the emerging nature of the area, its development and consolidation will depend, in part, on the increasing attention also given to empirical research. Thus, additional empirical research using diverse methods would be welcomed in this area.

In response to the identified gaps in the existing research, the subsequent sections furnish an elaborated roadmap

delineating thematical, pedagogical, and empirical trajectories aimed at propelling further inquiry.

Thematic Implications for Future Research

Our review shows that research on the integration of religion and spirituality into BME education provides strong arguments in favour of their use as ethical teachings in a business, management, or entrepreneurial university context. In particular, their humanistic contribution to the development of nonconventional BME theory, serving as a complement to common economic rationality and extending beyond the traditional logic of the market with short-term profit priorities, seems evident (e.g., Azevedo & Jugdev, 2013; Lozano, 2017). However, in addition to ethics, the integration of religion and spirituality into BME education might be useful to provide relevant frameworks in many other areas. For example, since religion and spirituality provide individuals with a sense of extraordinary purpose (Askeland et al., 2019; Jeavons, 2004), further research may focus on how they may assist students to identify higher business purposes and long-term goals. In this context, research may illuminate the theory of organisational purpose, helping to introduce meaningful changes to the conventional assumptions about the economic purpose of business by adding new notions to the economic or philosophical concepts that traditionally have been used to conceptualise the corporate mind (Harrison et al., 2020; Morrison & Mota, 2023). This could also contribute to enriching the literature on purpose-led organisations, non-profit organisations, or social and sustainable entrepreneurship, all of which are built on a conception of business as organisation driven for serving others instead of being driven by profit and self-interest (Stubbs, 2017; Van Buren III et al., 2020).

A similar argument may be applied to typical management topics, such as leadership, organisational culture, and teamwork. For instance, possible future theoretical research might comprehensively delve deeper into how religion and spirituality could surpass the well-studied technical dimension in teams (e.g., problem solving and flexibility) addressed in the management literature to shed some new light on the normative (e.g., socialisation of team members) and governance dimensions (e.g., increased responsibility in management teams) (Findlay et al., 2000). Indeed, many religious and spiritual traditions stress the significance of collaboration, cooperation, and the creation of community so, by making management students conscious of these practices, they may learn valuable lessons about structures for inter-group coordination (Epstein, 2002; Ghosh & Mukherjee, 2020) that are different alternatives to traditional organisational structures.

Nonetheless, while rooted in ideals of community-building and collaboration, the abuse of spirituality in corporate culture is also a possibility (Haldorai et al., 2020; Worthington et al., 2011); therefore, the dangers of the instrumentalisation and ethical appropriation of spiritual discourses for commercial ends is also a topic to be considered. In a similar vein, potential problems in the integration of individuals' spirituality with corporate identity and how it affects both personal well-being and professional success (Worthington et al., 2011) might be a compelling area for research and discussion in BME classrooms. Indeed, some of the topics that might be at the forefront of spirituality and religion vis-à-vis BME might take into account issues concerning workplace well-being—including employees', entrepreneurs' and leaders' health—and diversity in organisations.

If we focus on entrepreneurship education, there are also many topics that future research may consider. For instance, taking into account that spirituality and religion are experienced by many people as inseparable from creativity and transcendence (Buckenham, 2011), it would be interesting to investigate how they may contribute to developing entrepreneurship students as creative individuals who can think for themselves and see opportunities for change in real-world situations. Moreover, because the virtues of charity, love, and social justice have long been articulated in religious and spiritual language (Dyck, 2014; Smith et al., 2021), the role that these traditions may play as sources of inspiration for social innovation and social entrepreneurship, or as a conduit to address issues related to open innovation, may be analysed to determine how students (potential entrepreneurs) are inspired to create innovations that address social, sustainable, and other sensible complex problems.

Finally, future theoretical studies may contribute to developing a clear understanding of religion and spirituality in an often-secular business and educational context. Indeed, research efforts in this area are still somewhat disconnected, resulting in an array of descriptions to define spirituality and religion; thus, studies considering how to collate different insights into a common understanding would be welcomed.

Pedagogical Implications for Future Research

As noted earlier, in terms of pedagogical approaches, the articles reviewed, with a few exceptions (e.g., Herzog et al., 2018; Marcic, 2000), rarely referred to more than one religious or spiritual tradition. Therefore, we encourage researchers to engage in further pedagogical refinement with the integration of insights grounded on diverse religions and spiritualities, including their comparison with philosophical or organisational approaches.

This should not be understood as a way to pursue syncretism as a goal such that religion's import in BME education is dominated not by any one religion but rather

looks more like an amalgam of many; in contrast, it means encouraging sensitivity, respect and academic rigour, recognising the insights that each religion and spirituality can bring to BME education as cultural expressions and custodians of distinctive beliefs and rituals. For instance, promising research might arise from considering more directly the links between diverse spiritualities and practical wisdom or the connections between different religions and ethical behaviours. By adopting this perspective, it might also be possible to respond to current concerns regarding how to address diversity in business schools and contribute to a better understanding of how to prepare students to work in global and multinational corporations (Landfester et al., 2016; Schlegelmilch, 2020). In this sense, for example, research might explore how an understanding of key ancient concepts from different religions and spiritual practices may be linked with cultural variables that affect international markets. Thus, comparisons of religions and spiritual practices may be made in association with education endeavours to enact alternatives in global markets and international business. Moreover, a comparative approach may encourage research collaborations among academic institutions, bringing together scholars from different continents, religions, disciplines, and cultures. This, in turn, might help to build the academic literature in some underrepresented geographic locations, nurturing cooperation and avoiding unhealthy enmities between different disciplines, and even between diverse religious and spiritual understandings of the divine or transcendence (Dyck, 2014), making BME education a positive means of peaceful paradigm transformation (Beyes et al., 2016; Dodd et al., 2022; Loi et al., 2022).

Conversely, considering the lack of attention given to pedagogical approaches based on religious and spiritual practices in comparison with sacred and ancient texts, it can be inferred that this area of study would benefit from a greater emphasis on analysing these practices. Indeed, the emphasis on ancient texts overlaps with intellectual knowledge (Dyck, 2014), which, although it is knowledge that may be very useful as a component of BME learning, it might be insufficient for taking advantage of the alternative approaches embedded in religion and spirituality. For example, religion- and non-religion-based spiritual practices are often related to holistic well-being, strength, and resilience (Doe, 2004; Drive, 2007); in this context, it would be interesting to study how they may contribute to developing BME students as individuals suited to coping with failure or unexpected contingencies. Moreover, by considering spiritual practices that have received no attention, such as prayer, scholars might bring fresh insights into uncommon pedagogical means that have been associated with well-being, resilience, and hope (Davids & Waghid, 2018; Vasconcelos, 2009).

Implications for Future Empirical Research

Our analysis has revealed that the reviewed literature mainly relies on reflective and conceptual research. Furthermore, most of the empirical studies in our sample rely on successful autoethnographic research (e.g., Narayanswamy, 2008), while there is a lack of studies that address failure cases. One reason might be the difficulties involved in publishing this research; nonetheless, if professors are called to deliver transforming education that overcomes the weaknesses of the dominant for-profit enterprise educational model (Beyes et al., 2016; Michels et al., 2020), they need to understand how they can better incorporate religious and spiritual traditions into their courses, potentially learning from studies of success but also from those that faced difficulties. In this respect, future research might help, for example, by studying the implications of the integration of religion and spirituality into BME education, focusing not only on the perspective of the course recipients—students—but also considering a wider set of stakeholders, such as the institutions or instructors themselves, and taking into account their difficulties. For example, institutions' space and instructors' time constraints or their reluctance to commit to innovations in educational interventions that may need a closer relationship with students might be obstacles to the consideration of religion and spirituality in BME education that deserve attention in future studies. Similarly, the rise of the religious "nones"—those who have no affiliation—and the increase in the number of "dones" —those who were affiliated but left the church, synagogue or mosque (Einstein, 2024, p. 303)—might also be taken into account as a specific group of stakeholders to work on, since their aversion to religious issues (Epstein, 2002) can be seen as a challenge to BME educational initiatives in which religious traditions may have some voice.

There is also a significant lack of longitudinal studies focusing on the processes of course design and implementation. Issues related to the selection of materials (e.g., holy or ancient texts), the temporal programme in which they would be included, how they are integrated with the rest of the subjects that BME students are taking, or the difficulties or contingencies that arise during the course remain under-researched. For instance, there is an important gap regarding how internal educational structures, and in general educational ecosystems, interact with the design and implementation of BME courses that consider religious and spiritual traditions as part of their material or as a methodological approach. Thus, much can be learned from studies that carry out in-depth qualitative and longitudinal analysis to broaden the scope of their asset base beyond students' profile or course structure.

Finally, there is a significant lack of quantitative empirical research. Therefore, rigorous quantitative research that aims

to test theoretical arguments empirically by making use of large-scale quantitative approaches might illuminate the opportunities and risks associated with the transformation of BME education from a materialist paradigm towards a more humanistic one making use of religious and spiritual traditions.

Concluding Remark

The consideration of religion and spirituality in BME education has become part of today's educational practices in some universities and business schools (Comer & Schwartz, 2020; Culham & Vu, 2021). Nevertheless, as a field of research, it is still at an emerging stage. Our review has shown that the topic has mainly been addressed from a theoretical perspective, with a focus on exploring how some of the teachings embedded in religion and spirituality can be considered to inform different discussions in BME courses with a prominent application of sacred and ancient texts in the teaching of business ethics.

However, there are some limitations in our work. Firstly, we only covered the integration of religion and spirituality into higher education, although it is a field that is also flourishing in non-formal academic education (e.g., organisational training). Focusing on other educational levels or contexts and analysing how they integrate religion and spirituality into BME lessons were outside the scope of our review, but our findings open the door to assessing the use of religion and spirituality to teach and learn in other settings. Secondly, and related to the previous limitation, it is important to recognise that our review was derived from our search criteria, which, being different, might have provided some additional information. Indeed, literature review articles, although rigorous, are not immune to potential biases, as the selection of studies and methodologies can introduce subjective judgments (Kraus et al., 2024). For example, in our case, by initially excluding book chapters, we may have missed some important information or relevant empirical work, such as some experimental studies, because this topic and approach has not yet been well received by top academic business, management, or entrepreneurship journals. However, by adhering to transparent and well-documented procedures (Sauer & Seuring, 2023), we help to mitigate these biases. Furthermore, our commitment to neutrality in selection and analysis led us to check for heterogeneity in the studies included in the literature review, recognising that too many similar studies could lead to pooling of ideas. Nevertheless, we encourage further reviews to include grey literature, such as dissertations and book chapters, in order to learn more about this topic and to capture a wider range of research.

Despite these weaknesses, we add value by providing scholars with up-to-date information and identifying research areas for further studies that can address important knowledge gaps in the field. We hope that our review will thus help to streamline the discourse and facilitate the interaction among religion and spirituality and BME education.

Appendix

Higher Education Institution	Institution Type and Religious Affiliation	Country
Robert Morris University	Private—Secular (Non-Profit Institution)	USA
University of St. Thomas	Private—Christian (Catholic)	USA
Hofstra University	Private—Secular (Non-Profit Institution)	USA
Vanderbilt University	Private—Christian (Methodist)	USA
University of Virginia	Public	USA
California State University Northridge	Public	USA
University of Redlands	Private—Christian (Baptist)	USA
Santa Clara University	Private—Christian (Catholic)	USA
Abilene Christian University	Private—Christian (Church of Christ)	USA
Saint Mary's College of California	Private—Christian (Catholic)	USA
Saint Joseph's University	Private—Christian (Catholic)	USA
Lilly School of Philanthropy (Indianapolis Univ)	Private—Christian (Methodist)	USA
Sam Walton College of Business (Univ Arkansas)	Public	USA
Baruch College (City Univ NYork)	Public	USA
Maharishi University of Management	Private—Hindu	USA
University of Dayton	Private—Christian (Catholic)	USA
Northcentral University	Private—Secular (Non-Profit Institution)	USA
University of La Verne	Private—Christian (Church of the Brethren)	USA
Yeshiva University	Private—Jewish	USA
Prairie View A&M University	Public	USA

Higher Education Institution	Institution Type and Religious Affiliation	Country
Eastern Illinois University Charleston	Public	USA
Concordial University	Public	Canada
Simon Fraser University	Public	Canada
Athabasca University	Public	Canada
University of Huelva	Public	Spain
ESADE Business School	Private—Christian (Catholic)	Spain
Northumbria University	Public	UK
Douai Abbey	Public	UK
University of the West of England	Public	UK
Open University	Public	UK
HEC Paris	Private—Secular (Non-Profit Institution)	France
ENPC	Public–	France
EFMD	Public–	Belgium
EABIS	Private—Secular (Non-Profit Institution)	Belgium
Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstad	Private—Christian (Catholic)	Germany
National University of Ireland Maynooth	Public	Ireland
IMD Lausanne	Private—Secular (Non-Profit Institution)	Switzerland
St.Xaviers college	Private—Christian (Catholic)	India
Indian Institute of Management Shillong	Public	India
Rajagiri Centre for Business Studies	Private—Christian (Catholic)	India
India School of Mines, Dhambad	Public	India
Mandel Foundation-Israel	Private—Secular	Israel
Tanta University	Public	Egypt
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology	Public	Australia
University Otago	Public	N.Zealand

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