

Estimating the Impact of Leadership Styles on Knowledge Management

Application Strategies

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Abstract

This study analysed the influences of leadership styles on knowledge management application strategies from the perspective of managers and employees working at five stars hotels located in the capital of Jordan- Amman, the results of the study indicate that the majority of managers heavily adopted a combination of telling and selling as leadership styles and they rarely used the delegating leadership style in their attempt to apply knowledge management strategies. From the employees perspective knowledge management application strategies implies that managers should be capable for allowing to employees to determine their own organizational objectives because they are know more about their jobs than mangers, so it should allow to employees to carry out the decisions to do their jobs.

Key words: leadership styles, Strategy, knowledge management application.

1. Introduction:

Leadership has been a major topic of many researches in psychology for almost a century and has spawned thousands of empirical and conceptual studies. Today's organizations operate in the context of an information age in which technology has revolutionized the operating environment of organizational leaders. This technology, with its corresponding impact on organizational information flow, presents leaders with challenges and opportunities that can fundamentally restructure how they accomplish the tasks of organizational leadership and change. And we should understand that leadership is about coping with change, a Successful change Leaders should:

- Challenge the process
- inspire a shared vision
- enable others to act
- Model the way
- encourage the heart

As we know that the basis of knowledge management is provided by motivated employees, they have to be supported with structural aspects and leadership- Top management's commitment to knowledge management and the organization of strategies. As a hotel it should be generates knowledge incessantly, managers require a knowledge vision, which harmonizes knowledge management throughout the different hotels. Moreover, knowledge strategies often determine by the degree of sharing employees. Shared models allow better understanding, but prevent specialization. Top managers who work in the hotels but communicate with the knowledge department provide the link between hotels and the centralized information system.

Despite the popularity of knowledge management in many industries, hotel-specific concerns have thus been neglected in the literature and knowledge management has just rudimentarily been implemented in hotels, so the

purpose of this research is to identify the leadership styles at five stars Jordanian Hotels located in Amman, and determine if there is any influence of these leadership styles on knowledge management application strategies.

2. Literature Review.

2.1 Concept of Leadership:

Is inspiring people with a compelling vision which encourages them to come together in a common cause and keeps them together to accomplish common goals. People may not be aware of this common cause; the leader draws attention and convinces and clarifies the common goals. Robbins (1998).

2.2 Leadership Theories:

According to Barrick and Alexander (1991) there are eight basic types of leadership theories:

1. Trait theories of leadership: these theories answer the question by specifying or identifying traits, characteristics, abilities, behavioural patterns, or skills that leaders have or demonstrate. If a definition is offered by a trait theorist, it normally begins "a leader..." and follows with a list of traits (is a servant, is charismatic, is ethical, takes initiative, shows excellence, is goal-oriented, is inspiring, is good at communicating, has positive self-regard, is empowering, etc.). The problem with these theories has always been identifying characteristics that differentiate leaders from people with the same traits who are not leaders. (Bass 1990)

2. Management theories of leadership: these theories are concerned primarily with organizational or group performance. This type of theory (transactional leadership, transformational leadership, democratic leadership, LMX, the Four Is, path-goal, etc.) tends to dominate leadership thought, and discussions of "different" theories are usually limited to this type. The essential problem for these theories is the problem of exploitation. (Bass 1990)

3. Relationship theories: answer the question by defining leadership as a relationship among people with mutual wants and needs who are striving for mutual goals (no one goes to work to make someone else rich). This relationship is defined by conflict (Burns) and by influence (Rost).

4. Process theories: answer the question by defining leadership as a process of dynamic interaction among people with varying ethics who align themselves to solve specific social problems or to generate general evolutionary social change. This process is understood as dissipative and not controllable by the leader. In these theories, the leader is more of a symbol of what everyone wants rather than a producer of outcomes. The fundamental problem for leadership studies is distinguishing leadership from management, supervision, statesmanship, and command. All of these words represent concepts that are different, but often labelled "leadership".

5. Behavioural theories: addresses many of the holes in the traits theory by concentrating on what leaders actually do rather than on the qualities they possess. Most behavioural theories (Theory X & Theory Y managers, Managerial grid) attempt to answer the question, "What are the different styles of leadership, and how effective are these styles?" (Hall, 1991).

6. Participative leadership: theories recommend leadership styles that involve other people in the leadership process. These theories (Lewin's, Likert's leadership styles) do suggest, however, that a leader retains the right to give or deny any subordinate a say in the leadership process.

7. Situational leadership: theories suggest that leadership is specific to the situation in which it is being exercised. These theories (normative model, action-centered leadership model, leadership continuum, Hersey and Blanchard's

situational leadership model, path-goal theory, etc.) suggest that there may be different styles of leadership required at different levels in the same organization.

8. Contingency theories: refine the situational viewpoint by focusing on identifying the situational variables that determine the most appropriate style of leadership to fit the particular circumstances.

9. House's Path-Goal Theory of Leadership: this theory was developed by Robert House and has its roots in the expectancy theory of motivation. The theory is based on the premise that an employee's perception of expectancies between his effort and performance is greatly affected by a leader's behavior. The leaders help group members in attaining rewards by clarifying the paths to goals and removing obstacles to performance. They do so by providing the information, support, and other resources which are required by employees to complete the task (managementstudyguide.com), the four leadership styles according to House are:

1. Directive.
2. Supportive.
3. Participative.
4. Achievement-oriented.

2.3 Developing a KM strategy:

According to Robertson, There are many approaches for developing a knowledge management strategy, each approach supported by a holistic model of KM processes; these can be classified into two main approaches: Top-down and Bottom-up.

3. Theoretical framework.

3.1 Telling style

The leader here is a Directing so When the follower cannot do the job and is unwilling or afraid to try, then the leader takes a highly directive role, telling them what to do but without a great deal of concern for the relationship. The leader may also provide a working structure, both for the job and in terms of how the person is controlled. Hersey & Blanchard (2000)

3.2 Selling style

The leader here is a Coaching so when the follower can do the job, at least to some extent, and perhaps is over-confident about their ability in this, then 'telling' them what to do may demotivate them or lead to resistance. The leader thus needs to 'sell' another way of working, explaining and clarifying decisions. Hersey & Blanchard (2000)

3.3 Participating style

The leader here is a supporting so When the follower can do the job, but is refusing to do it or otherwise showing insufficient commitment, the leader need not worry about showing them what to do, and instead is concerned with finding out why the person is refusing and thence persuading them to cooperate. Hersey & Blanchard (2000)

3.4 Delegating style

The leader here is a observing so when the follower can do the job and is motivated to do it, then the leader can basically leave them to it, largely trusting them to get on with the job although they also may need to keep a relatively

distant eye on things to ensure everything is going to plan. Followers at this level have less need for support or frequent praise, although as with anyone, occasional recognition is always welcome. Hersey & Blanchard (2000)

3.5. Knowledge Management Application:

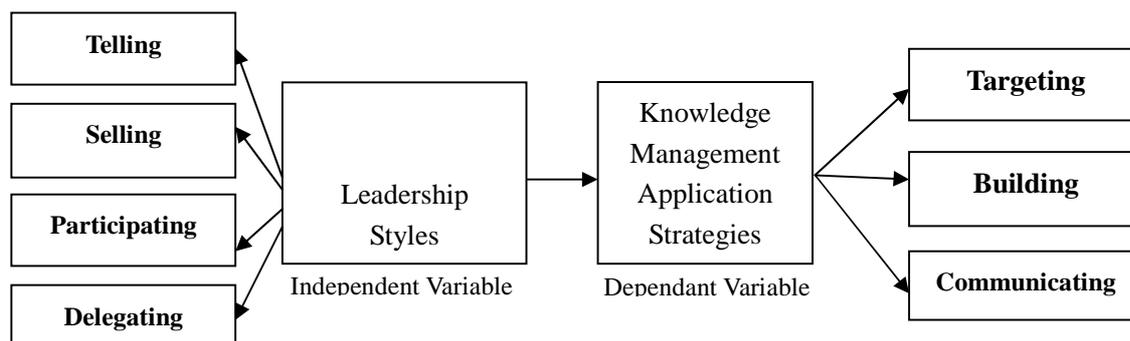
The process of using relevant knowledge that has been discovered, captured, or shared to make decisions and perform tasks. (Fernandez, 2004).

Knowledge management application strategies: in this article the author will emphasize on three strategies (Raud&Wittich, 2004):

1. Assigning key members
2. Building knowledge network
3. Communicating a purposeful message

4. Suggested model:

Based on the literature reviews especially Hersey & Blanchard (2007) theory, and Raud&Wittich, (2004) works, the researcher has developed a conceptual model which consists two types of variables, the independent variables (leadership styles: telling, selling, participating and delegating) and the dependent variable (Knowledge management application strategies) which will be measure through three strategies: targeting, building and communicating, as this shown in figure (1)



Research Model

Figure (1)

5. Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the literature reviewed, the researcher proposed four main hypotheses as follows:

H1: Telling leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application strategy

H2: Selling leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application strategy

H3: Participating leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application strategy

H4: Delegating leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application strategy

6. Methodology:

6.1. Research instrument:

The primary data were collected by using a questionnaire which was especially developed for this research. The questionnaire was developed and piloted before the distribution to validate the content in terms of: validity, logic, and accuracy.

The questionnaire consists of three parts: the first part of the questionnaire was designed to identify the demographic characteristic of respondents such as: gender, age, educational level, working experience and working position.

The second part contains a series of questions about the independent variable (leader ship styles). The third part contains a series of questions about the dependent variable (knowledge management application).

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of agreement or disagreement with various statements related to leadership styles on five –point likert type scaling range from (1) “ strongly disagree” to (5) “ strongly agree”. To measure knowledge management application strategies scale from 1-7 was used, while (1) refer to ‘very ease of implementation, and (7) very difficulty of implementation.

7. Study population and analysis unit:

A total number of a (110) questionnaires was distributed to five hotels stars which located in Amman and its total according to statistics and information department at ministry of tourism 13 hotels. Questionnaires are distributed through: hand delivery of self-administered questionnaires followed by personal collection. Of the one hundred and ten questionnaires that were distributed, (85) questionnaires were received, (16) questionnaires were eliminating through the process of data cleaning, those questionnaires with many missing data, so only (69) questionnaires were being available for analysis. The researcher uses a statistical package (SPSS 15) for doing statistical analyses. The unit of study are the mangers at top, middle levels and staff in the hotels.

8. Validity and Reliability of data

8.1 Validity of data collected:

The content validity of the questionnaire was determined by a panel of experts in the fields of leadership, knowledge management, and Information Systems in the faculty of economics and administrative sciences at the applied science private university .They displayed a constructive comments and suggestions, which were taken into consideration.

8.2 Instrument Reliability

The reliability of the survey instrument was assessed through Cronbach’s coefficient alpha (a). All coefficients alpha were within acceptable ranges for comparable in strumentations (Sekran, 2000). The test results are as follows: Cronbach alpha for Independent Variable = 0.8612, Cronbach alpha for dependent Variable = 0.8942, Cronbach alpha for over all instrument = 0.9232, which exceeded the acceptable limit. Zikmund (2002)

9. Population Description:

This section describes the population through the general characteristics of the respondents in term of gender, age, educational level, working experience and working position, as shown in table (1) below. The data in table (1) show that the majority of Respondents over half (72.4) were males and only (27.5) were Female and this is normal because Jordanian culture still conservative and sometimes refuse working women at hotels because they have to work at evening according to the shits ,which something unacceptable at some Jordanian families. The data in table show that respondents who are between 46-55 years old represent the highest percentage among respondents with (40.6%), and this normal result because part of study unit were mangers at top and middle levels. While than from 18- 25 years old

their percentage were only (7.2%), from 26-35years old were (36.2%), only (16. %) were for age from 36-45 years. The data in table (1) also show that the highest percentage (40.6%) was for the bachelors University degree holders. only (18%) attained PHD graduate qualification. The respondents have middle and long experience in their hotels,(18.8%) are among (1-5 years)(23.2%) are from (6-10) years and(23.2%) are more than 15 years working experience, where only (2.9%) working less than one year.

Finally (43.3%) of the respondents were managers, (24.6%) were administrative staff, (14.5%) of respondents were front office management, while guest assistant were (10.1%), the lowest percentage were to service positions (7.2%).

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of respondents (n=69)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	50	72.4
Female	19	27.5
Age:		
18-25	5	7.2
26-35	25	36.2
36-45	11	16
46-55	28	40.6
Educational Level:		
High school	8	11.6
Bachelors	28	40.6
Master	20	29
PhD	13	18.8
Working experience :		
Less than one year	2	2.9
1-5	13	18.8
6-10	16	23.2
11-15	22	31.9
More than 15	16	23.2
Working position:		
Front Office Management	10	14.5
Guest Assistance	7	10.1
Service Positions	5	7.2
Administrative Staff	17	24.6
manager	30	43.3

10. Results and Hypothesis testing.

(H1) Telling leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application strategy

Table 2.a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of The Estimate
1	.661 ^a	.437	.434	.38280

a. Predictors: (Constant) TELLING,

Correlation coefficient between telling and Knowledge Management Application (KMA) = 66.1% which indicates that there is a strong relationship (direct effect) between the two variables. R square (coefficient of determination) = 43.7% which means that 66.1% of the variability in the KM application strategy is due to the telling leadership style and the rest 38.28% to other factors, F=120.093 at Sig. = 0.0 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between Telling and Overall KMA .

Table.2.b. ANOVA b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square ^a	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.734	1	16.734	120.093	.000 ^a
	Residual	16.979	67	.129		
	Total	33.713	68			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Telling

b. Dependent Variable: Overall KMA

The value of $t = 10.405$ at 0.0 significance level which means that Telling is an important variable to determine the overall KMA and it should be included in the model.

(H2): Selling leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application strategy

Table 3.a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.785 ^a	.616	.608	.47041

a. Predictors: (Constant), SELLING

Correlation coefficient between Selling and knowledge management application = 78.5% which indicates that there is a strong relationship (direct effect) between the two variables. R square (coefficient of determination) = 61.6% which

Table.3.b. ANOVA ^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.766	1	18.766	165.723	.000 ^a
	Residual	14.947	67	.113		
	Total	33.713	68			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), SELLING
 b. Dependent Variable: Overall KMA

Table.3.c. Coefficients ^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.561	.187		8.350	.000
	SELLING	.623	.048	.746	12.873	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Overall KMA

means that 61.6% of the variability in the KM application strategy is due to the Selling leadership style and the rest 47.04% to other factors.

F=165.723 at Sig. = 0.0 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between selling and Overall KMA , The value of t =12.873 at 0.0 significance level which means that selling is an important variable to determine the overall KMA and it should be included in the model.

(H3) Participative leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application

Table 4.a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.467 ^a	.219	.202	.56908

- a. Predictors: (Constant), PARTICIPATING

Correlation coefficient between participating and knowledge management = 46.7% which indicates that there is a strong relationship (direct effect) between the two variables. R square (coefficient of determination) = 21.9% which means that 46.7% of the variability in the KM application strategy is due to the participating leadership style and the rest 56.9% to other factors, F=165.723 at Sig. = 0.0 which indicates that there is a significant relationship between participating and Overall KMA. The value of t =12.837 at 0.0 significance level which means that participating is an important variable to determine the overall KMA and it should be included in the model.

Table 4.c. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.615	.208		7.781	.000
	PARTICIPATING	.612	.050	-.086	12.217	.566

Dependent Variable: OVERALL KMA

The regression coefficient is -0.086 and the significance level is 0.566(p>0.05). Therefore null hypothesis cannot be rejected. So Participative leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application strategies in Jordanian five stars hotels.

(H4) Delegating leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application

Table 5.a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.546 ^a	.298	.283	.42099

a. Predictors: (Constant), DELEGATING

Correlation coefficient between Selling and knowledge management = 54.6% which indicates that there is a strong relationship (direct effect) between the two variables. R square (coefficient of determination) = 29.8% which means that 29.8% of the variability in the KM application strategy is due to the delegating leadership style and the rest 42.09% to other factors, The value of t =10.873 at 0.0 significance level which means that delegating is an important variable to determine the overall KMA and it should be included in the model.

Table.5.b. ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.766	1	18.766	165.723	.000 ^a
	Residual	14.947	67	.223		
	Total	33.713	68			

a. Predictors: (Constant), DELEGATING

b. Dependent Variable: Overall KMA

Table.5.c. Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.561	.187		7.350	.000
	DELEGATING	.623	.048	.090	10.873	.446

a. Dependent Variable: Overall KMA

The regression coefficient is 0.90 and the significance level is 0.446($p > 0.05$). Therefore null hypothesis cannot be rejected. So delegating leadership style has no direct effect on Knowledge management application strategies in Jordanian five stars hotels.

11. Discussion and Conclusions:

The objective of this study is to estimate the influence of leadership styles on knowledge management application strategies from the perspective of managers and staff at five stars Jordanian hotels. The results show that the majority of Jordanian managers and staff strongly believe that the telling and selling leadership styles effect on knowledge application strategies, so they are rarely believed in participating and delegating as leadership styles influence on the management application strategies.

The study also found that there are many difficulties in knowledge management application strategies, the first difficulty related to enlisting top managers as “figureheads” for knowledge management which related to targeting key members as one KM application strategy as displayed in table (7).

The second difficulty related to understanding networking as a key task of KM which related to building knowledge networks as one KM application strategy as showed at table (7), Final difficulty related to focusing KM on client value and building a business case which related to communicating a purposeful message as one KM application strategy as displayed in table(7), as we know that knowledge strategy application concerns the type of organizational knowledge transfer (personalization or codification , Although some elements of a knowledge management system can be more dominant than others, hotels should realize that knowledge management is a system of interacting pails. so knowledge management represents an integrated system, this paper lays a focus on knowledge management application strategies and leadership styles , because they strongly differ from other industries" requirements.

Therefore, further studies should concentrate on anther items on knowledge management application strategies in hotels by expanding the findings of this article.

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Table (6) Leadership Styles Survey

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Rotated factor loading</i>	<i>Eigen value</i>	<i>% of variance</i>
Telling leadership style			
1. Effective leaders give orders and clarify procedures.	.661		
2. Employees need to be supervised closely, or they are not likely to do their work	.563		
3. Most employees feel insecure about their work and need direction	.713	6.076	2.066
4. It is fair to say that most employees in the hotel are lazy	.706		
Selling leadership style			
1. Employees want to be a part of the decision-making process	.719		
2. Providing guidance without pressure is the key for being a good leader	.651		
3. Most employees want frequent and supportive communication from their leaders	.841	2.643	7.774
4. Leaders need to help employees accept	.849		

responsibility for completing their work			
Participating leadership style			
1. Leaders always ask employees for their vision of where they see their jobs going and then use their vision where appropriate	.595		
2. Leaders want to create an environment where employees take an ownership, they allow to employees to participate in decision –making process.	.859		
3. When thing go wrong, the leaders need to create a strategy to keep a process running on schedule, leaders call a meeting to get the employees advice.	.882	2.531	7.445
4. Leaders like to use their leadership power to help employees grow	.911		
Delegating leadership style			
1. Leaders allow employee to determine what needs to be done and how to do it.	.624		
2. Leaders delegate tasks in order to implement a new procedure or process.	.655	1.087	3.198
3. Each employee is responsible for defining his/her job	.613		
4. Employees have the right to determine their own organizational objectives.	.677		

Table (7) Knowledge Management Application Strategies

<i>KM Application Strategy</i>	<i>Ease or difficulty of application</i>
Targeting key members	
1.Gaing support from line managers who identify with KM	3.7
2.Enlising top managers as “figureheads” for KM	2.8
3.Clarifing and managing interfaces with key functions	3.2
4.Puting pressure through the lines of hierarchy	3.6
Building knowledge networks	
1.Using existing KM initiatives	4.1
2.Understanding networking as a key task of KM	3.7
3.Purcasing ready-made KM solutions in the market	4.7
4.Relaying on outside experts for KM application	4.5
Communicating a purposeful message	
1.Documanting and communicating KM	3.8
2.Using the internal client’s language for promoting KM concepts	4.7
3.Focusing KM on client value and building a business case	3.1
4.Keeping the KM concept deliberately vague	5.2
5.Deliberately avoiding the use of KM terminology	4.2

Ranking is based on a 1-7 scale, where 1=“very difficult” and 7=“very easy”

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