

A Review of Knowledge-Oriented Leadership and Its Effect on Work Attitudes

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Abstract:

This paper systematically reviews the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and work attitude. This article reviews knowledge-oriented leadership and work attitudes, including three dimensions of work attitudes: affective commitment, work engagement, and creative self-efficacy. The relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and work attitude and three dimensions of work attitude are discussed. The review found that most scholars used quantitative methods to conduct research involving different industries in different countries. Most research results proved a significant relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and work attitude and its three dimensions, but some scholars' research did not support this view. Finally, the paper indicates directions for future research, including the expansion of cross-cultural studies, the increase in longitudinal study designs, multi-attitude integrative studies, and a focus on dynamic change and individual differences.

Keywords: Knowledge-Oriented Leadership, Work Attitude, Affective Commitment, Work Engagement, Creative Self-Efficacy

1. Introduction

Knowledge-oriented leadership (KOL) has gradually become critical in promoting organizational innovation and performance improvement in today's knowledge-based economy. Knowledge-oriented leadership refers to the ability of a leader to guide individual innovation goals, create a shared and safe cognitive environment, encourage members to share their knowledge and accelerate the implementation of creative and exploratory behaviors by utilizing external knowledge resources (Donate & Pablo, 2015). KOL enhances the competitiveness of an organization by encouraging knowledge sharing and promoting employee capacity development (Donate & Pablo, 2015).

In the current era of globalization and rapid technological development, organizations must continue to innovate to respond to changing market requirements. Therefore, understanding the impact of knowledge-based leadership on employees' work attitudes is crucial for organizations. Attitude is a state of mind, and behavior is the external expression of this state of mind. Affective commitment, work engagement, and creative self-efficacy are the main factors affecting employees' work attitudes (Hashim&Tan, 2015). Studies have shown that KOL positively impacts affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and employee work engagement(Shamim et al., 2017). However, there are still different views on the relationship between KOL and work attitude, especially in affective commitment, work engagement, and creative self-efficacy. However, the academic community still needs to form a unified conclusion.

This review aims to systematically analyze the existing research results on the relationship between KOL and work attitude and explore how KOL can improve organizational performance by affecting affective commitment, work engagement, and creative self-efficacy. This review not only contributes to a better understanding of the multi-dimensional impact of KOL on employee attitudes but also provides theoretical support for management practices and helps leaders effectively apply KOL to achieve organizational goals.

2. Knowledge-oriented leadership

Knowledge-oriented leadership refers to the ability of a leader to guide individual innovation goals, create a shared and safe cognitive environment, encourage members to share their knowledge, and accelerate the implementation of creative and exploratory behaviors by utilizing external knowledge resources (Donate&Pablo, 2015). By combining transformational and transactional leadership characteristics and using effective communication and incentive strategies, knowledge-oriented leadership can help create a favorable environment for knowledge flow and innovation. This allows the organization to adapt to institutionalized environments, challenges the organization's status quo, and promotes organizational change (Klein, 2023).

In addition to improving employee performance (Putra&Aima, 2022), knowledge-oriented leadership can lead to improved organizational performance and contribute to sustainable development (Kathurima & Thairu, 2023). Knowledge-oriented leaders place a premium on knowledge and can cultivate a team dynamic in which everyone's contributions are appreciated. Knowledge-oriented leaders have a clear vision of the importance of knowledge in achieving organizational goals. They develop strategies that align knowledge management with the overall business strategy. They communicate the vision and strategy to employees, ensuring everyone understands the significance of knowledge sharing and utilization (Donate et al., 2022). By setting clear objectives and aligning them with the organization's goals, leaders can motivate employees to seek the knowledge they need to achieve them. Creating a work environment that incentivizes and recognizes employees for sharing their expertise and experience can further enhance performance in the workplace (Deng et al., 2022).

3. Work attitude

Attitude is a fundamental concept in psychology. Attitude is a set of beliefs, emotions, and behavior toward a particular person, object, or event resulting from experience. In other words, a person forms certain beliefs and emotions that lead to a specific behavior toward that particular person, object, or event. The attitude influences or drives the behavior of the person. Kondrotienė and Bakanauskas (2021) delve into the causal-consequential relationship between attitude formation and behavior, emphasizing how attitudes are cumulative evaluations that develop over time and influence behavioral tendencies. Shamim et al. (2017) mentioned that attitude is a mindset, and behavior is an outward expression of that mindset. Affective commitment, work engagement, and creative self-efficacy are the main factors influencing an employee's attitude (Hashim & Tan, 2015).

3.1 Affective commitment

Affective commitment is employees' emotional attachment, identification with, and organizational involvement (Butali & Njoroge, 2017). It is associated with one's desire to contribute to the organization's well-being and willingness to remain connected and aligned with the company. (Elkholie et al., 2022). Swalhi et al. (2017) investigated the influence of organizational justice on job performance, with affective commitment as a mediating factor. The study tested the mediating effect of affective commitment using a

specific protocol, highlighting the role of affective commitment in linking organizational justice and job performance. Wang (2022) explored the mechanisms linking transformational leadership, perceived organizational support, creativity, and performance in the hospitality industry, with affective commitment as a critical mediator. The study emphasized the role of affective commitment in linking leadership, support, creativity, and performance.

3.2 Work engagement

Work engagement is a vital component of the work environment, characterized as a positive, fulfilling, affective-motivational state closely linked to the balance between resources and demands in the workplace (Cajander et al., 2020). Ivanović et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between recruiter burnout, work engagement, and turnover intention in Serbia. The study found that work engagement has a statistically significant negative impact on burnout, emphasizing the importance of work engagement in reducing turnover.

3.3 Creative self-efficacy

Creative self-efficacy refers to an individual's assessment of their ability to complete creative tasks; those with high levels of creative self-efficacy have more confidence in finishing such tasks, allowing them to maintain an optimistic mindset when faced with challenges and setbacks (Xiao, 2020). Su et al. (2019) examined the effect of supervisor developmental feedback on employee innovative behavior, with creative self-efficacy as a mediator. The study confirmed that creative self-efficacy effectively mediated the relationship between supervisor developmental feedback and innovative behavior.

4. Knowledge-oriented leadership and work attitude

The relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership (KOL) and work attitudes has received considerable attention in the academic literature. When researchers study the relationship between KOL and work attitude, they mostly adopt cross-sectional research design and use structural equation modeling (SEM) to test. The research objects involve different industries in different countries, such as hotel employees in the United Kingdom, employees of the secretariat in Indonesia, and employees of higher education institutions in Pakistan. Their findings confirmed the positive impact of KOL on work attitudes. Alzghoul et al. (2023) explored the role of KOL on knowledge center culture, service innovation behavior, employee job satisfaction, and the mediating role of knowledge-center culture. The proposed model and hypotheses were tested using survey data from employees of 456 hotels and travel agencies in Jordan. The partial least squares method was used for analysis. The results confirmed that KOL significantly impacted work attitudes, especially in fostering employee satisfaction and innovative behavior. KOL promoted a knowledge-centered culture in the organization, promoting employee job satisfaction and innovative service behavior. The authors emphasize that knowledge-oriented leaders create environments encouraging knowledge sharing, contributing to a positive work culture, and increasing employee engagement.

Knowledge-oriented leadership (KOL) positively impacts all aspects of organizational behavior and performance (Putra et al., 2022). The mediating role of employee work attitudes (including affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and work engagement) has also been discussed in the relationship with KOL (Shamim et al., 2017; Rehman & Iqbal, 2020; Putra et al., 2022), who suggested that KOL positively influences affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and employee work engagement.

Shamim et al. (2017) used a cross-sectional study design to collect 330 data from frontline staff in four- and five-star hotels in London and Bournemouth, UK. The mediating role of employees' work attitudes

(including affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and work engagement) was investigated using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The study found that KOL positively impacted knowledge management behaviors, affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and employee work engagement. Work attitudes (affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and work engagement) moderated the relationship between KOL and knowledge management behaviors. In addition, direct positive effects of employee affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and work engagement on knowledge management behaviors are also evident.

This result is supported by Putra et al. (2022), whose study aimed to analyze the impact of organizational structure and knowledge-oriented leadership based on learning innovation and organizational suitability on employee performance. The study population consisted of 222 employees of the regional secretariat of Padang City. The sampling technique used the census method, using the entire population as the study sample. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used for data analysis, and SmartPLS3 was used for hypothesis testing. The results suggest that knowledge-oriented leadership promotes the knowledge activities of employees and motivates them to generate, share, and implement new ideas by influencing their affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and work engagement.

Rehman and Iqbal (2020) examined the mediating role of neglected knowledge management processes and innovation by investigating the impact of knowledge-oriented leadership on the organizational performance of higher education institutions. A cross-sectional study design was used, and data were collected through self-administered questionnaires from 312 faculty members in tertiary institutions in Pakistan. Partial least squares structural equation modeling data analysis techniques were used to test the hypothesized relationships. Knowledge leaders participate in knowledge management activities and use this as a model to influence their subordinates' knowledge management behavior by fostering their work engagement, affective commitment, and creative self-efficacy.

Although most studies have verified a significant relationship between KOL and work attitude, this is only sometimes the case. For example, the Shahzad et al. (2020) study collected raw data through a standardized questionnaire that included a sample of 305 pharmaceutical and health sector employees in Pakistan. The study suggests that Kols does not always significantly improve work attitudes. Their study showed that while KOL can facilitate knowledge processes, its direct effects on employee attitudes, such as commitment and satisfaction, are not universally significant.

In addition to the above studies, some scholars have discussed the relationship between KOL and affective commitment, creative self-efficacy, and work engagement (Wang, 2022; Chughtai & Khan, 2024; Asad et al., 2021).

4.1 KOL and affective commitment

When leaders demonstrate attentive behavior to employees' personal and professional challenges, it fosters a sense of loyalty and emotional attachment among employees. Wang (2022) proposed and tested a model linking transformational leadership (a key component of KOL), perceived organizational support, affective commitment, creativity, and performance. The data of 362 employees from 18 international tourism hotels in northern Taiwan China were collected and analyzed using a structural equation model. The results showed that transformational leadership was significantly positively correlated with employee affective commitment, and affective commitment significantly impacted creativity and performance. The study also found a significant positive mediating relationship between affective commitment and the effects of transformational leadership and perceived organizational support on creativity and performance. A model linking knowledge leadership to team performance was developed in the study by Khan et al.

(2024). Data were obtained from Pakistani pharmaceutical company employees (health sector) during the outbreak using quantitative data methods. Hypotheses were tested using partial least squares structural equation models. The findings support the hypothesis that knowledge-oriented leadership significantly affects team outcomes. It is found that affective commitment is closely related to the degree of emotional attachment of employees to the team and organization under the influence of effective leadership. Based on the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, this study explored how knowledge leadership promotes team commitment, especially affective commitment, by enhancing team cohesion, collaboration, and efficiency.

Although most studies have emphasized the relationship between KOLs and affective commitment, this relationship may be indirect in certain situations. Ng's (2023) research highlights that KOLs' role is often focused on branding and marketing influence rather than directly affecting employees' affective commitment. Although KOs can promote brand loyalty through social media, this is mainly reflected in consumers' behavior rather than employees' affective commitment.

4.2 KOL and work engagement

Many scholars have studied the relationship between KOL and work engagement. Sahibzada et al. (2021) surveyed 248 academics and managers of higher education institutions. Smart PLS 3.2.9 software was used for the correlation test, and the fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) method was used to analyze the configuration path. Studies have found that Kols promotes organizational performance by increasing employee work engagement. They found that Kols enhances employee work engagement by aligning employee expectations with organizational goals, enhancing overall performance.

Chughtai and Khan (2024) explored the mediating role of knowledge-sharing behavior and work engagement and the moderating role of innovation self-efficacy in the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and employee innovation performance in China's information technology industry. The data for this study were collected randomly, in three phases, and using a time-lag approach. 452 IT staff (313 subordinates and 139 direct supervisors) volunteered to participate. The results of this study confirm that work engagement mediates the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and employee innovation performance. The results of this study also demonstrate the moderating role of innovation efficacy in the relationship between knowledge leadership, knowledge-sharing behavior, and work engagement. In addition, the moderated mediation results confirmed that higher levels of innovation self-efficacy increased the level of innovation performance of employees through the indirect effects of knowledge leadership through knowledge-sharing behavior and work engagement.

Donate et al. (2022) explored the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership (KOL) and work engagement in their study, especially in the hospitality industry. They used structural equation modeling to test hypotheses in 118 inland Spanish hotels. The findings confirm that KOL plays a key role in fostering an environment conducive to innovation by mitigating knowledge-hiding behaviors among employees. This leadership style emphasizes the importance of knowledge sharing and collaboration, which is essential to improving employee engagement and, thus, innovation.

All the above scholars have proved that there is a relationship between KOL and work engagement, but some scholars have proved that the relationship between them is not significant. Shahzad et al. (2020) found that the expected positive relationship between KOL and various employee outcomes, including job engagement, may only sometimes hold. This finding highlights the complexity and variability of the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement, suggesting that cultural and organizational context can significantly influence these dynamics. In addition, Khatri et al. (2023)

discussed the critical relationship between KOL and knowledge acquisition, but their findings should have explicitly mentioned work engagement. This omission suggests that while KOL may facilitate knowledge processes, its direct effect on work engagement remains to be seen in some cases and may not be significant. In addition, Gameda and Lee Gameda & Lee (2020) showed that although transformational leadership was positively associated with work engagement, the nuances of KOL impact were unclear. They suggest that the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between leadership style and outcomes may vary, implying that Kols may not consistently improve work engagement across Settings. This also indicates that the relationship between KOL and work engagement is not universally meaningful. This highlights the need for further research to explore contextual factors that may influence the effectiveness of Kols in improving employee engagement.

4.3 KOL and creative self-efficacy

Asad et al. (2021) explored the relationship between transformational leadership (a component of KOL) and the creative performance of employees and the mediating mechanism of creative self-efficacy. In addition, this study also aimed to examine the moderating effect of a knowledge-sharing culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and creative self-efficacy. Quantitative survey methods were used to collect data, and 150 questionnaires were distributed to employees in the private banking sector in Twin Cities, Pakistan. This study's results show a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee creative performance, and creative self-efficacy plays a mediating role.

In their study, Ahmed et al. (2024) tested the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and organizational innovation performance through the mediating role of creative self-efficacy. To achieve this, a structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to software /IT companies in Pakistan. Responses were collected from 309 employees of different software /IT companies in Islamabad and Karachi. The results show that creative self-efficacy can significantly affect the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and innovative organizational performance, which is a mediator and a moderating factor. Knowledge-oriented leadership also creates a strong climate to enhance employees' creative skills further.

Chughtai and Khan (2024) emphasized the importance of creative self-efficacy in the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership and employee innovation performance, especially in information technology. The results of their study demonstrate the moderating role of creative self-efficacy in the relationship between knowledge-oriented leadership, knowledge-sharing behavior, and work engagement. In addition, the moderated mediation results confirmed that higher levels of creative self-efficacy increased the level of innovation performance of employees through the indirect effects of knowledge leadership through knowledge-sharing behavior and work engagement.

Although the relationship between KOL and creative self-efficacy is evident in most cases, some studies do not fully support this view. Waheed and Dastgeer(2020) explored the effect of self-efficacy on creativity and emphasized the importance of self-efficacy in facing challenges but did not specifically address the role of KOL. Their study showed a positive correlation between self-efficacy and creative performance, but the influence of KOL was not considered. This suggests that the relationship between KOL and creative self-efficacy may need clarification. Li et al. (2020) explored the relationship between creative self-efficacy and individual creativity, emphasized the importance of participation in the creative process, and did not involve the influence of KOL. This suggests that although KOL may affect an individual's creative performance in some contexts, its direct role in creative self-efficacy needs to be

further explored. Future research could further explore the impact of KOL on creative self-efficacy in different contexts to more fully understand the complexity of this area.

5. Conclusion

The review in this paper aims to explore the impact of knowledge-oriented leadership (KOL) on employees' work attitudes, particularly in the three dimensions of affective commitment, work engagement, and creative self-efficacy. By analyzing the existing literature, this paper found that most studies supported the significant positive effects of KOL on these three aspects. Through knowledge sharing and innovation culture, KOL can enhance employees' affective commitment, stimulate work engagement, and enhance employees' creative self-efficacy. However, some scholars have found that their relationship could be more significant. Although this review confirms the positive effects of KOL, the influence of KOL is not significant in some cultural and organizational contexts, and there is uncertainty, especially regarding the promotion of creative self-efficacy. Future research should consider longitudinal study designs and cross-cultural comparisons to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of KOL in different contexts. Furthermore, exploring the impact of KOL on dynamic changes and individual differences will provide more valuable insights into the field.

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