

# KNOWLEDGE SHARING BEHAVIOUR AND LEADERSHIP STYLE AND ACADEMIC JOB PERFORMANCE THE ROLE OF ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION

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*Abstract* : Challenges are increasing for higher education institutions, especially the public-owned ones. However, very few studies are available on the impact of leadership style (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) and knowledge sharing behaviour as well as the moderating role of entrepreneurial orientation on academic job performance of higher education institutions, especially in Jordan. Based on the Resource-Based View Theory, this study determines the significance of the relationships between knowledge sharing behaviour and leadership style (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) and academic job performance of public universities in Jordan. The study further determines the moderating role of entrepreneurial orientation in the relationship between knowledge sharing behaviour and leadership style (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) and academic job performance of the public universities. Data were collected from academic staff in public universities. The study employed a multistage sampling procedure with the use of a survey questionnaire. Out of the 1000 questionnaires distributed, 418 were returned with only 398 usable questionnaires, giving a 41.8% response rate. The usable responses were analysed through SPSS, Smart PLS version 3.0, to investigate the relationships between knowledge sharing behaviour and leadership styles (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) and academic job performance of the public universities. Results show significantly positive relationships between knowledge sharing behaviour and leadership style (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) and academic job performance. Furthermore, the results show that entrepreneurial orientation moderates the relationship between knowledge sharing behaviour and transactional leadership style, while the relationship between transformational leadership style and knowledge sharing behaviour is not moderated by entrepreneurial orientation.

*IndexTerms* - Leadership Style (transformational leadership style (TL) and Transactional Leadership Style(TLS), Academic Job Performance(AJP), Entrepreneurial Orientation(EO), public universities in Jordan.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The higher education sector provides much of the vision, mission, academic decision-making and crucial support toward enhancing universities' prestige, prominence and success (Watson, Dada, Wright, & Perrigot, 2019). Accordingly, by virtue of their appointments, leaders, administrators, mentors and role-models, significantly influence the achievements of others in their constituency and the university (Masa'deh, Shannak, Maqableh, & Tarhini, 2017). Given that an organisation's performance is the result of overall individual performances (Aqqad, Obeidat, Tarhini, & Masa'deh, 2019) and a university's performance is significantly influenced by its faculty members (Alzyoud, Othman, & Isa, 2015; Lau, 2017), issues regarding the performance of universities boils down to the question of how well academicians perform their own jobs. Their performance is crucial as it reflects their effectiveness and competitive advantage, which in turn, impact the performance of their teams, and ultimately, the performance of their university (Dobrota, Bulajic, Bornmann, & Jeremic, 2016). Academicians, including lecturers, play a vital role in educating people and developing their affective, cognitive and behavioural intelligence. Thus, the top

management at universities must monitor the job performance of lecturers and find ways to improve their performance (Alzyoud, et al., 2015).

A number of factors have been suggested to explain how individual job performance of an organisation can be improved. To date, some factors have been considered, such as person-job-fit, organisational structure, job characteristics, work involvement and others. In the case of higher education institutions, there is a serious need to improve the competencies and abilities of staff to produce knowledge, in an attempt to increase the level of innovation, and enhance the capacity to deal with several problems at different levels in order to achieve excellence (Watson, et al., 2019).

Presently, the Jordanian society, like many other societies, has witnessed accelerated development, fueled by reforms that have seen the country's economy explode with an eightfold increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) between 1990 and 2014 and a growth rate averaging 7% yearly from 2000 to 2008. According to the Central Bank of Jordan, this development has impacted various aspects of life, and the educational sector is one of them. Indeed, in February 2018, Jordan's Ministry of Education announced a new five-year strategic plan for 2018-2022. The plan was developed in cooperation with UNESCO, and the Minister of Education, Omar Razzaz, called for the development of "mechanisms for proper implementation, reviewing, monitoring and accountability, which are crucial in achieving success" (UNESCO, 2018). The education plan has six sections addressing access and equity, early childhood education and development, quality, human resources, system strengthening and vocational education. The cumulative goal of the plan is to help achieve Jordan's 2030 agenda for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2018).

The Jordanian government currently applies national planning to increase the quality of higher learning institutions to help the country become a developed nation in the future. To achieve that goal, the Jordanian government has facilitated the production of more innovative research by universities and institutions. The government has been giving research grants and pushing academic staff to improve their ability and motivation to produce excellent research projects. One main concern with this effort has been on increasing the quality of academicians, research and leadership because the government is keen on using knowledge sharing to enhance the quality of learning and improving the overall rankings of Jordanian universities (Naser, *et al* 2016). As Shaher Momani, Dean of Academic Research of the University of Jordan noted, "The deficient performance of Jordanian universities was a result of failure to address several challenges

faced by Jordanian universities, including human resources and funds” (Al Emam, *Jordan Times*, 2017). The government, specifically, and the public, in general, are insisting that public universities increase their contributions and enhance their performance in order to help spur the country’s transformation initiatives. These are needed to make a return to society and they must be transparent as well as accountable in their internal workings and performance (Cargill, 2006; EPU, 2010). These demands are only fair to state-funded institutions, particularly public universities, because the government is the main source of their funding (Aqqad, et al., 2019; Masa’deh, et al., 2017; Alzyoud, et al., 2015). Thus, the call for greater accountability in the internal workings and performance of higher educational sector employees as providers of a public good, is becoming an increasingly important national issue (Cheng, 2012).

Looking into academicians’ work performance is both important and inevitable because academicians are among the most critical human capital in the education sector. It is crucial to study the education sector, especially universities, because they play a key role in the development and growth of the knowledge-intensive sector (Umer *et al.*, 2014).

### Research Questions

- Is there a significant relationship between leadership style (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) and academic job performance?
- Is there a significant relationship between knowledge sharing behaviour and academic job performance?
- Does entrepreneurial orientation moderate the relationship between knowledge sharing behaviour and academic job performance?
- Does entrepreneurial orientation moderate the relationship between leadership style (transformational leadership style and transactional leadership style) and academic job performance?

### Literature Review

#### The Relationship between Knowledge Sharing Behaviour and Academic Job Performance

Knowledge sharing behaviour is a set of behaviours involving information exchange and assisting others (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003), or the provision of task-related information and know-how to help and collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas or implement policies or procedures

(Cummings, 2004; Pulakos *et al.*, 2003). It happens when individuals mutually exchange their tacit and explicit knowledge, and in the process, jointly create new knowledge (Wiig, 2002; Van & De Ridder, 2004). It is the gaining of newly created knowledge via sharing, which is a critical factor that affects individuals, teams and organisational performance (Davenport & Prusak, 2000; Bartol & Srivastava, 2002; Wiig, 2002; Yang, 2007). Hence, higher levels of knowledge sharing behaviour in itself creates greater and better access to newer knowledge, which then significantly enables job-related problems to be solved and decisions to be made better, faster and in a more cost effective way (Alhammad, *et al.*, 2009; Almahamid *et al.*, 2010).

Literature on the knowledge-based view has often suggested that knowledge sharing behaviour within the organisation leads to application of new competencies and experiences that enhance problem-solving and decision-making skills, opportunity recognition and innovation, which in turn, result in better performance, and ultimately, lead to the gaining of organisational competitive advantage (Grant, 1996; Jackson *et al.*, 2006; Fleming & Soborg, 2010; Yesil *et al.*, 2013). Many studies on knowledge sharing behaviour in academic contexts have also revealed similar results (Yang, 2007; Aulawi *et al.*, 2009; Zwain *et al.*, 2012). This is because by combining the knowledge of individuals into a collective whole via knowledge sharing, leaders can improve their skills, knowledge and abilities needed especially when attempting to solve complicated new problems in different contexts, hence resulting in improvement of their own performance (Augier, *et al.*, 2001; Ipe, 2003; Al-Hawamdeh, 2003; Jensen, 2011). Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

***H1a: Knowledge Sharing Behaviour has a positive effect on academic job performance.***

### **The Relationship between Leadership Style and Academic Job Performance**

According to McCleskey (2014), substantial evidence exists on the correlation between leadership style and workplace values, including satisfaction, motivation, commitment and other performance variables.

Due to extensive acknowledgement that leaders substantially affect the performance of organisations (Birnbaum, 1992; Bass, 1998; Bass *et al.*, 2003), the impact of leadership style has caught the attention of both scholars and practitioners (Bass, 1985; Cannella & Rowe, 1995; Giambatista, 2004; Avery & Jing, 2008). In the extant literature on transactional and transformational leadership style theories, several critical organisational consequences, such as satisfaction, commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour, efficiency, effectiveness, motivation and performance, are ascribed to leadership styles (Avolio, 1990; 1993;

Nguni *et al.*, Lowe *et al.*, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996; & Bass, 2006) and these findings have been validated across several settings and cultures (Al-Dmour & Awamleh, 2002).

Jing and Avery (2008) pointed out several important issues with regards to understanding the effects of leadership style on performance. The first is that by adopting the correct style, leaders can improve their own as well as members' performance, and consequently, organisational performance, which in turn, becomes a potent force towards achieving competitive advantage (Avolio, 1999; Rowe, 2001). Second, in challenging times due to dynamic changes, innovation-based competition, depleting resources and greater expectations to perform, adopting a suitable leadership style is needed to facilitate the transformation process and performance enhancement (Teece *et al.*, 1997; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000).

In consideration of the two widely researched and adopted leadership styles of transformational and transactional leadership (Bass, 1999, Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Avolio, 2003, Bass & Bass, 2008), numerous suggestions have been made on the importance of leaders in augmenting and incorporating their entrepreneurial orientation or mind-sets to affect superior performance, especially while leading the transformation process in a constantly changing, uncertain and competitive environment (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Covin & Slevin, 2002; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003; Janney & Dess, 2006; Covin *et al.*, 2006). The suggestions simply signify that leaders should bundle together entrepreneurial orientation in the form of their innovativeness, reactivity and risk-taking propensities, as vital resources to augment their adopted styles and approaches corresponding to the changes in demands and complexities at their workplace (Janney & Dess, 2006).

Likewise, against the backdrop of the university setting, faculty members assigned with leadership role to oversee faculties, departments or other units, must react accordingly to stay ahead and adopt suitable leadership styles to be effective and capable of meeting the challenges and changes in their midst (Barnett *et al.*, 2001).

Glanz (2002) stressed on the importance of leaders in the educational sector in actualising their leadership potential by finding the correct leadership style to affect better performance. Mirroring the argument that leaders also learn by leading (Kouzes & Posner, 2002), academic leaders must constantly update their knowledge and skills to remain current, search for feedback of their own performance, self-reflect and



regularly assess the appropriateness of the style they assume to stay relevant. This is especially important for leaders operating in public universities that mostly rely on public funds and are subject to the inherent accountability and pressure of expectations by their stakeholders and the general public to produce value for money performance (Bess & Goldman, 2001). Otherwise, as Bess and Goldman (2001) noted, educational institutions may have “no place in this world”. This statement also implies that if they fail to adopt the appropriate styles, practices or approaches while leading, their performances and those of their constituencies and universities will suffer over time.

One way to understand how the performance of academic leaders is evaluated is by identifying their roles and responsibilities because leaders are judged on their effectiveness in accomplishing their roles (Hecht *et al.*, 1999, Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002; Aziz *et al.*, 2005; Wolverton *et al.*, 2005;). Various scholars have categorised these roles. For example, Ostendorf *et al.* (2005) suggested that generally, academic leaders’ job description falls into three major areas, namely, research, educational and administrative duties. Wolverton and Gmelch (2002) categorised academic leaders’ roles into six main areas, namely, academic personnel management, internal productivity, leadership, personal scholarship, resource management and external and political relations. Hecht *et al.*, (1999) categorised academic leaders’ duties into eight principal scopes: curriculum and programme development, communication with external public, data management, department governance and office management, faculty matters, financial and facilities management, institutional support and student matters.

Within the framework of specific job roles and responsibilities, an individual’s skills and competencies are most frequently used to discuss and evaluate an individual’s performance (Strebler, *et al.*, 1997; Rothwell, 2005). Research in leadership effectiveness has moved over time towards understanding and identifying leadership competencies, such as knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviours as subjective measures of their performance (Spendlove, 2007). This development indicates that to be competent, leaders serving in any organisation must possess and apply a set of specific competencies to effectively perform their specific roles. In this sense, the needed competencies not only enable academic leaders to enhance their performance and maximise their effectiveness (Rothwell, 2005), but more importantly, these competencies are needed to survive often challenging university work environments. It is not a coincidence when the literature describes the working environment of universities as “organised anarchies” rather than “rational bureaucracies” (Cohen & March; 1974; Birnbaum, 1992).

Research on academic leadership, management and administration, has listed several most valued competencies in academic leaders, namely, integrity, problem-solving, decision-making, leadership, interpersonal, communication, budgeting and fund raising skills (Creswell, *et al.*, 1990).

Tucker (1984; 1993) devised a scale combining five areas of job-specific competencies, namely, managerial, interpersonal, communication, academic and political skills, to measure academic leaders' performance. Along this line, and modelling Tucker's work, Fox Burns, Adams, (2005) then developed and piloted the Leadership Evaluation Instrument for Academic Chairpersons (LEIFAC) as a tool to measure academic leaders' performance. They recommended LEIFAC as an instrument with sound psychometric properties that is consistent, comprehensive and objective for assessing the performance of academic leaders in higher education sector institutions. Thus, based on the above literature, the following hypotheses are offered:

***H2a: Transactional leadership style has a positive effect on academic job performance.***

***H2b: Transformational leadership style has a positive effect on academic job performance.***

### **The Moderating Effect of Entrepreneurial Orientation**

According to Alhammad *et al.* (2009), several studies have shown that knowledge sharing behaviour is the main factor in creating entrepreneurial organisations. Drejer *et al.* (2004), Stull (2005), Lumpkin (2007) and Rupcic *et al.* (2010), for example, suggested that sharing of knowledge is a very important characteristic because it leads to modification of skills, habits and attitude, which in turn, increases ones' innovativeness and capacities to recognise and select opportunities. Academics, as intrapreneurs is the key workers, operating amongst mostly knowledge workers in knowledge intensive organisations, such as universities, often manipulate knowledge rather than other resources in order to create the necessary innovations to attain competitive advantage (Drucker, 1993; Drejer *et al.*, 2004).

They foster a knowledge sharing culture by instilling cooperation and participation amongst individuals and using their sense-making, knowledge, social and communicating skills, as well as appropriately exhibiting behaviours, in order to generate synergies from existing knowledge assets and the newly created knowledge (Morosini, 2000; Leidner, 2006). They can only do these by pushing themselves to act entrepreneurially within their organisation (Zahra *et al.*, 1999; Hornsby *et al.*, 2002; Kuratko, 2009). Past research and literature have shown that one of the most crucial factors impacting entrepreneurship is management support

(Hornsby *et al.*, 1999; Hornsby *et al.*, 2002; Holt *et al.*, 2007; Kuratko, 2009;). Along this line, management support in the form of approaches or styles that leaders demonstrate in championing innovation, proactive actions, permitting a degree of risk-taking, experimentation and the toleration of mistakes and failures, while providing needed resources and rewards, are considered crucial factors for entrepreneurship to prosper within their organisations (Dess *et al.*, 2003; Kuratko *et al.*, 2005; Holt *et al.*, 2007).

In essence, the style that a leader embraces in the workplace is critical for entrepreneurship behaviours to thrive (Zhao, 2005), especially in the knowledge-based institutions, in which creativity, innovativeness, proactiveness, personal initiative, risk-taking and flexibility are attributes that dictate individuals' success (Drucker, 2002; Foba & De Villiers, 2007; Lynch & Smith, 2011).

A large body of literature has suggested that in a time of transformation, the driving force needed for change to take place successfully is leaders with an entrepreneurial orientation (Bass, 1994; Reardon *et al.*, 1998; Lucas, 2000; Kuratko *et al.*, 2005). Leaders with higher entrepreneurial orientation are needed when organisations are coping with the challenges brought about by the dynamic, complex and uncertain competitive environment (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000; Cohen, 2004; Tarabishy *et al.*, 2005; De Jong & Wennekers, 2008; Kearney *et al.*, 2009). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

*H3a: Entrepreneurial orientation significantly moderates the relationship between transactional leadership style and academic job performance.*

*H3b: Entrepreneurial orientation significantly moderates the relationship between transformational leadership style and academic job performance.*

*H3c: Entrepreneurial orientation significantly moderates the relationship between knowledge sharing behavior and academic job performance*

## Research Methodology

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| Research design              | Cross-sectional quantitative design                                      |
| Population of interest       | Academic staff of the public universities in Jordan                      |
| Sampling list                | Population of 15,000-20,000  |
| Determination of sample size | ▪ According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970):<br>▪ Minimum sample needed:395 |
| Sampling technique           | Simple random sampling   |
| Data collection tool         | Researcher-administered questionnaire                                    |



|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Data analysis tool     | SPSS, Smart PLS version 3.0                 |
| Reliability & validity | Tested in pilot study and measurement model |
| Hypotheses testing     | Assessment of structural model              |

### Hypotheses Testing Results

|                 | Hypothesis                            | Path coefficient | p value | Standard Error | Effect size | Decision      |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|---------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| H <sub>1a</sub> | KSB -> AJP                            | 0.38             | p <0.01 | 0.048          | 0.145       | Supported     |
| H <sub>2a</sub> | TS -> AJP                             | 0.19             | p <0.01 | 0.049          | 0.037       | Supported     |
| H <sub>2b</sub> | TSL-> AJP                             | 0.23             | p <0.01 | 0.049          | 0.051       | Supported     |
| H <sub>3a</sub> | Moderating effect of EO on KSB -> AJP | 0.08             | p =0.05 | 0.050          | 0.014       | Supported     |
| H <sub>3b</sub> | Moderating effect of EO on TS -> AJP  | 0.08             | p =0.05 | 0.050          | 0.011       | Supported     |
| H <sub>3c</sub> | Moderating effect of EO on TSL -> AJP | 0.07             | p=0.09  | 0.050          | 0.012       | Not Supported |

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study shows that if higher education institutions are entrepreneurially-oriented with transformational leaders and human capital, this would enable these institutions to satisfy their customers who are primarily students. Students would get excellent and world-class training when due and probably at a reduced cost.

Apart from that, it shows that public higher education institutions could better utilise the funds available for running their institutions without heavily depending on government subventions. This can be possible through collaboration in conducting ground-breaking research that usually can attract funding from the private sector, funding agencies and non-governmental organisations.

Higher education institutions could achieve effective results and outcomes by motivating their staff to show a high level of initiative, identifying work problems and providing solutions to them. Staff opinion could be sought in decision-making, while staff training and development could be used to achieve excellent performance in higher education institutions.

Furthermore, this study shows that higher education institutions could positively contribute to society by providing opportunities for members of the institutions' immediate environment and improving the quality

of life of people in the locality. These institutions could contribute to economic development and serve as a source of foreign exchange earnings for Jordan. Instead of the capital flight being experienced now due to increase in Jordanians seeking further education abroad, the trend could be reversed. This would also result in a reduction in the drain of foreign exchange direly needed by a developing country, like Jordan.

Other implications of this study is with regards to the image of public higher education institutions, as entities, and Jordan as a country. Excellent performance can play a significant role in boosting the image of institutions. This can subsequently improve the image of the country in which they are located. In fact, like tourism, education could be said to contribute, to making Jordan a preferred destination for foreigners

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