

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP: WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT ROLES DURING COVID-19 CRISIS?

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Abstract

Leadership holds important roles in organization during extreme external pressure or crisis such as covid-19 happened at this time. During such a crisis, a leader is expected to be not only a safeguard in terms of physical and psychological health to preserve all the organization members but also as a guide for organization during uncertainty and stressful situations. While in a high uncertainty of external environment, organization's vision possibly be changed. Spiritual leadership which is derived from transformation and learning organization is appropriate to investigate during covid-19 crisis. This article aims to fill up the gap by offering a discussion spiritual leadership's role in crisis time enhancing intention employee's knowledge sharing and innovation behavior.

Keywords: spiritual leadership, knowledge sharing behavior, innovation behavior, covid-19.

I. INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus-19 was first reported on December 31, 2019 in Wuhan, China which then spread extensively and became a global pandemic. Until recently, the pandemic has devastating impacts on communities and organizations across the world. The number of cases continues to rise through more various transmission modes, such droplets and air transmission. Medical treatments such as vaccines, mandatory health and hygiene protocols such as social distancing policies and proper use of mask have been enforced and implemented. However, there is still not guarantee that the pandemic will disappear in the near future. The covid-19 pandemic undoubtedly has been changing the community and organization life for many years to come. In such crisis time, resilience and sustainability of many organization is being tested. One of organization's elements which potentially makes significant contributions during the time of crisis such as in current covid-19 pandemic is leadership.

Leadership plays crucial roles in determining the direction of an organization during current Covid-19 pandemic. In such uncertainty, the organization members need a good leader who is able to maintain strong emotional bonding among members and boost their spirit to sustain and achieve organization's targets. The leaders are expected to provide motivation and direction and foster positive attitudes and behaviors among all organization members. According to Fry (2003) spiritual leadership is needed to facilitate transformation process of learning organization in obtaining continuing success. Spiritual leadership encourages leaders and followers to be more committed and productive in carrying out organizational activities. Spiritual leadership is needed in current situation, as previous leadership theories only focused on certain physical, mental, and emotional aspects of human interaction in

organizations while negating the spiritual element. The spiritual concept in this case, is intended as an interpretive understanding of values, attitudes and behavior. Different from other leadership theories, spiritual leadership theory obviously combines three concepts of leadership that are: the passion of its followers, effectiveness, and organizational culture into a single frame of mind. Spiritual leadership also has values related to religiosity and ethics at its core. Spiritual leadership theory combines both the understanding of life as well as participation and appreciation in organizational membership as two dimensions of spiritual resilience.

The discussions on spiritual leadership cannot be separated from the world of work which undoubtedly carries the nuances of spirituality (Jabbar & Kusumastuti, 2017). In addition, the organization's resilience during COVID-19 crisis demanding spiritual leaders to allocate work beyond traditional work and to think out of the box. In such crisis situation, innovation becomes a key solution. With most organizations are currently struggling, the presence of spiritual leaders is expected to inspire innovative behavior of their members. Several innovative behaviors are enforced by companies during this pandemic. For example, in promoting new products some companies in China are using social media platforms, such as WeChat, to coordinate employees and partners virtually. This situation deals with the challenges of remote work and a new complex set of coordination such in COVID-19 pandemic. Another example, innovative breakthroughs are being promoted by creating free life insurance products to provide short-term protection to customers from the corona virus for a certain period of time as a way to engage their customers (Abeysekera, 2020).

This article aims to describe the role of spiritual leadership to enhance knowledge sharing and innovative behaviour among the organizational member during crisis pandemic in order to survive and enhance organization's sustainability. Previous research has provided various insights about the effectiveness of spiritual leadership in employee outcomes, however there is still research gap need to discuss. *First*, researchers consider spiritual leadership to be important in the innovative process but so far, there is still a dearth of research showing a clear relationship between spiritual leadership and innovative behavior (Donate and Pablo, 2015). *Second*, lack of research discussing about how employees holding different cultural values react to spiritual leadership. Therefore, it is important to study whether employees with different cultural values react differently to spiritual leadership, especially in the dissemination of knowledge and innovative behaviour in organizations (Zhang & Yang, 2020). *Third*, Fry (2003) states that spiritual leadership is a determining factor in promoting innovative employee behavior. However, the relationship between spiritual leadership and employee innovative behavior has been largely ignored in current literatures. Several studies have not successfully explained the role of spiritual leadership in increasing the innovation behavior of employees (Tu & Lu, 2013). *Forth*, in line with self-determination theory, research results show that when employees are spiritually motivated by their spiritual leaders, employees will engage in more complex jobs and exhibit more initiate new ideas (Zhang & Yang, 2020), such intense involved in a community for sharing knowledge. In addition, self-determination theory implies that employees can be more innovative when they are ready to be intrinsically motivated. Moreover, spiritual leadership plays a significant role in motivating employees to fulfil their spiritual needs based on their vocation and membership (Fry, 2003). It is also expected that employees are intrinsically motivated by their spiritual leaders and are encouraged to explore relevant knowledge independently. Based on research gap above, this is possible by uncovering the motivational mediation mechanism and further verifying the indispensable role of employee motivation in fostering employee innovative behaviour such as knowledge sharing.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership is the values, attitudes and behaviors needed to motivate oneself and others intrinsically so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through a motivation call to work and become members of a group (Fry, 2003). Meanwhile, according to Reave (2005), spiritual leadership is the ability to bring the search for meaning and self-awareness based on one's own spirituality into its role as a leader. Spiritual leadership is the ability to tap into the fundamental needs of leaders and followers, to achieve alignment of vision and values among individuals, as well as among teams, which in turn increases the well-being and commitment of the organization. employees and improve organizational performance (Fry & Cohen, 2009). Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that spiritual leadership is leadership that is able to create motivational calls for employees to work, as well as build an organizational culture based on spiritual values in order to have a sense of membership. The spirituality of the workplace provides an appropriate context for employees in which they can feel meaning and connection with others.

During the Covid 19 pandemic crisis, leaders must encourage collaboration and transparency throughout the team network. One way to do this is by distributing authority and sharing information, or showing how the team should perform. In addition, another important role of a leader, especially in an emotional and stressful environment as a sign of a crisis, is to provide psychological security so that workers can openly discuss their ideas, questions, and concerns without being afraid of the negative consequences. Leaders also need to build effective and transparent communication to all members of the organization to convince stakeholders that they are making efforts to deal with a crisis. This is in accordance with the goals of spiritual leadership where a leader makes employees feel the meaning and relationship with others (D'auria & Smet, 2020).

In order to maintain the survival in such crisis COVID-19 pandemic, organization needs leader as innovators not only to conduct research, but also to allocate their efforts efficiently across projects. As mentioned before, with most businesses are currently struggling due to the crisis, spiritual leaderships are demanded to be more creative and innovative. Leaders can learn best practices in creativity and innovation from other competitors. According to Landry & Bianchini (1995) in the 21st century industry will increasingly depend on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation. Prior research with new ideas to integrate both spiritual and innovation elements of leadership has been proposed to capture new expression creative ideas as well as maintain spirituality norms (Nurhidayati, 2019) in digital era (Nurhidayati and Ratnawati, 2020).

Prior research measured spiritual leadership using, (1) vision : about where an organization wants to be in the future (2) altruistic affection : having values that contain feelings related to unselfishness, loyalty, wisdom, concern, and respect for oneself and others (3) hope : based on values, attitudes and behaviors that show a strong belief in what is wanted and hope to get it, (4) meaning / calling : every member of the organization believes and believes that the work they do is important and has important meaning for them, and (5) membership : understanding and appreciating every action and achievement achieved by employees (Fry, 2003).

Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Knowledge is an important organizational resource that provides a sustainable competitive advantage in a dynamic uncertainty situation such as COVID-19 pandemic. To sustain in such crisis, organizations need to search and collect relevant and credible knowledge quality. Particular in digital information era where information and knowledge provide easy accessibility to free and real-time. Thus, finding knowledge with high quality is important considered in decision making. Furthermore, organizations are required to know how to transfer knowledge to members who need the knowledge (Hinds et al, 2001). According to Pulakos et al (2003) knowledge sharing refers to the preparation of task, information and knowledge to collaborate with others in solving their problems, implementing policies, or developing new ideas. Meanwhile, Ryu et al (2003) suggest that knowledge sharing is a type of behavior when a member spreads the knowledge, he / she gets to other members in the organization.

Knowledge sharing behavior can be defined as the degree to which a person actually spreads knowledge (Brock and Kim, 2002a; Brock and Kim, 2002b). Knowledge sharing behavior can also be understood as behavior where someone voluntarily provides access to others about their knowledge and experience (Hansen and Avital, 2005). It is also known as a series of actions in which individuals disseminate and share valuable information with other people in the organization. This behavior represents the process of transferring and exchanging relevant information, and it implies synergistic collaboration among individuals working towards common goals (Wang, et al., 2019). Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that knowledge sharing behavior is an activity of transferring and exchanging ideas, experiences and expertise that is carried out by a person with his colleagues in an organization for a common goal.

Types of knowledge sharing behavior can vary according to the typical of knowledge itself. Knowledge can be understood as an individual or organizational asset that is tacit or explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is typical knowledge that has been codified and documented, that is easily modified and articulated and is objective. On the other hand, tacit knowledge is typical knowledge that has not been documented and it inherent in a person, is not easy to express and is subjective (Hansen and Avital, 2005), and obtained from learning by doing.

Empirical studies have identified that leadership is a pivotal actor in influencing knowledge-sharing attitudes and behavior (Gagné, 2009). The goal of spiritual leadership is to realize the desired vision and value congruence across strategic plans, and this shared vision clearly illustrates that entire members of organization must solve problems and share valuable knowledge to meet common goals, when they faced with complex challenges. Sharing professional knowledge is seen as a valuable personal realization for employees who have internalized the organization's vision into their value system (de Vries et al., 2006). The theory of spiritual leadership which is fundamentally rooted in the intrinsic motivation model, consistent with intrinsic motivation enjoy helping others, which builds an organizational culture that includes the value of altruistic love. Thus, spiritual leadership will most likely encourage followers to demonstrate knowledge-sharing behavior (Wang et al., 2019).

Knowledge sharing behavior is measured by (1) embodied knowledge : individuals can carry out activities without a verbal presentation of a thought, which will make knowledge grow, (2) embrained knowledge : individual cognitive abilities through formal study (learning by studying), (3) encultured knowledge : the behavior of organizational members in preparing,

explaining, and evaluating knowledge, (4) embedded knowledge : instilling organizational routines, practices, values, norms and shared beliefs, and (5) encoded knowledge : codifying explicit knowledge (Matzler et al, 2008).

Innovation Behavior

To develop innovative products and services requires all members of the organization to be involved in team activities to share and disseminate knowledge. In this case, organizations have emphasized the importance of flexible relationships linked through ICT systems. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, organizational teams often hold online meetings, where they can provide reports, check the status of the goals set, intervene and adapt them, and set future goals. Furthermore, having an IT infrastructure allows more than just the continuity of business operations, it enables organizations to redirect to online sales when physical branches are temporarily closed during a pandemic (Obrenovic et al., 2020).

According to Crossan and Apaydin (2010) innovation behavior is the behavior of producing assimilation and exploitation that adds value, renewal and expansion of products, services, and the formation of new systems. Other scholar defines innovation behavior as behavior of creating new concepts or new thoughts and ideas as a result of individual creativity (Serrat, 2009). It is also understood as the development of an idea with new services that results in the development and improvement of innovative jobs (Ghazinoori et al, 2011). Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that innovation behavior is individual behavior in creating new ideas and concepts as a result of creativity to achieve goals.

Innovation is the heart of many companies that produce excellent products and services. In fact, every company has implemented a certain degree of innovations so they can survive and succeed today and the future (Koc & Ceylan, 2007). The term innovation is often used interchangeably with the term creativity, even though they are two different things. In this case, creativity is limited only to the emergence of ideas, while innovation must reach the realization stage. It can be said that every innovation requires creativity, but not all creativity leads to innovation (Parzefall, Seeck, & Leppanen, 2008). Relevant to this, innovative behaviour, defined as deliberate discovery, promotion, and realization of new ideas in work, group, or organizational roles that serve to benefit work, group, or organizational performance needs to be promoted (Janssen, 2004). This is obvious in an organization with a high spiritual leadership and climate. The members of the organization are characterized by self-transcendence and a high level of motivation and work engagement that help them identify with the larger social and natural environment. Employees working in such organizations find greater meaning in their work and tend to be more creative and innovative (Gupta & Singh, 2013).

Organizations which is rich in spirituality is believed to be able to generate creativity among team members. Spirituality is considered as a key element of the creativity and innovation process. Spiritual leadership is an effective approach to maintain spirituality in the workplace (Fry, 2008), which in turn facilitate the innovative behavior of individuals in the organization. In particular, spiritual leaders' value individual meaning in the workplace and motivate them to go beyond the call of duty, so that followers will have a sense of self-transcendence. This experience is an important antecedent of innovation behavior (Jung et al., 2003). In addition, spiritual leaders are characterized as having integrity, honesty, altruism and genuine concern for others (Reave, 2005). These traits are usually attached to spiritual leaders who are

concerned with individual development. The focus on individual development is the result of meeting their basic psychological need for safety. Individuals who consider themselves important at work and have a strong psychological sense of security will tend to generate new ideas and experiment with these ideas (Hogan and Coote, 2014).

Innovation behavior is measured by (1) the ability to create new ideas and concepts, (2) the ability to implement new ideas and concepts, and (3) commitment to innovative activities (Grewal et al (2000) & Humphreys et al. (2005).

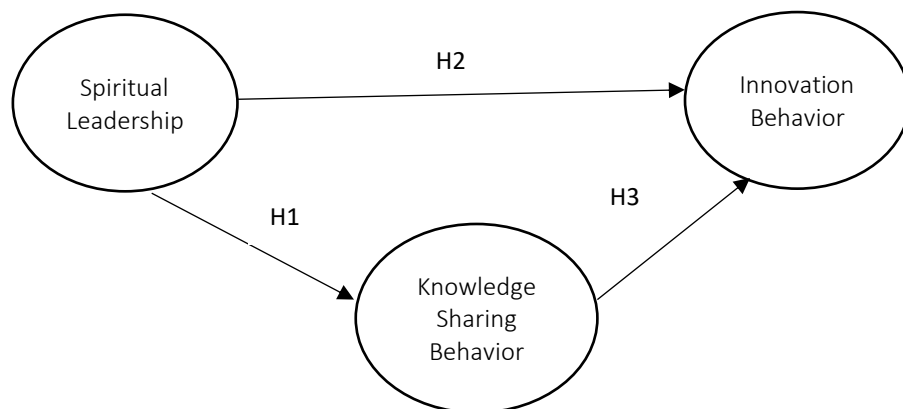
III. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Based on literature review in the previous section, the conceptual models can be described in Figure 1 and hypothesis proposed as follows:

H1: Spiritual leadership will lead to increase knowledge sharing behaviour of organizational member.

H2: Spiritual leadership will lead to increase innovation behaviour of organizational member.

H3: Knowledge sharing behaviour will play mediation variable toward relationship of spiritual leadership and innovation behaviour.



IV. CONCLUSION

Discussion of spiritual leadership, knowledge sharing behaviour and innovation behaviour have not been widely discussed in the current literature, especially in COVID-19 pandemic crisis. This article aims to fill the research gap relation between spiritual leadership and innovation behaviour using knowledge sharing mechanism as mediating variable. Spiritual leadership offers promise for fostering organizational transformation in such uncertainty and crisis environment such COVID-19 pandemic through knowledge sharing and innovation behaviour. Spiritual leadership it seems to be required for achieving successful in today's chaotic COVID-19 pandemic.

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