

The Effect of Paternalistic Leadership Perception on Knowledge-Sharing Behavior in the Context of Social Exchange Theory

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ABSTRACT

Building upon social exchange theory, this study addresses the following questions: “Is leadership one of the premises of knowledge-sharing behavior?” and “Do paternalistic leaders influence employees’ knowledge-sharing behaviors within the organization?” The study aimed to determine the effect of employee perceptions of paternalistic leadership on knowledge-sharing behaviors. For this purpose, data were collected from 376 private sector employees using the survey method. The data were analyzed using SPSS 29 and AMOS 24. According to the findings, the perception of moral leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on knowledge-donating and knowledge-collecting behavior. Furthermore, while the perception of authoritarian leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on knowledge-donating behavior, it was determined that the perception of benevolent leadership does not have a statistically significant effect on knowledge-collecting behavior and knowledge-donating, and the perception of authoritarian leadership does not have a statistically significant effect on knowledge-collecting behavior. These results contribute to the literature and present a ground for discussion among researchers in subsequent studies.

Keywords: Paternalistic Leadership, Paternalistic Leadership Perception, Knowledge-Sharing, Knowledge-Sharing Behavior, Social Exchange Theory

JEL Codes: M10, D83

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership style is an important external environmental variable influencing individual behavior (Yanhui et al., 2021, p. 102). Leaders are organic characters who affect individuals and communities, touch their lifeline at some point, and have often constructive but sometimes destructive effects. Individuals who manage and are managed can be found in any environment with more than one person. This situation puts leadership at the center of work and social life. From past to present, leaders have defined and adopted many leadership styles. One of the accepted leadership styles of recent times is paternalistic leadership.

Knowledge is an effective tool for assisting individuals and organizations in achieving their goals. At this point, obtaining knowledge in any way possible is important. Although knowledge can be obtained in various ways, the easiest way for individuals and organizations to share knowledge is through knowledge-sharing. According to Ipe (2003, p. 341), knowledge-sharing is the individual’s act of providing knowledge to other individuals within an organization. An organization’s ability to use knowledge effectively depends largely on its employees who create, share, and use knowledge. Meanwhile, encouraging knowledge-sharing behavior is seen as important for today’s organizations to continue their existence and achieve success. The researchers emphasize that leadership supports this process. This study’s first question is, “Is leadership one of the premises of knowledge-sharing behavior?”

According to the literature, different leadership styles promote knowledge-sharing. For example, Yang (2007) found that leaders’ mentoring and innovative roles positively correlate with knowledge-sharing activity, but the monitoring role has a negative relationship with knowledge-sharing. According to Xue et al. (2011), empowering leadership significantly impacts employees’ attitudes toward knowledge-sharing. Meanwhile, the results of Lee et al. (2014) revealed that empowering the team leader increased the level of knowledge-sharing among team members. Bradshaw et al. (2015) observed the effects of transformational and transactional leadership behaviors on the knowledge-management process, particularly knowledge-sharing. Moreover, Song et al. (2015) found that servant leaders positively impact the team’s knowledge-sharing climate. Edú-Valsania et al. (2016) stated

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that authentic leadership positively affects employees' knowledge-sharing behaviors with their results. Similarly, Zeb et al. (2020) determined the positive relationship between authentic leadership and knowledge-sharing. By contrast, Bavik et al. (2018) pointed out that ethical leadership is vital for employees' knowledge-sharing behavior. Furthermore, Srivastava and Joshi (2018) discovered a positive relationship between technology leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior. Lastly, Shariq et al. (2019) supported the direct positive impact of knowledge-oriented leadership on knowledge-sharing, whereas Novitasari et al. (2021) demonstrated the indirect effect of charismatic leadership on implicit knowledge-sharing through intrinsic motivation.

All of these studies showed that leadership occurs in organizational life as an important precursor to individuals' knowledge-sharing behaviors. In this context, researchers have been motivated in recent years to uncover the relationships between leadership styles and knowledge-sharing behavior. However, according to Bavik et al. (2018), the mechanisms by which leaders influence knowledge-sharing remain unclear. However, the theoretical basis between leadership style and knowledge-sharing behavior is not included, particularly in national studies, and the connection between these two concepts must be established based on theory.

Knowledge-sharing behavior, which is considered together with many leadership styles, has not been examined together with paternalist leadership in the national literature. As a result of this gap, this study aims to determine the effect of employees' paternalistic leadership perceptions on their knowledge-sharing behaviors. In particular, this study is based on the following question: "Do paternalistic leaders influence employee knowledge-sharing behavior within the organization?" This study also aims to examine knowledge-sharing behavior, which is viewed as an important factor in private sector organizations to achieve their goals and thus sustain their existence, on private sector employees. The scope of the research included managers and employees from all departments of private sector organizations involved in production. Within the scope of the study, the framework for the concepts was first established, then the theoretical basis between the concepts was examined, and the research methodology and findings were presented. The result created a discussion to contribute to the literature. In addition to filling the gap in the literature, this study will provide insight into whether leaders who guide their followers in today's organizations can direct individuals' information-sharing behaviors by highlighting their paternalistic aspects.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Paternalistic Leadership

Paternalistic leadership, a common and deeply ingrained leadership style in oriental organizations, is one of the most frequently cited factors influencing employee behavior (Lu et al., 2022). Farh and Cheng (2000, p. 91), who dominated most of the literature on paternalistic leadership, defined the concept as a "type of leadership that combines strong discipline and authority with paternal benevolence." Researchers have introduced the three-dimensional structure of paternalistic leadership into the literature: authoritarian, benevolent, and moral leadership. Paternalistic leadership is distinguished from other types of leadership by combining strong and clear authority with elements of benevolent and moral leadership (Farh et al., 2008, p. 172). In other words, a typical paternalistic leader should be authoritative, benevolent and moral (Wong et al., 2022, p. 910). Authoritarian leadership refers to leader behaviors that give the leader complete control over his or her subordinates and demand unquestioning obedience from them (Farh & Cheng, 2000, p. 94). Under such control, subordinates have no choice but to obey the leaders' decisions and orders (Zhang et al., 2015, p. 27). This may cause subordinates to feel negative emotions toward the leader, such as fear or anger (Farh et al., 2006, p. 232). According to the literature, authoritarian leadership produces more negative results with organizational outputs (Niu et al., 2009, p. 33). The second dimension, benevolent leadership, refers to leader behaviors demonstrating individual concerns for personal or family well-being (Farh & Cheng, 2000, p. 94). Leaders who exhibit compassionate behaviors, such as a parent, show interest in their subordinates in their work and nonwork lives (Zhang et al., 2015, p. 27). Paternalistic leaders with their beneficent aspects allow employees to correct their mistakes in their business lives, relieve shame in society, mentor them, and support their career development. In their nonwork lives, they leave aside hierarchical relationships, regard them as family members, help them in their troubles and exhibit parental benevolence (Farh et al., 2008, p. 174). This level of interest in their employees' work and personal lives shows that the paternalistic leader values long-term social exchanges over short-term and economic relationships (Zhang et al., 2015, p. 27). The benevolent aspect of paternalism demonstrates that leaders are also interested in their subordinates' lives outside of work and strive to increase their well-being (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008, p. 568). Even in paternalistic cultures, leaders see it as an obligation to protect those in their care by adopting the role of parents (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006, p. 267). Meanwhile, the moral leadership dimension is seen as leader behaviors that demonstrate superior personal virtues providing legitimacy and arousing an identity and respect in subordinates (Farh & Cheng, 2000, p. 94). Moral leadership includes honesty, nonselfish behavior, and a desire to fulfill obligations (Zhang et al., 2015, p. 26). Additionally, the moral dimension of paternalistic leadership includes refraining from abusing authority, refusing to take advantage of subordinates, and exhibiting exemplary leadership behaviors (Farh et al., 2008, p. 173; Niu et al., 2009, p. 33). Furthermore, the moral characteristics of paternalistic leaders make them leaders who keep their promises and are fair to all of their subordinates (Niu et al., 2009, p. 33).

Researchers accept both the paternalistic leadership model proposed by Farh and Cheng (2000) and the paternalistic leadership

model introduced by Aycan (2006). Aycan (2006) conceptualized paternalistic leadership by focusing on role expectations in the relationship between superior and subordinate and built his model on this structure. Accordingly, Aycan (2006) emphasized the inherent duality of control and interest in paternalism and proposed two dimensions of paternalistic leadership: benevolent and exploitative paternalism. Karakas and Sarigollu (2012) have another model in the literature on paternalistic leadership. They defined paternalistic leadership as the process of creating a virtuous cycle that encourages positive change in organizations. The researchers also identified four dimensions of paternalistic leadership: ethical sensitivity, spiritual depth, positive engagement and community sensitivity.

Paternalism encompasses social and cultural aspects and leadership approaches (Saygili et al., 2020). At the end of a literature review, it is easy to say paternalistic leadership is quite popular in Far Eastern culture. Most of the researchers in the international literature are Chinese. Farh and Cheng (2000, p. 91) argue that paternalistic leadership is common in Chinese family businesses. The reason for this is shown by the social structure of Chinese society that centers on the family. For nearly 3,000 years, the family has been recognized as the fundamental pillar of Chinese society. This entire structure is linked to the Confucian ideal that society has adopted. Today, the effects of this structure can be seen in the west (Farh & Cheng, 2000, p. 99, 118–119). Paternalistic leadership is seen in traditional, hierarchical, and collectivist cultures such as Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East (Mansur et al., 2017, p. 702). Aycan et al. (2000) state paternalistic leadership practices are more prevalent in China, India, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United States than in Canada and Germany.

Meanwhile, Mediterranean countries are shown to be the best examples of the reflections of paternalistic leadership in the west (Farh et al., 2006, p. 231). It is possible to trace the traces of this structure in Turkey, which is considered as the bridge between east and west this importance, the Turkish cultural structure, which places a premium on the concept of family, appears to be conducive to paternalistic leadership. Numerous studies on paternalistic leadership in the national literature confirm the Turkish social structure's suitability for this type of leadership. Researchers of one of the previous empirical studies, Pellegrini and Scandura (2006, p. 266) also argue that the traces of paternalist leadership can be followed in Turkey, which has a high-power distance and collectivist culture. The paternalistic leader is concerned with his subordinate's family problems, processes, and various aspects of his life. A paternalistic leader is not afraid to make positive contributions where they are needed by mastering the details. Wherever possible, a paternalistic leader attempts to assist his or her subordinates with solutions and suggestions to problems arising from daily life practices, as well as to share their sorrows and joys. It establishes the employee's commitment to the organization, the goals, and herself/himself by creating a climate of trust and support (Yıkılmaz ve Sağbaş, 2022, p. 991). In this sense, such leadership styles is viewed as suitable for Turkish culture.

2.2. Knowledge-Sharing Behavior

Knowledge is “the truth or state of knowing something through familiarity acquired through experience or association,” “the grasping of truth through reasoning,” and “the sum of what is known, the totality of truths and principles acquired by human beings” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023). With the acceptance of knowledge as one of the most prominent sources of organizations, the literature is interested in managing knowledge in organizations. The fact that knowledge is regarded as one of the fundamental sources of life in today's organizations necessitates research into the creation, sharing, and application of individual and collective knowledge (Ipe, 2003, p. 337).

Knowledge is a product of human thought and experience, a resource embedded in a routine or process found in the individual. The knowledge that becomes concrete in language, concepts, rules, and tools creates the capacity to make decisions and achieve certain goals (De Long & Fahey, 2000, p. 114). Today's employees and managers need more knowledge than ever to adapt to the rapidly changing environment and maintain their existence in business. However, at this point, not the multiplicity of data, its size, or the ease of accessing it, but the ability to analyze it and translate it into insights gain importance (Ulukapı Yılmaz, 2022, p. 41).

De Long and Fahey (2000) stated that knowledge exists at multiple levels. These are the level of individuals, groups and organizations. First, human knowledge is about individuals knowing what they know or how to do it. Combining explicit and tacit knowledge enables combining an individual's skills and expertise. Human knowledge can be acquired through cognitive processes or established in the body. Group-level knowledge is handled within the scope of social knowledge. This knowledge can be found in interpersonal relationships or within groups. The majority of social knowledge is open knowledge. This is because group members share it, and such knowledge develops as a result of working together. This knowledge is possible only with the ability to cooperate effectively. Meanwhile, organization-level knowledge is called structured knowledge. It is the knowledge embedded in an organization's systems, processes, tools, and routines. Structured knowledge is distinct from human and social knowledge in that it is a resource available to organizations and can exist independently of individuals (De Long & Fahey, 2000, p. 114). Although human knowledge is only one type of knowledge available in the organization, sharing human knowledge is indispensable for creating, disseminating, disseminating and managing knowledge at all other levels within the organization (Ipe, 2003, p. 340).

Knowledge-sharing is the act of providing knowledge to others within an organization by an individual (Ipe, 2003, p. 341). Knowledge-sharing, defined as the process of mutual exchange of knowledge and joint creation of new knowledge (van den Hoof & de Ridder, 2004, p. 118), provides individuals with a basic set of skills and complete knowledge to help them achieve their work goals more efficiently (Le et al., 2018, p. 706). Furthermore, with this sharing, human knowledge can attain organizational form (van den Hoof & de Ridder, 2004, p. 118). An organization's ability to use knowledge effectively depends largely on its employees who create, share, and use knowledge (Ipe, 2003, p. 341). At this point, knowledge-sharing behavior is vital for individuals and organizations.

Knowledge-sharing between employees can be thought of as the process by which employees transform their knowledge into a form that can be understood, assimilated, and used by other employees. The concept of sharing shows that donating human knowledge in a way that others can use involves the conscious actions of the employee who knows (Ipe, 2003, p. 341). However, it is worth noting that this share is bidirectional. At this point, knowledge-sharing behavior is divided into two dimensions: knowledge-donating and knowledge-collecting. Knowledge-donating is defined as communicating the employee's knowledge capital to others, whereas knowledge-collecting is defined as brainstorming ideas with colleagues in order for the employee to share their knowledge capital. As can be seen, both dimensions involve the active processes through which employees communicate. Some employees take action to communicate what they know to others, and some employees take action to learn what others know (van den Hoof & de Ridder, 2004, p. 118).

De Long and Fahey (2000) distinguished between explicit and tacit knowledge. Some human knowledge is open; that is, the knowledge resides in the organizational environment that can be used by everyone. However, some employees' knowledge is implicit and hidden in their minds. The important thing is to instill knowledge in the employees' minds. Thus, this knowledge can be documented, shared and used by other employees (Esen, 2016, p. 159). Employees who see the benefits of keeping their knowledge to themselves view knowledge-sharing as optional (Gerpott et al., 2020, p. 789). Knowledge-sharing behavior is important for every organization. However, converting human knowledge into organizational knowledge is not as simple as one might think (Rhee & Choi, 2017, p. 827). Knowledge-sharing enables others to access and use previously personalized knowledge, creating space for claiming related benefits such as status and reputation. Employees are hesitant to share their valuable knowledge and expertise because they are afraid of losing their knowledge and advantages over others (Son, 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, several researchers in the literature regard knowledge-sharing as a natural function of organizations, an activity that occurs automatically. However, even under the best of circumstances, knowledge-sharing within an organization is now widely accepted as a multifaceted and complex process (Ipe, 2003, s. 338). Individuals put in extra time and effort to share their knowledge, which incurs costs for both the individual and the organization (Rhee & Choi, 2017, p. 816).

2.3. Paternalistic Leadership, Knowledge-Sharing Behavior and Social Exchange Theory

Knowledge is believed to be free. Although this appears to be the case, knowledge and skills in organizations are unevenly distributed among employees. In addition, knowledge has a structure that can be acquired through sharing. However, an employee's knowledge cannot be instantly and easily transformed into organizational information (Chaudhary et al., 2023, p. 99). To do this, knowledge must be shared within the organization. At this point, knowledge acquisition, transfer and reproduction is possible with certain premises. Demonstrating this, Srivastaba et al. (2006) argued that the leadership style prevailing in the organization determines success or failure in transferring knowledge.

Globalization and the hypercompetitive environment necessitate a long-term relationship and a social exchange that includes loyalty and commitment between leaders and employees. By providing care, support, protection, communication with their employees, and developing close individual relationships, paternalistic leaders demonstrate behaviors oriented to their needs (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008, p. 584, 570). Pellegrini and Scandura (2008) examined the organizational outcomes of paternalistic leadership by reviewing the literature. Accordingly, they identified job performance, identification, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, career development, leader-member interaction, empowerment and proactivity as the outcomes of paternalistic leadership. This study examines the relationship of paternalistic leadership with knowledge-sharing behavior, which is one of the important organizational concepts.

In an organizational setting, paternalistic leadership promotes mutual relationships (Lee et al., 2018, p. 1096). The social exchange theory can be used to explain the relationship between paternalistic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior. The theory of social exchange views social life as a continuous series of exchanges between two or more parties, which may be individuals or institutions that interact and cooperate with each other. The theory underpins the study, assuming that when people receive a reward from others, they feel obligated to reciprocate. Although an employee is usually one of the parties involved in management organization work, the actors on the other side of the exchange are the organization, other employees, or supervisors (Walker, 2019, p. 246–247; Curun, 2021, p. 75–76). Social exchange theory describes how employees perceive the treatment they receive from their organization or supervisors and how this influences their attitudes and behaviors (Walker, 2019, p. 247). The

rational selection process is described by the decision that individuals will make as a result of benefit–cost or reward–price analysis (Ateş, 2017, p. 151).

However, social exchange theory also argues that individuals establish relationships due to emotions; they can feel many positive or negative emotions at the end of the process (Curun, 2021, p. 79). In this context, individuals decide whether to maintain the mutual relationship according to the reward or price they receive from the social relationships they experience (Ateş, 2017, p. 151). As evidence, in paternalistic cultures, people in authority are obligated to protect those under their care and expect loyalty and reverence in return (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008, p. 568). Especially in collectivist cultures, paternalistic leadership is found in the literature to positively affect employees' organizational attitudes (Gelfand et al., 2007). In collectivism, leaders place a premium on the maintenance of relationships and give importance to their employees who are aware of their obligations and their loyalty (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008, p. 571). Due to perceived reciprocity, individuals who work with paternalistic leaders are more likely to perform voluntary and mandatory duties (Lee et al., 2018, p. 1094). In this study, the knowledge-sharing behavior of the employee, the other party, is contrasted with the paternalistic behavior of the leader, who is one of the parties. Evaluation of knowledge sharing as a voluntary act (Ipe, 2003; van den Hoof & de Ridder, 2004; Gerpott et al., 2020; Son, 2020). Accordingly, this study proposed the main hypothesis in line with the relationship between the paternalistic leader and the employee to social exchange:

H₁: Employees' paternalistic perceptions of leadership have a statistically significant and positive effect on knowledge-sharing behavior.

Lee et al. (2018, p. 1096) stated that organizations could expect paternalistic leaders to share the knowledge they possessed by employees who upheld benevolent, moral, and authoritarian leadership and personal expectations. Hence, it would be appropriate to test the effects of paternalistic leadership dimensions on knowledge-sharing behavior separately. The benevolent leadership aspect of paternalistic leadership can be addressed first. Social exchange begins when one party takes the initiative to show kindness or provide benefits, and the other party acts in return (Tan et al., 2016, p. 348). With their benevolent qualities, paternalistic leaders direct their subordinates' work and private lives as a parent (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2008, p. 568). The caring and thoughtfulness of paternalistic leaders in business and nonwork times suggests they value long-term social exchanges. Within the social exchange framework, leaders' reliable, generous, supportive and self-sacrificing behavior toward their employees (Zhang et al., 2015, p. 27) seems to support employees' knowledge-sharing behaviors within the organization. In light of this information, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1a}: Employees' perceptions of benevolent leadership have a statistically significant and positive effect on knowledge-sharing behavior.

Employees are expected to respond to benevolent leaders in this manner. They are also more likely to follow moral leaders who implement business processes ethically. Individuals can select leaders who treat them well and generously, allowing them to make fair evaluations. In contrast, authority is one of the most powerful characteristics that can force employees to accept their policies. According to Niu et al. (2009, p. 33), authoritarian leadership encourages subordinates' obedience, benevolence encourages subordinates' gratitude, and morality promotes subordinates' respect from the dimensions of paternalistic leadership. Authoritarian leaders who focus employee discipline enforce rules by directly commanding them to achieve managerial goals (Lee, 2018, p. 1096). In this case, employees respond to the paternalistic leader's authority by displaying obligatory obedience (Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006, p. 267). In light of these traces followed in the literature, considering that knowledge-sharing is an optional process, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_{1b}: Employee perceptions of authoritarian leadership have a statistically significant and negative effect on knowledge-sharing behavior.

Another distinguishing characteristic of paternalistic leaders is their moral structure. Paternalistic leaders can influence their employees with their moral aspects because they are honest and exemplary individuals. Furthermore, moral leaders are perceived to encourage their subordinates to share their ideas (Chan, 2014, p. 687). Employees are motivated to share knowledge with others by providing an appropriate organizational environment and encouraging them to do so (Lee et al., 2018, p. 1095). This favorable environment can be easily provided in organizations by the moral character of the paternalistic leader. From this idea, the next hypothesis can be formed as follows:

H_{1c}: Employee perceptions of moral leadership have a statistically significant and positive effect on knowledge-sharing behavior.

van den Hoof and de Ridder, who considered knowledge-sharing behavior in two dimensions (2004, p. 120), specified that various sources of motivation and outcomes can be associated with both the dimensions of knowledge donation and knowledge collection. Based on this information, the effect of paternalistic leadership on the subdimensions of knowledge-sharing behavior, knowledge-donating, and knowledge-collecting should be tested separately. To test these effects, the following hypotheses have been established:

H_2 : Employees’ paternalistic perceptions of leadership have a statistically significant and positive effect on knowledge-donating behavior.

H_3 : Employees’ paternalistic perceptions of leadership have a statistically significant and positive effect on knowledge-collecting behavior.

In light of the aforementioned theoretical relationships and established hypotheses, Figure 1 presents the model of the study.

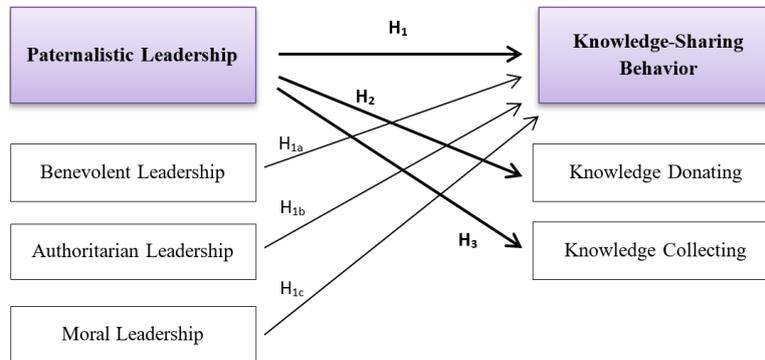


Figure 1. Research Model

The research methodology and findings designed within the model’s scope in Figure 1 are presented in the following sections.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Problem, Questions, Purpose and Importance of Research

Aside from the importance of employee knowledge for their business lives, it is also undeniable for organizations to achieve their goals, make a profit and survive. Spreading knowledge in the organizational environment is necessary to ensure organizational continuity. Knowledge-sharing should be prioritized in this importance. It has been proposed that leaders performing numerous critical organizational tasks can impact knowledge-sharing behavior. At this point, the questions “Is leadership one of the premises of knowledge-sharing behavior?” and “Do paternalistic leaders influence employees’ knowledge-sharing behaviors within the organization?” arose. This study, which was shaped in line with these research questions, aimed to determine the effect of employees’ perceptions of paternalistic leadership on their knowledge-sharing behaviors.

Employees must share their knowledge and experience that they have gained within the organization with other organization employees for both individual and organizational positive outcomes. Saving time in getting things done, eliminating mistakes, creating a positive organizational environment and establishing a benevolent climate will bring about individual and organizational success. Therefore, examining the situations, events and people that will catalyze employees to demonstrate knowledge-sharing behaviors is necessary. In this study, paternalistic leadership and knowledge sharing behavior were discussed.

3.2. Research Method and Data Collection Tool

The research was designed empirically and the screening model from quantitative research designs was preferred. Data were collected using the survey method. The questionnaire was designed in three parts. The first part deals with the demographic information of the participants. The second part presents a “Paternalistic Leadership Scale” developed by Cheng et al. (2004). The scale, which consists of 26 expressions and 3 dimensions, was adapted by Karabulut (2019) in the Turkish context. The third part is the “Knowledge-Donating and Knowledge-Collecting Scale,” developed by van den Hoff and de Ridder (2004) and used by Ayazlar (2012). The scale consists of 10 expressions and 2 dimensions. Although demographic questions consist of multiple-choice statements, the second and third parts of the questionnaire are rated on a 5-point Likert type: 1 = I strongly disagree, 2 = I disagree, 3 = Neither I agree and nor disagree, 4 = I agree, and 5 = I strongly agree.

3.3. Research Scope and Ethics Committee Permission

Knowledge is an important tool for all types and levels of organizational employees. Employees can achieve their individual and organizational goals through human, team, and organizational knowledge. At this point, it is deemed important for individuals within the organization to share knowledge. Industrial organizations are one type of organization where knowledge-sharing should

be considered. These organizations, also known as private sector organizations, operate in markets with difficult competitive conditions to make a profit and stay in business. One of the ways to survive in these difficult conditions is through knowledge-collecting and knowledge-sharing. Accordingly, under the purpose of the study, the employees of Konya Organized Industrial Zones were accepted as the subject of the research. According to data from the Konya Chamber of Industry, there are approximately 52,000 employees in the Konya Industrial Zones (www.kos.org.tr, 2022). With “95% reliability and 5% margin of error,” the sample was determined to be 382 people (Sekaran, 2003).

With the decision of the KTO Karatay University Human Research Ethics Committee dated 6.3.2023 and numbered 55433, the data collection tool was proven to be suitable for scientific research and publication ethics. Moreover, the questionnaire form was applied face-to-face to 389 participants between 10.3.2023 and 17.3.2023. A total of 376 forms were found to be suitable for analysis. The data were analyzed by making the necessary coding of SPSS 29 and AMOS 24 programs. Within the scope of the study, scientific research and ethical rules were followed and verbal consents was received.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Frequency Analysis

According to the frequency analysis of demographic variables, 31.1% of the participants were female and 66% were male; 12.6% had 0–1 year of experience, 21.3% had 2–5 years, 18.1% had 6–10 years, 16% had 11–15 years and 29.3% had 16 years or more of experience; 21.8% were managers and 75% were employees.

4.2. Validity and Reliability Analyses

Here, validity and reliability analyses of paternalistic leadership and knowledge-sharing scales were performed. First, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to determine the structural validity of the paternalistic leadership scale. As a result of the analysis, the expressions with factor loading below 0.45, which were found to reduce reliability (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2018), were removed from the scale. Accordingly, factor loadings below the statistical limit were removed sequentially from the model, and the analyses were repeated. The following are some examples: statements under the authoritarian leadership dimension; the 20th expression of the scale (“My supervisor emphasizes that our team should have the highest performance of all teams in the enterprise”; factor loading = 0.223); the third expression (“My supervisor asks me to follow his instructions completely”; factor loading = 0.321); and statements belonging to moral leadership and the 15th item of the scale (“My supervisor uses his powers to give himself privileges.”; factor loading = 0.370). Then, to obtain an ideal model fit, modification adjust paths were established by considering the theoretical connections between some expressions following the modification indices and the covariances drawn. Figure 2 presents the factor structure model.

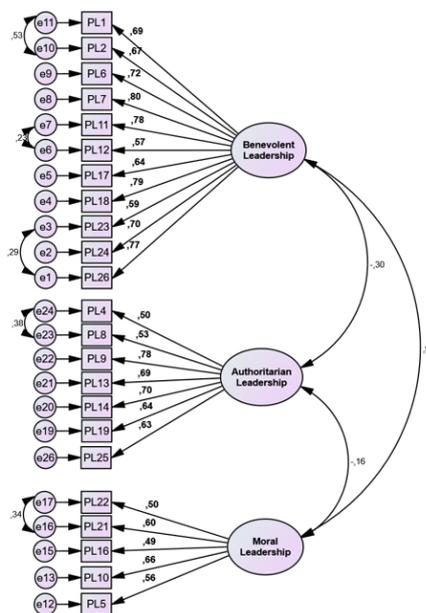


Figure 2. First level factor structure model measured on paternalistic leadership scale

From the dimensions of paternalistic leadership, statements about benevolent leadership have a factor loading of 0.57 to 0.80. Meanwhile, the factor loading of the expressions related to authoritarian leadership was between 0.48 and 0.76 and that about moral leadership was between 0.49 and 0.65. Values with factor loading greater than 0.71 are considered “excellent,” 0.63 and 0.71 are considered “very good,” 0.55 and 0.62 are considered “good,” and 0.45 and 0.54 are considered “reasonable/acceptable” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2018). In this context, the factor loadings in the model are statistically sufficient. The conformity values of the model are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Adjustment Values of the Model Regarding the Paternalistic Leadership Perception Scale

Fit Indices	Value Achieved	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	Result
χ^2 Fit Test	0,000	$p < 0,05$	$p < 0,01$	Good Fit
CMIN/df (χ^2 /sd)	2,434	≤ 3	≤ 5	Good Fit
RMSEA	0,062	$\leq 0,05$	$\leq 0,08$	Acceptable Fit
RMR	0,088	$\leq 0,05$	$\leq 0,08$	Acceptable Fit
GFI	0,892	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,80$	Acceptable Fit
CFI	0,920	$\geq 0,95$	$\geq 0,85$	Acceptable Fit
NFI	0,872	$\geq 0,95$	$\geq 0,80$	Acceptable Fit
TLI	0,908	$\geq 0,95$	$\geq 0,80$	Acceptable Fit

Source: Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Simon et al., 2010.

When considering the compliance values in Table 1, all values are acceptable or at a good adjustment level. According to the relevant data, it is understood that the original three-factor structure of the paternalistic leadership scale has been confirmed.

Second, a confirmatory factor analysis was performed to determine the knowledge-sharing behavior scale’s structural validity. After determining that all factor loadings were statistically acceptable, modification adjust paths were established by considering the theoretical connections between some expressions under the modification indices. The factor structure model in Figure 3 was obtained as a result of the drawn covariances.

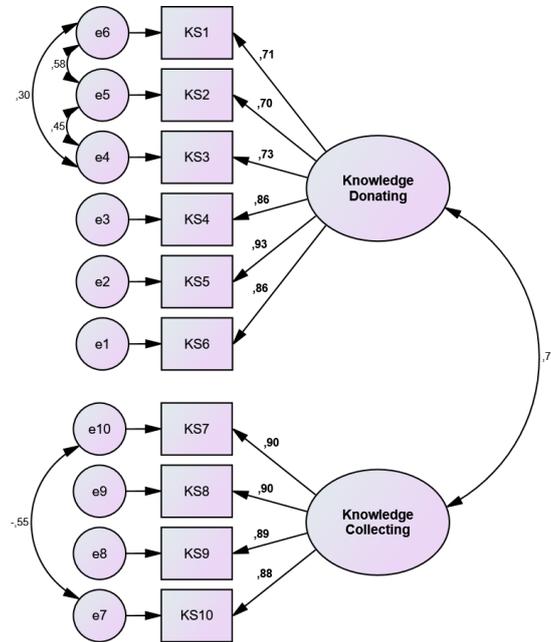


Figure 3. First-level factor structure model measured regarding knowledge-sharing behavior scale

As shown in Figure 3, the factor loadings of the expressions regarding the knowledge-donating dimension of the knowledge-sharing behavior scale are between 0.70 and 0.93, and the factor loadings of the expressions about the knowledge-collection dimension are between 0.88 and 0.90. Therefore, the factor loadings in the model are statistically sufficient. The conformity values of the model are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Adjustment Values of the Model Regarding Knowledge-Sharing Behavior Scale

Fit Indices	Value Achieved	Good Fit	Acceptable Fit	Result
χ^2 Fit Test	0,000	$p < 0,05$	$p < 0,01$	Good Fit
CMIN/df (χ^2 /sd)	3,556	≤ 3	≤ 5	Acceptable Fit
RMSEA	0,083	$\leq 0,05$	$\leq 0,08$	Acceptable Fit
RMR	0,033	$\leq 0,05$	$\leq 0,08$	Good Fit
GFI	0,948	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,80$	Good Fit
CFI	0,978	$\geq 0,95$	$\geq 0,85$	Good Fit
NFI	0,969	$\geq 0,95$	$\geq 0,80$	Good Fit
TLI	0,966	$\geq 0,95$	$\geq 0,80$	Good Fit

Source: Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Simon et al., 2010.

When considering the compliance values in Table 2, we determine that all the values are acceptable or at a good adjustment level. According to the relevant data, the original three-factor structure of the knowledge-sharing behavior scale has been confirmed.

Meanwhile, it is useful to evaluate the combination's validity in addition to the structural validity. In this regard, the composite/structure reliability (CR) and average explained variance (AVE) coefficients and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated. Table 3 presents the relevant values.

Table 3. CR and AVE Values with Reliability of Scales and Subdimensions

Scales and Subdimensions	Number of Expressions	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Paternalistic Leadership	23	0,846	0,945	0,432
- Benevolent Leadership	11	0,917	0,915	0,498
- Authoritarian Leadership	7	0,834	0,825	0,409
- Moral Leadership	5	0,726	0,697	0,318
Knowledge Sharing Behavior	10	0,944	0,960	0,706
- Knowledge Donating	6	0,926	0,914	0,643
- Knowledge Collecting	4	0,934	0,941	0,800

Cronbach's alpha values for the scales and dimensions were all greater than 0.70, indicating reliability of the relevant measuring instrument (Durmuş et al., 2022). However, Fornell and Larcker (1981) stated that for convergent validity, the CR value should be greater than 0.70 and the AVE value should be greater than 0.50. The CR value, however, must be greater than the AVE value (Hair et al., 2019). When these values are analyzed, it is clear that all variables' CR and AVE values are statistically acceptable in general, with the CR values being greater than the AVE values. The AVE values of paternalistic leadership and its subdimensions were found to be lower than 0.50. However, since the CR values were greater than 0.70 and the AVE values, and the reliability coefficients and factor loadings of the relevant variables were statistically sufficient, excluding the relevant variables from the analysis was unnecessary. As a result, it was decided that the research variables had a reliable level, construct validity and convergent validity.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics

Within the scope of this study, descriptive statistics of research variables and skewness and kurtosis values were analyzed. Relevant findings are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Variables and Skewness Kurtosis Values

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max	Skewness	Kurtosis
Paternalistic Leadership	3,21	,545	1,00	4,65	-,603	2,030
- Benevolent Leadership	3,30	,825	1,00	5,00	-,366	,175
- Authoritarian Leadership	2,92	,823	1,00	5,00	,265	-,188
- Moral Leadership	3,44	,812	1,00	5,00	-,266	-,095
Knowledge Sharing Behavior	3,88	,769	1,00	5,00	-1,041	1,989
- Knowledge Donating	3,95	,810	1,00	5,00	-1,138	1,984
- Knowledge Collecting	3,78	,853	1,00	5,00	-,825	1,205

Note: n=376; 1= I Strongly Disagree, 5= I Strongly Agree

When the descriptive statistics of the variables were examined, it was discovered that the variable with the highest arithmetic mean was the highest "knowledge-donating" ($X = 3.95 \pm 0.81$), while the variable with the lowest arithmetic mean was the

“authoritarian leadership” ($X = 2.92 \pm 0.82$) dimension. In addition, when the average values of the variables are evaluated as “1.00–2.33” low level, “2.34–3.66” intermediate level and “3.67–5.00” high-level taking into account the 5-point Likert scale; it is understood that employees’ knowledge-sharing behavior is at a “high” level; and their perception of paternalistic leadership is at a “medium” level.

When the skewness and kurtosis values of the variables are examined, it was determined that they all have a distribution between -3 and +3; additionally, the arithmetic mean, mode and median values are close to each other; the histograms and graphics of the variables are close to the normal distribution; therefore, the variables have a univariate normal distribution (Huck, 2012; Moors, 1986; Seçer, 2017). The Mardia coefficient was calculated the AMOS program (Mardia = 425.28) and the relevant coefficient was compared with the value obtained from the formula $p^*(p + 2)$ ($p =$ number of observed variables) ($33*35 = 1155$) and it was assumed that the data had a multivariate normal distribution because the Mardia coefficient was less than the value determined by the formula (Teo et al., 2023).

4.4. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between paternalistic leadership perceptions and knowledge-sharing behaviors of the employees participating in the study. Pearson’s correlation analysis with the normal distribution of the data was preferred.

Table 5. Correlation Coefficients for Variables

Variables		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Paternalistic Leadership (1)	r	1					
- Benevolent Leadership (2)	r	,851**	1				
- Authoritarian Leadership (3)	r	,284**	-,207**	1			
- Moral Leadership (4)	r	,784**	,688**	-,081	1		
Knowledge Sharing Behavior (5)	r	,464**	,439**	,037	,399**	1	
- Knowledge Donating (6)	r	,442**	,397**	,095	,342**	,951**	1
- Knowledge Collecting (7)	r	,416**	,424**	-,053	,412**	,898**	,719**
* Correlation is significant at the 0,05 level (one-tailed). $p < 0,05$							
** Correlation is significant at the 0,01 level (2-tailed). $p < 0,01$							
*** $n=376$; $r=$ correlation coefficient ; $p=$ significance							

The correlation coefficient (r) ranges from -1 to +1. When this value is between 0.10 and 0.29, a low correlation was determined. When it is between 0.30 and 0.70, a moderate correlation, and when it is between 0.71 and 1.00, a high level of correlation was determined (Büyüköztürk, 2023). Consequently, concerning the results of the Pearson correlation analysis given in Table 5; there is a moderate, positive and statistically significant relationship between paternalistic leadership perceptions and the knowledge-sharing behaviors of the participants ($r = 0.464$; $p < 0.01$). Similarly, medium, positive and statistically significant relationships were found between the perceptions of perceptions of paternalistic leadership of employees and their knowledge-donating behaviors ($r = 0.442$; $p < 0.01$) and knowledge-collecting behaviors ($r = 0.416$; $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, while there was a medium, positive and statistically significant relationship between employees’ benevolent leadership perceptions and knowledge-sharing behaviors ($r = 0.439$; $p < 0.01$) and moral leadership perceptions and knowledge-sharing behaviors ($r = 0.399$; $p < 0.01$), no statistically significant relationship was found between their authoritarian leadership perceptions and knowledge-sharing behaviors and its subdimensions ($p > 0,05$).

4.5. Structural Equation Model

The effect of the independent variable paternalistic leadership perception on the dependent variable knowledge-sharing behavior and its subdimensions was tested using a structural equation model. The measurement model was tested in the first stage, and the model’s factor loadings and fit indices were examined. The factor loadings in the model were found to be significantly distributed between 0.48 and 0.92 and the relevant values were statistically sufficient. When the model’s fit indices were examined, it was discovered that the values (X^2 Fit Test = 0.00; $X^2/sd = 2.162$; RMSEA = 0.056; RMR = 0.074; GFI = 0.859; CFI = 0.927; NFI = 0.873; TLI = 0.919) were within acceptable limits (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Simon et al., 2010).

In the second stage, the structural equation model was tested. To obtain results that demonstrate the best fit for the model, a modification was established between the error terms within the framework of theoretical connections, and the model was

revisiting. While modifying the error terms, it was decided that the expressions observed to be related to the error terms could measure the same dimension, could be used interchangeably, and could be attributed to the similar or the same meaning by the participants (Meydan & Şeşen, 2015), as well as their theoretical foundations. Following these procedures, meaningless paths were removed from the model and a revised model is shown in Figure 4.

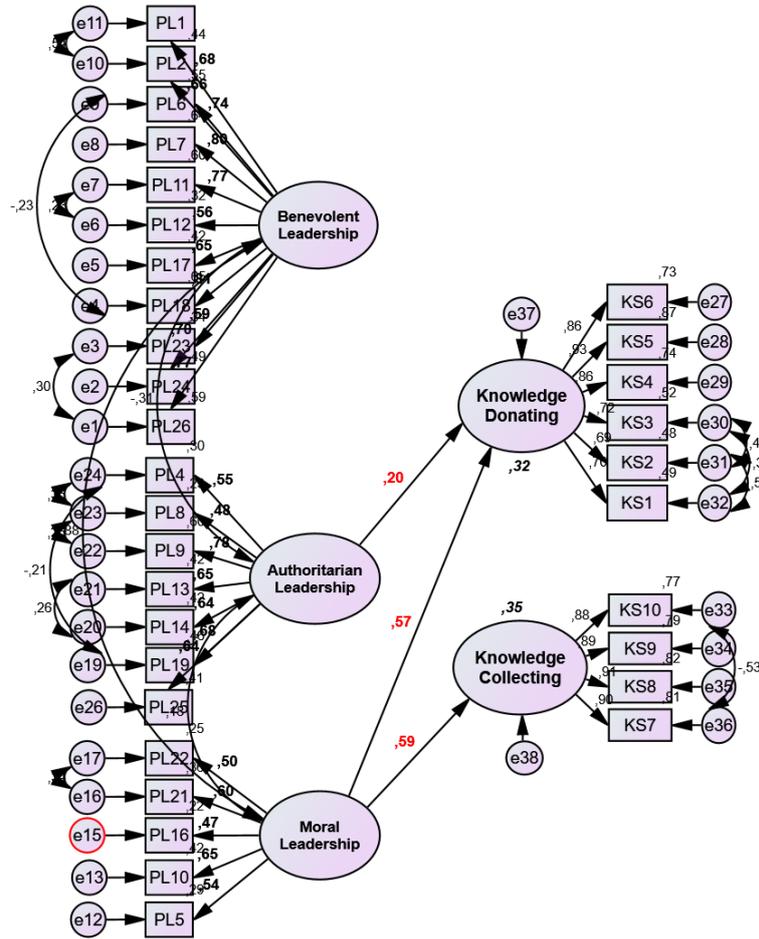


Figure 4. Structural equation model on the effect of paternalistic leadership perception on knowledge-sharing behavior

Direct impact paths of the model, coefficients, significance values and concordance indices are displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Parameter Estimation Values for Structural Equation Model Analysis

Parameter Estimates						
Dependent Variable	β	Independent Variable	β	S.E.	C.R.	p
Knowledge Donating	β	Benevolent Leadership	-,780	,345	-2,132	0,053
Knowledge Collecting	β		-24,30	43,66	-,552	0,581
Knowledge Donating	β	Authoritarian Leadership	,196	,064	3,479	0,001
Knowledge Collecting	β		-3,57	8,49	-,506	0,613
Knowledge Donating	β	Moral Leadership	,570	,094	7,741	***
Knowledge Collecting	β		,595	,097	8,203	***

Not: R^2 (Knowledge Donating = ,324; Knowledge Collecting = ,354);
 X^2 Fit Test=0,00; $X^2/sd=2,377$; RMSEA=0,06; RMR=0,09; GFI=0,854; CFI=0,914; NFI=0,861; TLI=0,905
 * β = Standardized beta coefficient, direct effect ; S.E.= Standard error ; C.R.= Critical rate ; p= Significance ; n=376
 ** Significant effect at the level 0,05 ($p<0,05$); *** Significant effect at the level 0,001 ($p<0,001$).

When the findings in Table 6 are evaluated; it is understood that the authoritarian and moral leadership variable can explain 32.4% ($R^2 = 0.324$) of the change in knowledge-sharing behavior; the moral leadership variable can explain 35.4% ($R^2 = 0.354$) of the change in knowledge-collecting behavior. Meanwhile, moral leadership perception was found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on knowledge-donating behavior ($\beta = 0.570$; $p < 0.05$) and knowledge-collecting behavior ($\beta = 0.595$; $p < 0.001$); additionally, authoritarian leadership perception was found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on knowledge-donating behavior ($\beta = 0.196$; $p < 0.001$). Based on these findings, the H_{1c} hypothesis was supported, the H_{1a} hypothesis was rejected, the H_{1b} hypothesis was partially supported and thus the H_1 , H_2 and H_3 hypotheses were partially supported.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Leadership is important in an organization's success or failure (Le et al., 2018, p. 706). Individuals who take on various roles as leaders shape the organization's future. The most difficult task for leaders has been identified as creating a supportive work environment that encourages people to share knowledge (Son et al., 2020). Meanwhile, managers have significant responsibilities in creating this environment. One of them is the leadership styles that leaders take on in the organizational environment and in the face of subordinates. The leadership literature from the past to the present includes many leadership styles. One of these styles is paternalistic leadership.

Some studies and researchers consider paternalistic leadership as leaders who approach their employees with parental interest, take care of both their work and private lives, are controlling and interested simultaneously, encourage positive change, and initiate a virtuous circle. The three-dimensional structure of paternalistic leadership, consisting of "authority, benevolence and morality" was used as the basis for this study, following Farh and Cheng's (2000) definition of "the type of leadership that combines a strong discipline and authority with paternal benevolence" Consequent paternalistic leaders are authoritarian on one side and benevolent and moral on the other, leaving an impression on their subordinates.

This study used the social exchange theory to examine the relationship between paternalistic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior. The relationships in the workplace are mutual, according to the social exchange theory. As a result of their social relationships with their employees, leaders will have various expectations from themselves. At this point, the leader who engages in social exchange with their employees will have certain expectations from them for the benefit of themselves and the organization. Employees who are satisfied with their social interactions with their leaders will be motivated to act to meet this expectation. One of these behaviors may be the knowledge-sharing behavior. Knowledge-sharing behavior is defined as the emergence and documentation, sharing and use of the knowledge implicit by other employees, in other words, in the individual's mind (Esen, 2016, p. 159). Although this is not an easy process, the factors that motivate the employee to move in this direction must be included in the organizational environment.

This study aimed to determine the effect of employees' paternalistic leadership perceptions on their knowledge-sharing behaviors. Data was collected from 376 private sector employees using the survey method. Employees must share their knowledge and experience that they have gained within the organization with other employees of the organization for both individual and organizational positive outcomes. Saving time in getting things done, eliminating mistakes, creating a positive organizational environment and establishing a benevolent climate will bring about individual and organizational success. At this point, examining the situations, events, and people that will catalyze employees to display their knowledge-sharing behaviors is necessary. This study discussed paternalistic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior in private sector organizations where achieving goals and sustaining their existence is important.

According to the analysis results, it was determined that the perception of moral leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on knowledge-donating behavior and knowledge-collecting behavior. This discovery is an expected result. Because the structure of Turkish society, which values honesty, appears to allow paternalistic leaders to elicit more positive responses from their employees. Furthermore, the perception of authoritarian leadership was found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on knowledge-donating behavior. It is thought that due to this unexpected result, employees feel obligated to share their knowledge with other employees under the authority of the paternalistic leader and share their knowledge with other employees as a result of this obligation. It was determined, however, that the perception of authoritarian leadership had no statistically significant effects on knowledge-collecting behavior. Finally, it was found that the perception of benevolent leadership did not significantly affect knowledge-collecting behavior and knowledge-donating. Although it is thought that where the giver does the receiver a favor, the receiver will also pay the giver's kindness at an appropriate time (Yanhui et al., 2021, p. 106), it will be possible to say that this result is an unexpected result. Private sector organizations are organizations where knowledge-sharing is considered important to achieve goals. Research results support this statement. Consequent it seems that the importance of sharing knowledge among individuals within the organization is understood. In addition, it is thought that more than half of the sample (51.1%) have more than 11 years of working experience, making it easier for them to engage in knowledge-sharing behavior.

There are studies in the international literature that deal with knowledge-sharing behavior and paternalistic leadership and

have some similarities and differences with this study. For example, Zhang et al. investigated the effect of knowledge-sharing behavior on paternalistic leadership, believing that it would significantly impact organizational effectiveness. They discovered that benevolent and moral leadership increased employees' knowledge-sharing behavior, whereas authoritarian leadership did not affect knowledge-sharing behavior (Quoted by: Jia & Pan 2020, p. 25). Through empirical research in large Chinese firms, Lee et al. (2018) demonstrated that paternalistic leadership fosters perceived mutual support among employees, allowing them to share knowledge with other employees through voluntary charity behaviors. Yanhui et al. (2021) obtained the result of a positive correlation of paternalistic leadership with knowledge-sharing behavior as a result of their research with high school teachers and argued that paternalistic leadership is an effective type of leadership that plays a role in improving teachers' knowledge-sharing behavior. Furthermore, the study revealed significant positive effects of paternalistic leadership's benevolent and moral dimensions on knowledge-sharing behavior (Yanhui et al., 2021, p. 106). Through organizational commitment, Chaudhary et al. (2023) sought to determine the relationship between paternalistic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior. They found that emotional and normative commitment mediates the relationships between the benevolence, moral, and authoritarian leadership dimensions of paternalistic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior in their study of 312 nurses. In contrast, sustained commitment only mediates the relationship between authoritarian leadership and knowledge-sharing.

Considering the findings obtained as a result of the research and the results of previous research, the effects of leaders on people are known to encourage their employees to produce, acquire and use knowledge in today's knowledge-based societies. Furthermore, it is a fact that paternalistic leadership is accepted in our country in terms of its characteristics and will continue to be so. At this point, managers should incorporate paternalistic leadership qualities into their leadership according to the dynamics of the country. Managers who exercise paternalistic leadership should be able to develop social exchange relationships with their subordinates through benevolent, moral and authoritarian behaviors, allowing employees to behave in ways that benefit their leaders and organizations. According to the study's findings, moral leaders, in particular, support employees' knowledge-sharing behavior and leaders should be ethical in business.

There are limited studies that address knowledge-sharing behavior and paternalistic leadership. No studies have been found in the national literature. For this the study is believed to contribute to the literature and create a discussion environment for future studies. In particular, the theoretical basis between paternalistic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior reveals the strength of this study. Of course, it is possible to discuss various study limitations. First, the study's biggest limitation is that the research universe is limited to the employees of Konya Organized Industrial Zones. With the data obtained from the sample, the study may be insufficient to dedicate the results to the general. More research is needed to understand the relationship between the concepts more clearly. Empirical studies in different sectors will illuminate the dark spots in the relationship. It will also be helpful to measure the effects of mediator or moderator in the relationship between concepts. Furthermore, it is thought that international comparative empirical studies will enrich the literature. Another study limitation is that the data was only collected via survey and subjected to quantitative analyses. Face-to-face in-depth interviews and qualitative data analysis are thought to be drilled down into details at points where quantitative data results are insufficient, and different perspectives on the relationship between paternalistic leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior will be captured for future studies between the lines.

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