Identification of the Components of the Friendship-Oriented Leadership Model

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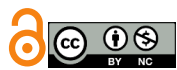* Corresponding author email address: etebarian@khuisf.ac.ir

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: This research focuses on identifying the components of a friendship-oriented leadership model, addressing a gap in theoretical and empirical differentiation in leadership studies. Emphasizing the evolving nature of leadership, especially in the business world, this study explores the elements contributing to effective leadership in organizational settings.
Method: A qualitative research approach using Grounded Theory was employed. The population included experts in organizational behavior and university professors. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 20 participants, reaching theoretical saturation.
Results: The study identified 72 initial codes, categorized into 8 main and 5 subcategories. These include leader strategies, positive and negative outcomes, individual abilities, follower conditions, external organizational factors, and components of friendship-oriented leadership. Positive outcomes emerged as a significant category, highlighting the importance of these leadership components.
Conclusion: The research concludes that understanding and implementing a friendship-oriented leadership style is crucial for organizational success. This style is characterized by mutual and open relationships, balancing power dynamics, often overlooked in traditional leadership theories.
Keywords: Leadership, Friendship-Oriented, Organizational Behavior, Grounded Theory, Qualitative Research.

1 Introduction

Leadership style is a combination of characteristics, skills, and behaviors of managers to interact with their employees. The leadership style in Hersey-Blanchard's theory (1969) refers to a combination of behaviors based on work relationships and task behaviors (Golmoradi & Ardabili, 2016). Nordhaus (2007) stated that leadership is the process of influencing an individual and a group of people to achieve common goals. Current leaders rely on their legitimate power to persuade people to perform assigned tasks and have a keen interest in interacting with subordinates and expanding their benefits. Despite researchers believing that "the nature of leadership study is inherently multi-level," research in the leadership field lacks conscious theoretical and empirical distinction between different analytical levels (Braun & Nieberle, 2017). Current leaders are expected to have a better understanding of the

methods and behaviors that can lead to greater efficiency in their operating environment. Providing support for employees in organizations requires the identification and implementation of a leadership style that includes leadership characteristics and behaviors appropriate for the relevant environments (Derler & Grant, 2019). Leadership design teams often spend a lot of time and energy creating new leadership models, and at the same time, many business leaders struggle to remember these models. As a result, many organizations end up with relatively complex models that do not clearly connect to business goals and existing talent systems and rarely impact leaders' behaviors. Many organizations expect their leaders to adhere to their "leadership model," thus referring to "a set of behaviors directly related to business outcomes." Leadership models should be comprehensive and complete, providing an accurate description of key behaviors that encompass good leadership characteristics (Jensen et al., 2019). In this regard, amiable leadership is one of the growing methods of leadership, especially in the business world. Despite its many advantages, many leaders refrain from using this leadership method in issues due to uncertainty in the results, uncertainty in maintaining control, fear of losing respect from team members, or loss of productivity and efficiency (Hansen & Pihl-Thingvad, 2019).

Today's competitive world is happening; organizations must think about adapting to changes and seek to exploit potential opportunities (Mardani et al., 2019). A leader is someone who develops a vision for agreed-upon goals and facilitates the organization's success towards that vision (Demirçelik & Korkmaz, 2017; Ohlsson et al., 2020). The leadership style is of interest in the success of organizations, especially those operating in a competitive environment where innovation is vital. Some have stated that effective leadership also depends on the characteristics of the followers and the environment in which the leader operates. Still, at the same time, the leadership style is one of the most important aspects influencing innovation because the leader plays a prominent role in generating ideas, setting goals, and creating a culture for innovation in the organization (Kjellström et al., 2022; Weiss et al., 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this research was to identify the components of the amiable leadership model.

2 Methods and Materials

2.1 Study Design and Participants

This research employed a qualitative research method using grounded theory. The study population included experts and specialists in the field of organizational behavior and university professors who are directly involved with the subject matter. In grounded theory, theoretical sampling is used. This sampling seeks exploratory answers to research questions and their theoretical generalization. Therefore, the use of probabilistic methods and random selection does not meet the research expectations, and samples must be chosen that are completely appropriate for clearly expressing the relationships between concepts and constructs of the study. Sampling continues until the categories reach theoretical saturation. In this study, convenience sampling was conducted, continuing up to 20 people until reaching theoretical saturation.

2.2 Measures

2.2.1 Semi-Structured Interview

This study used semi-structured interviews for data collection. The main questions used in these interviews included:

1. Please explain in detail about your work and describe your activities for us.
2. What is your definition of amicable leadership? What do you consider its components to be?
3. What behaviors do amicable leaders exhibit? Please describe.
4. In your opinion, what are the organizational factors that affect amicable leadership? Please explain.
5. In your opinion, what are the environmental factors that affect amicable leadership? Please explain.
6. What do you think are the outcomes and consequences of amicable leadership?

2.3 Data Analysis

In the theoretical analysis process, interview and textual data are coded. Coding includes three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective or choice coding. Open coding is carried out in two stages: initial coding and secondary coding. Initial coding can be done by coding line by line, phrase by phrase, or paragraph by paragraph of the data. Each is assigned a concept or code. In secondary coding, by comparing concepts, similar and common items are grouped into a single category; thus, the mass of data (codes - concepts) is reduced to a specific and limited number of

major categories. Then these categories are placed next to each other and related.

3 Findings and Results

The results obtained from axial coding are shown Table 1. It is observed that 72 initial codes are categorized into 8 main categories and 5 subcategories.

Table 1

A Summary of The Results of Qualitative Analysis

| Main Category	Subcategory	Open Code	Freq.
Leader's Strategies	General Behaviors	Boosting Morale	2
		Providing Calmness	2
		Motivation	4
		Moderation and Behavioral Balance	4
		Benevolence	10
		Enhancing Status	11
		Tolerance and Forbearance	12
		Valuing and Respecting Staff	17
		Building Trust	23
		Justice and Fairness	23
		Supportiveness	29
	Interpersonal Behaviors (Communication)	Family-like Relations	6
		Prioritizing Followers over Self	7
		Informal (Friendly) Relations	14
		Ethical Conduct	16
		Humility	17
		Empathy and Support	25
Negative Outcomes		Overflow of Expectations	6
		Employee Exploitation	3
Positive Outcomes	Positive Outcomes for the Organization	Reduction in Absenteeism, Job Rotation, and Resignation	2
		Employee Organizational Commitment	2
		Cost Reduction	3
		Friendly and Empathetic Organizational Climate	4
		Organizational Growth and Progress	4
		Increase in Citizenship Behavior	4
		Positive Work-Family Spillover	4
		Organizational Enjoyment	5
		Reduction of Conflict	6
		Organizational Vitality	7
		Organizational Climate based on Understanding and Cooperation	7
		Organizational Trust	8
		Increase in Motivation	8
		Acceleration and Facilitation of Achieving Organizational Goals	14
		Increase in Performance and Productivity	23
	Positive Outcomes for the Leader	Communication Outside of the Work Environment	3
		Improvement in Decision Making	3
		Obedience and Following	10

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	Leader's Calmness	11
	Popularity	12
	Follower's Sacrifice	13
Positive Outcomes for Followers	Job Satisfaction	8
	Strengthening Employee Organizational Attachment	8
	Followers' Peace of Mind	12
Individual Abilities and Capabilities	Self-criticism	2
	Patience and Resilience	6
	Emotional Intelligence	8
	Social Intelligence	25
	Being Pleasant and Adaptable	25
	Technical and Personal Legitimacy	30
Follower Condition	Gender Appropriateness	2
	Age Appropriateness	3
	Follower's Capacity and Maturity	29
External Factors	Necessitated by Variable and Critical Conditions	7
	Support from Higher Authorities	7
	Historical Experience	8
	Good Governance	15
	Economic Stability and Justice	17
	Cultural Cohesion and Richness of Society	26
Components of Amicable Leadership	Confidentiality	4
	Transparency	9
	Good Manners	9
	Intimacy	16
	Honesty	26
	Chivalry	26
	Affection	27
Organizational Characteristics	Organizational Philosophy based on Non-profit	2
	Organizational Life Cycle Necessity	5
	Organizational Size Necessity	7
	Transparent, Honest, and Supportive Organizational Culture	26
	Flexible and Dynamic Organizational Structure	27
	Friendly Performance Evaluation	2
	HR Management that Facilitates and Supports	7

For integration and presentation of the final model, after identifying the central category and relating other categories in the systematic paradigm of grounded theory, the designed pattern was refined, and the main factors of action and the final research model were developed as follows (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Paradigm Model of The Study
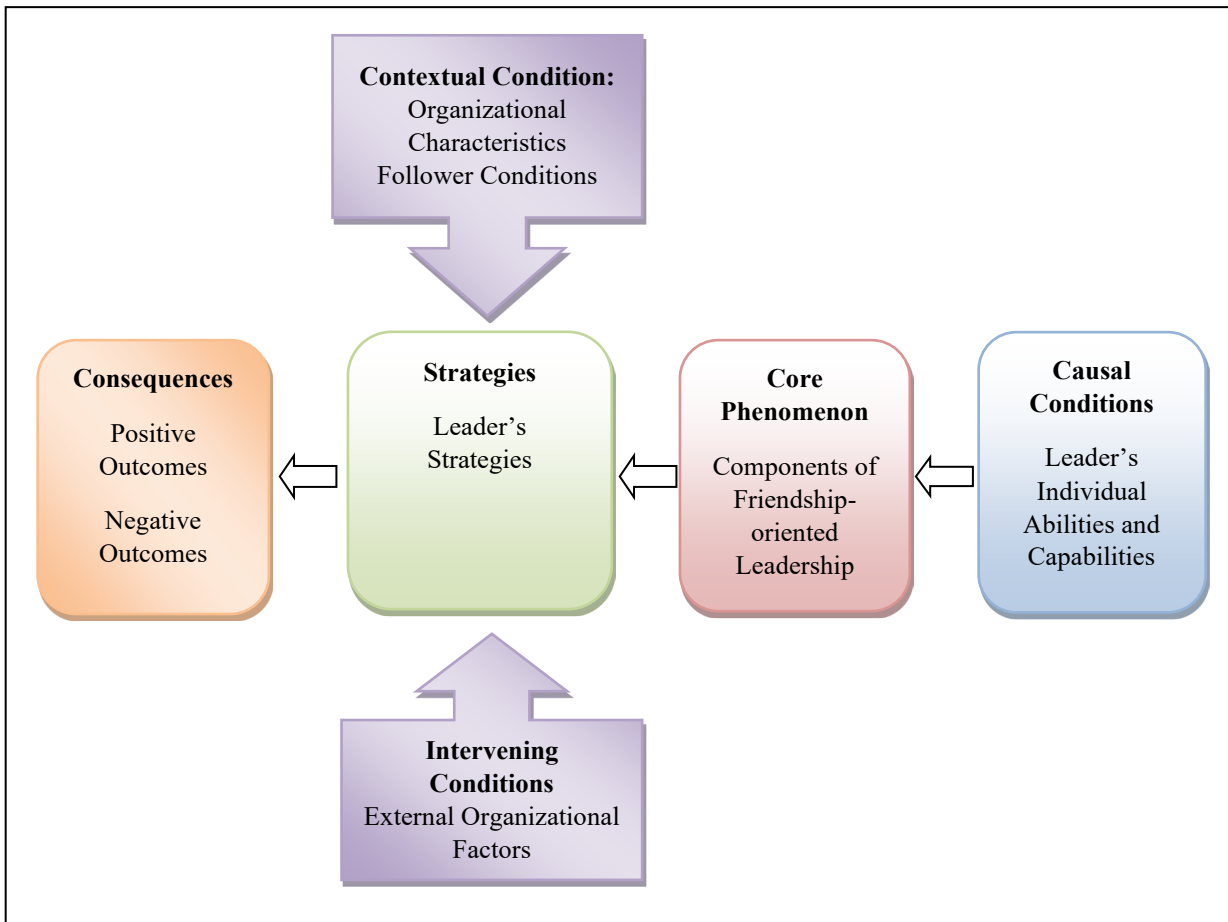
4   Discussion and Conclusion

The present research aimed to identify the components of the amiable leadership model. The results of the axial coding classified 72 initial codes into 8 main categories, which included: leader strategies, positive outcomes, negative outcomes, individual abilities and capabilities, follower conditions, external organizational factors, components of amiable leadership, and organizational characteristics. The category of positive outcomes, with 196 code repetitions, ranks first, leader strategies with 170 codes rank second, and components of amiable leadership with 137 codes rank third. Out of the total of 20 interviewees, 100% referred to the categories of leader strategies, positive outcomes, and components of amiable leadership. Therefore, the category of positive outcomes, in terms of the number of code repetitions and its prevalence among respondents, was prioritized, indicating the importance of this category. The category of follower conditions was mentioned by 2 interviewees, equivalent to 10%, which has the least frequency percentage. Leadership is the art of dealing with people, motivating, organizing, guiding, and leading team members. Leadership is a concept that has always been of interest to researchers and has been the subject of many theories. Early theories assumed that the primary source of leadership effectiveness lies in the personal characteristics of the leader (Munizu et al., 2023). However, this theory could not explain leadership effectiveness, so subsequent research focused on what the leader actually does when interacting with employees. These theories sought to describe the relationship between what the leader does and how employees react emotionally and behaviorally. Ultimately, they found that behavior alone could not justify leadership effectiveness in all situations, so contingency theories presented the interaction of the leader with the situation and the suitability of the style with conditions. In a paradigm shift, new theories emphasized inspiring leaders with competent and prominent qualities, finding that the golden keys to organizational success are in the hands of

such leaders. From this perspective, theories of authentic leaders, spiritual leaders, charismatic leaders, servant leaders, etc., were born (Katr, 2018). Alongside these theories and an abundance of styles, amiable leadership aims to provide a practical, simple, accessible, and highly applicable model. A leadership style that makes attainable the most important condition of the dialogue between organizational actors, namely the leader and follower, which is mutual and open relationships from a position of power balance, not hierarchy - a matter often overlooked in many leadership theories.

The results of this research are consistent with numerous previous studies. Ghorbani et al. (2012) demonstrated in a study that there is a significant relationship between role clarity and job commitment, similar to the component of clarity in amiable leadership (Ghorbani et al., 2012). Also, some have shown that the impact of servant leadership on innovative work behavior is moderated by organizational structure. These studies indicate that organizational structure affects various aspects of the organization and ultimately the leadership style, similar to intervening factors in amiable leadership (Göçen, 2021; Saputra & Mahaputra, 2022; Schwarz et al., 2020; Zarei et al., 2022; Zhang & Liu, 2019). Razaghi et al. (2020) listed traits such as honesty, forgiveness, justice as components of chivalry, which aligns with the components of chivalry as one of the main components of amiable leadership (Razaghi et al., 2020). Kafash et al. (2017) showed that spiritual leadership and resilience have a positive and direct effect on organizational excellence (Kafash et al., 2017). These studies correlate with the component of resilience and patience as causal conditions of amiable leadership. Also, Katr (2018) demonstrated that amiable leaders must have high social intelligence to be able to communicate with followers (Katr, 2018). These studies align with the component of emotional intelligence in amiable leadership.

5   Limitations and Suggestions

The results of this research are based on expert descriptions and the researcher's interpretation of those interviews. Therefore, caution should be exercised in generalizing these results. Due to time and research facility limitations, the researcher could not incorporate the complex relationships of other components in structural equation modeling. Although this research has examined the relationship between components, other variables could be introduced that would significantly increase the complexity of the model. Therefore, generalizing these results to other organizations and companies should be done cautiously. As a result, it is recommended to train managers in amicable leadership style through familiarity with the components and strategies obtained in the research. Although some of these components require innate backgrounds or at least extensive practice and alignment with the leader's innate personality, based on behavioral theory, it is believed that leaders can learn leadership styles.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Authors Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Ethics principles

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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