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How do wise leaders perform? Conceptualizing wise leadership and its styles

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1. Introduction

Effectivity is important in leadership, and leadership scholars strive to identify the characteristics that make leaders effective (DeRue & Wellman, 2009; Jiang et al., 2024; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Researchers have proposed various definitions to form the theoretical basis for evaluating and developing leaders. For example, trait-based leadership (focusing on stereotypical leadership traits) was proposed by Chemers (2000), whereas later scholars introduced the contingency theory of leadership (task-oriented or relationship-oriented), considering the interaction of environment and traits (Fiedler, 1964, 1967). Subsequently, Burns (1978) distinguished between transactional leaders, engaging in mutually beneficial exchanges, and transformational leaders, emphasizing engagement, co-creation, and empowering employees.

Competency-based models of leadership dominate leadership-development studies, with many scholars providing frameworks

describing an effective leader's knowledge, skills, and abilities (Goleman, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; McCauley et al., 2010; Mumford et al., 2007). When scholars use these models, their implicit assumption often is that leaders are 'good' in an ethical sense, and that they would use their skills and knowledge to achieve positive outcomes (Day et al., 2021). However, scholars often propose these models without sufficiently distinguishing between an "Effective Good Leader" and an "Effective Leader" (Newstead et al., 2021). Newstead et al. (2021, p. 2) argued, "Good leadership implies people being motivated by the right reasons, relating and influencing each other in ethical and effective ways, and moving towards ethical and effective ends". Scholars such as Sternberg et al. (2024) highlight that leaders can possess creativity and intelligence while still exhibiting toxic behaviors.

Many leaders are not good leaders (Hogan et al., 2011; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). They use their skills unethically to achieve personal goals, manipulate people, and strive for benefits not aligned with 'common good' purposes. Bad leaders can negatively impact employees and even countries. Schyns and Schilling (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of 57 studies on destructive leadership, finding negative correlations with positive follower outcomes (e.g., attitudes, well-being, performance) and positive correlations with negative outcomes (e.g., turnover, resistance, counterproductive behavior).

Some researchers have addressed this gap by incorporating dark-side characteristics into leadership studies (e.g., Harms et al., 2011; Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Kaiser & Hogan, 2010). For example, Kaiser and Hogan (2010) suggested evaluating these dark characteristics when recruiting leaders. Other scholars introduced leadership models that consider ethics and morality, for example, servant leadership (Kumar, 2018), ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006), and virtuous leadership (Fry, 2003; Newstead et al., 2021; Zaidman & Goldstein-Gidoni, 2011). This variety of leadership models is a result of scholars considering different aspects of leadership and situations that leaders encounter. We argue that we can consider these aspects together in a more comprehensive model of the wise leader.

Sternberg (2024) defined a wise solution to a problem as one that "(a) derives from extensive formal and tacit knowledge and the application of appropriate converging operations to this knowledge; (b) based on an intellectually humble recognition and acceptance of what one can and cannot know at a given time and place, as well as of what is knowable and what is not; (c) with the knowledge rationally and ethically deployed in the service of a common good to balance one's own, others', and both short- and long-term interests; (d)

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producing an internally consistent and, to the extent possible, an aesthetically pleasing solution that is consistent with the external state of the world as well as we can know it." This definition shows that wisdom is a broad concept encompassing effectivity, ethics, virtue, and other cognitive and non-cognitive components. The critical role of wise leadership is supported directly and indirectly by the extant leadership literature (e.g., Billsberry & O'Callaghan, 2024; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Harter, 2002; Intezari & Pauleen, 2018; Johnson et al., 2023; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Mahdavi et al., 2020; Salicru, 2023; Schminke et al., 2005) and psychology literature (e.g., Karami et al., 2020; Sternberg, 2007; Zhang et al., 2023).

Moreover, wisdom bridges the two trends of leadership models: individual leader models, on the one hand, and collective leadership models, on the other. In the leadership literature, some scholars have criticized competency-based models of leadership for focusing on the 'individual' rather than on the whole organization. These researchers introduced "leadership" in contrast with "leader" (Day, 2000). Leader-development approaches focus on developing leaders' knowledge, skills, and abilities as individuals (Hollenbeck et al., 2006; Kragt & Day, 2020; Liu et al., 2021). These models ignore the importance of social capital in 'leadership' models, which emphasize building networked relationships among all people to enhance cooperation and resource exchange in creating organizational values (Bouty, 2000; Day et al., 2004; Day & Zacarro, 2004; Eva et al., 2021; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). Day et al. (2021) proposed that considering the significant changes the world has undergone since early 2020, including the global pandemic, the emergence of a new civil-rights movement, international conflicts, and the escalating challenges of climate change, individuals across all sectors must be better equipped to engage in leadership. The necessity for inclusive leadership development extends beyond those in official leadership positions (Day et al., 2021). Collective leadership is important for transformational challenges like COVID-19, where collaborative leadership and self-leadership are important (Moore et al., 2023). Shared leadership is an example of collective leadership where people lead one another to achieve the group and/or organization goals (Conger & Pearce, 2003).

While leadership models are essential, we must recognize the importance of individual leader models. The role of leaders has remained, and researchers should consider both perspectives in their studies. For example, Wallace and colleagues (2021) asserted that 'leader' and 'leadership' development result in different outcomes and should be assessed using separate criteria, introducing

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a typology of learning outcomes specific to leader (like Declarative Knowledge and Cognitive Strategies) and leadership development (like Aggregated Knowledge and Shared Mental Models). We need a model that integrates these two perspectives.

Wisdom is a concept that connects these two perspectives, as wise people are good, effective leaders who strive for the common good (Sternberg, 1990, 2024). Ethics (Grossman et al, 2020), empathy, and caring for others (Soleimani-Dashtaki et al., 2023), virtue (Sternberg & Jordan, 2005), and other characteristics like cognitive abilities (Conway & Kovacs, 2020; Ellingsen & Engle, 2020; Engle, 2018; Nettelbeck et al., 2020; Sternberg, 1985) and affective abilities (Ardelt, 2003, 2004) are integrated into wisdom. A wise person uses their skills and abilities to balance interests and achieve a greater good (Sternberg, 1998, 2019). Wise leaders inspire collective efforts to succeed, as demonstrated by figures such as Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi.

Much has been written about wisdom and leadership from a philosophical perspective, suggesting what leaders should do (e.g., Intezari & Pauleen, 2013; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011). However, a more descriptive and empirical approach to wise leadership has remained fragmented, leaving scholars and practitioners with few answers to even the most fundamental questions, such as "What is wise leadership?" and "What styles does a wise leader use to achieve shared goals?"

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to bridge the science and practice of wise leadership by exploring its defining characteristics and the leadership styles employed by wise leaders to achieve shared goals. Specifically, this research aims to:

1. Identify the characteristics of wise leadership.
2. Explore the leadership styles and problem-solving approaches utilized by wise leaders in real-world organizational contexts.

Using a qualitative and mixed-method approach, including Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Cluster Analysis within a Cognitive Task Analysis (CTA) framework, this study investigates the narratives of nine leaders nominated as 'wise' within a large multi-branch organization in Iran. The findings aim to provide actionable insights for scholars and practitioners seeking to understand and implement wise leadership principles in organizational settings.

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2. Methodology of the Research

2.1. Purpose and Model of the Study

This research, which is inherently exploratory, aimed to explore what characteristics wise leaders have and what approaches they use to solve problems. This study was undertaken within a large, multi-branch organization in Iran during 2021-2022. The initial stage involved administering a survey that asked employees to nominate leaders they perceived to be wise compared with others. Subsequently, the nine leaders with the most nominations were selected for further study. These leaders were chosen from different organizational positions and levels. Therefore, their situational contexts differed, and each was assessed as performing wisely in their own positions.

One can study historical literature or documents for historical cases to study concepts that make access to the representative sample almost impossible (for instance, wise leaders). However, results are limited to the reports and literature. Hence, we used qualitative and mixed methods to solve the problem in this research. These methods will help scholars to study cases that represent that construct in some situations. Researchers can study that construct (in this case, wisdom) by exploring the special experiences of that person, which represent the manifestation of that construct (wise decision-making). Following the compilation of the wise-leader nominations, the field researcher initiated in-person interviews with each nominee. These interviews lasted between 1.5 and 2.5 hours, guided primarily by the number of stories shared by each leader. These stories should represent wise decision-making. The process continued until saturation was achieved, at which point no additional relevant concepts were extracted from the narratives. The interview protocol was adapted from Militello and Hutton (1998). All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

2.2. Data Analysis

This research, which is inherently exploratory, aimed to delve into various facets of leadership tasks and responsibilities. A Cognitive Task Analysis (CTA) framework, as delineated by Militello and Hutton (1998) and Crandall et al. (2006), structured the interview protocol. Meanwhile, a mixed method containing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Cluster Analysis on the codes were used. IPA, as described by Smith (1999), was

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utilized for data analysis. CTA focuses on deriving insights from detailed job-experience narratives (Akhbari et al., 2020; Crandall et al., 2006) which represents wise decision-making, whereas IPA emphasizes understanding participants' personal interpretations of their experiences (Mayoh et al., 2020).

2.3. Participants and Procedure

The study involved nine leaders in a large, multi-branch organization in Iran during 2021-2022 who were nominated as 'wise,' four females and five males, all above the age of 30, and representing various management levels. Each participant provided at least two detailed stories of work experience covering their duties.

CTA allowed a detailed examination of individual job experiences. Data analysis adhered to a qualitative analysis of the IPA methodology outlined by Smith et al. (1999), involving systematic transcript reading and open coding. This process yielded thematic lists for each narrative. They were then compared to formulate a comprehensive thematic list. Finally, a cross-table juxtaposing wise leaders with a general list of codes was generated that identified specific items pertinent to each leader. The final stage, using R software, comprised a cluster analysis (Complete Linkage), examining leaders to identify discernible clusters for leaders and items.

The cluster analyses were performed in two stages:

3. First Cluster Analysis (Codes): After coding the narratives using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a table was created where rows represented managers and columns represented extracted codes from their narratives. Cluster analysis was applied to these codes, identifying recurring thematic patterns that define wise leadership characteristics.

4. Second Cluster Analysis (Leaders): The same table was used for a leader-level cluster analysis, grouping leaders based on similarities in their narrative patterns. This analysis identified three distinct leadership styles among wise leaders- Relationship-oriented, transformational, and task-oriented.

A mixed method analysis helps to reduce the subjectivity of qualitative analysis. After clusters were identified for the wise leadership concept and its styles, extracted codes from the IPA analysis were used to elaborate on each cluster. Therefore, a circular approach was used to analyze data. First, data was coded using qualitative analysis. Then, categories were created using quantitative analysis. Again, codes were used to describe each category by

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comparing common codes among categories and distinguishing codes for each category.

The analysis of wise leadership characteristics followed these key steps:

- Code Extraction: Narratives were coded using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to identify recurring themes related to leadership characteristics.
- Cluster Analysis (Codes): A matrix was created with managers as rows and codes as columns. Hierarchical cluster analysis (Complete Linkage method) was performed in R software to group related codes into clusters.
- Cluster Interpretation: The resulting clusters were reviewed iteratively by the research team. Statistical proximity (as shown in the dendrogram) and conceptual meaning guided the assignment of each code to a thematic cluster.

Each thematic cluster was cross-validated by reviewing the original narratives to ensure conceptual alignment and avoid overlaps.

3. Findings

3.1. Dimensions of wise leadership

To answer the first research question, "What is wise leadership?" a cluster analysis was conducted on the codes. Five clusters were constructed: "Personal traits," Process," "Conscientiousness," "Going beyond the assigned responsibilities," and "Intrapersonal skills" (see Table 1). All these characteristics make these leaders effective good leaders who think about the common good and balance all interests. Also, wise leaders connect 'leader' to 'leadership' perspectives (Day, 2000) by empowering employees.

3.1.1. Personal traits

This dimension concerns attributes and traits associated with wisdom and positive creativity as they apply to the person striving for a common good. Positive creativity involves generating ideas that are not only novel and practical but also beneficial to humankind (Clark & James, 1999). Wise leaders have special traits that differentiate them from unwise leaders. Based on the codes categorized in this cluster, wise leaders have a positive mindset and look for a common good. They help employees to use their cognitive abilities, like intelligence, creativity, critical thinking, and reasoning. These individuals are aware of uncertainty, are pioneers and risk-takers, have

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a need for freedom and for solving problems, connect different ideas, and can use information quickly. They are good at change management and continually learn new things. Some of these attributes are shown in the following statements:

> *"Some things remain in my mind. This information then becomes interconnected whenever I need to make a decision…"*
> *"There is a well-known quote that says, 'I have a dream.' Perhaps the reason is that my team has a dream that other departments do not. It's a dream that is still alive in Iran..."*
> *"I like 'learning' very much. Learning is of primary importance to me. If this learning is related to the previous things that I know, I stay in the field. But if this learning does not happen anymore, I will go to a new field or department. This learning is important to me. It is not important that this learning is about a previous subject or a new one. Learning is very important to me."*

traits like "Benevolence" and "Communication of Ideas" were clustered under Personal Traits, reflecting inherent qualities rather than behavioral processes.

3.1.2. Process

This category concerns behaviors and actions that wise leaders show when interacting with others. Because wise leaders seek a common good, they act differently from less wise leaders. They manage their emotions to be able to make decisions that balance, to the extent possible, all people's interests (Sternberg, 1998). This balancing act involves a strategic approach encompassing shaping, adapting, and selecting environments. Moreover, it entails a nuanced understanding of reconciling long- and short-term interests, ensuring that decisions are both immediate and foresighted in their positive impact (Sternberg, 1998). Therefore, the leaders try to make relations cordial and, if possible, pacific between all parties.

When solving problems, wise leaders first collect information, then implement new procedures, consider all aspects of the problem, consider alternatives, and consider multiple perspectives on problems. They are not only pragmatic for themselves but also try to motivate others pragmatically but ethically to achieve their goals. They create trust among people, treat all people equally, constructively combat resistance when encountering it, break down barriers,

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develop teamwork, consult with others, and look far into the future. They learn from their environment and have mastered their work. Along with this mastery, they believe in themselves—they are self-efficacious- and when making decisions, consider the vagaries of the environment and the relativity of values among the people with whom they work. They are flexible, but when they have to decide, they are decisive and take responsibility for their work. Following are some related statements:

"….That's why I tried to see a path in advance, at least to a certain point. At least to reach the executive stage. Implementation problems can be solved more easily later."

"I started working as soon as I was introduced. I thought I had to do two important things. 1- To master work, processes and activities, and 2- To be able to create welfare and empathy in the unit."

"….However, we had resistance and the project took about a year to be accepted. It was because of the resistance."

Table 1. Superordinate and Subordinate Themes of the Wise-leader Model

Personal traits	Process	Conscien-tiousness	Going beyond the assigned responsibilities	Intrapersonal skills
Benevolence	Anger management	Good-tempered	Developing employees	Absence of egotism
Helping employees	Balancing adapting to, shaping, and selecting environments	Honesty	Cautious	Separating personal problems from work-related problems
Communication of ideas	Balancing interests long & short term	Responsibility	Perspicacity	Discipline
Epistemic humility	Balancing inter-, intra-, and extra-personal interests	Considering employees' personal lives	Creating positive relations among employees	Priority to organization's benefit
Awareness of uncertainty	Implementing new things	Considering employees' interests	Increasing power of the unit	Self-awareness

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Intelligence	Peacefulness	Organiza-tional com-mitment	Improving the unit	
Memory	Information gathering Pragmatism		Achieve justice	
Continuous learning	Considering all aspects of a problem		Understanding how world works	
Risk-taking	Motivating employees		Protecting values and boundaries	
Striving for the common good	Multiple perspectives on a problem		Personal development	
Need for freedom	Considering the situation		Personal promotion	
Positive mindset	Decisiveness		Unit output	
Change manage-ment	Thinking about alternatives		Self-evaluation	
Critical thinking	Trust / receptive			
Ability to make decisions	Treating all equal			
Expeditious use of information	Learning from environment			
Reasoning	Mastery			
Pioneer	Self-efficacy			
Creativity	Responsible			
	Farsightedness			
	Consulting with others			
	Resistance			
	Breaking Barriers			
	Team working			

Source: own study

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3.1.3. Conscientiousness

People like to work with wise leaders because those leaders hold themselves responsible for the job and for their duties. In other words, they project 'good citizenship.' These leaders are good-tempered, honest, responsible, and organizationally committed. They consider their employees' interests and care about the employees' personal lives. Codes such as "Good-tempered" and "Honesty" were grouped under Conscientiousness because they statistically clustered together and were conceptually aligned with a sense of moral responsibility and discipline.

3.1.4. Going beyond the assigned responsibilities

Wise leaders help ensure that the unit's processes work for everyone. They also help employees prepare to go beyond their current jobs and prepare them for the next step. They look for development opportunities for the employees and the unit. They seek to increase the ability of the unit to serve the organization. Moreover, they build positive relationships among employees so that the employees have a better work life.

Other characteristics in this category are related to "self," such as self-evaluation, personal development, and positive self-promotion. These are also beyond the duties of the ordinary leader. Wise leaders want to improve themselves to become better leaders for their unit and their organization. They also consider their personal growth in balance with other people's interests. They do not form self-centered goals that may harm other people. Following are some related statements:

"Because basically I am a person who when I go home at night….I very briefly review that day's work of mine in my mind. …. I review my day's work very briefly at the end of the night. Somewhere in my opinion, maybe I think it would have been better if I'd done this, it would have been better if I'd done that."

"…You should try to have more knowledge than the person who wants to come [to the unit] and help you. So that this interaction can be two-way. You can teach him; he can also teach you. And when he knows that you yourself are persistent in discovering something new, and you know what new things are in that field, he will also update himself and try to present a better work. And it was always important to me."

"The output and work rate of the entire unit increased. Consequently, the speed of our work improved. In fact, our time management became more efficient. The reports gen-

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erated by our unit grew in accuracy, leading to an enhanced level of trust in our unit from the entire system. This also resulted in increased trust from all senior managers within the group…"

3.1.5. Intrapersonal skills

Intrapersonal intelligence concerns understanding and organizing oneself (Gardner, 2011). Wise leaders work on themselves first. Intrapersonally skilled leaders know their strengths and weaknesses and have self-discipline and positive ethical values. Part of intrapersonal intelligence is metacognition, which involves self-understanding and self-control. Wise leaders know when they are confounding personal problems with work-related ones. They are notably lacking in egocentrism and egotism. For example:

"I think this responsibility, accountability, and commitment that people have is important. I now see that the behaviors in society and in the organization and between people are more self-interested. As long as we want to work for our interests, we cannot tolerate many difficulties at work and many other things. Even, many people may not understand how you are working."

3.2. Wise leadership styles

To address the question, "What styles do wise leaders use?" or in other words "What are the different styles of wise leadership?" a cluster analysis was conducted on the data. Three clusters were identified through cluster analysis: "Transformational," "Task-Orientation," and "Relationship-Orientation" (see Figure 1). The left side of Figure 1 shows the dendrogram resulting from the second cluster analysis on leaders. The three clusters represent the three wise leadership styles: Relationship-Oriented, Transformational, and Task-Oriented. The right side of Figure 1 offers a schematic representation of these three leadership styles, emphasizing their interconnections and overlap in real-world leadership behaviors. Moreover, styles can be classified into two major categories: Transactional wise leadership and Transformational wise leadership. Each cluster's codes were investigated, showing some specific and common areas for each style. Specific codes are characteristics that all cluster leaders have, but leaders of other clusters do not. Common areas are characteristics that leaders of two or three styles have. These codes are explained later and used to define each cluster.
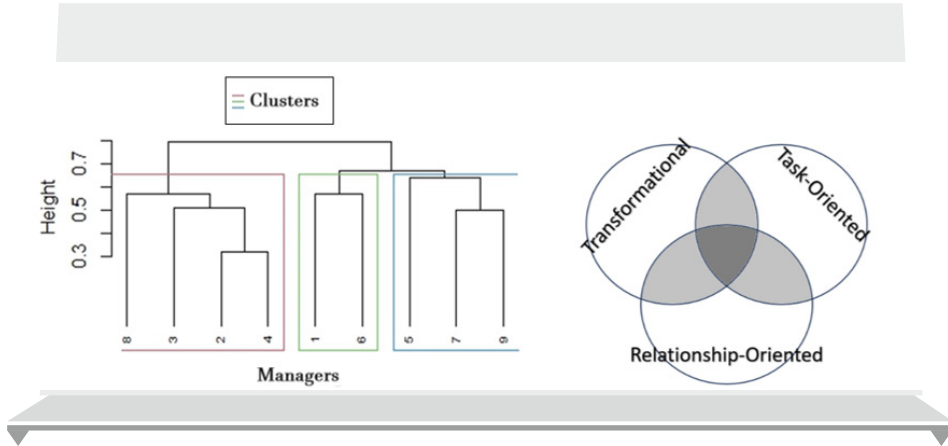
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Figure 1. Wise leadership styles

NOTE. The left graph is driven by cluster analysis.
The right picture is the schematic view of the clusters.

Source: own study

As shown in Figure 1, some codes representing characteristics are shared among all three styles of wise leadership including balancing adapting to, shaping, and selecting environments; negotiating long-term versus short-term interests; and taking into account the interests of all parties.

3.2.1. Transactional Wise Leadership

Some wise leaders have transactions with others to achieve their goals. The difference between transactional leaders (Booysen, 1999) and transactional wise leaders is that wise people make decisions that benefit all people, have positive ethical values, and concern for others. For example[1], a wise leader might have a mutual exchange with their employees and reward them for their good performance. Another wise leader might make a wise decision to retain their power or the power of their department. Or, one might make wise decisions to prove themselves and enhance their reputation. These leaders are not looking for

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1   All these examples are extracted from the interviews

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a transformational change in their department. Rather, they want to enhance the position of their department or its employees. Transactional leaders might use two kinds of styles based on the need of the unit and their personal preferences: a task-oriented wise leadership style or a relationship-oriented wise leadership. The motivation behind these styles is a mutual exchange between the wise leader and others but with different tools: building positive relations or focusing on implementing the tasks.

3.2.1.1 Task-Oriented Wise Leadership Style

Wise leaders, when dealing with technical duties, use a task-oriented wise style. They focus on performing their tasks correctly and professionally. These leaders gain knowledge and master the area in which they work. They coach employees on how the employees can effectively do the tasks at hand. They need to gain knowledge continually and to keep themselves up to date. They make project plans, divide roles among employees based on their expertise, and follow up and monitor the work to be done. Employees reach out to them when they have problems with their tasks because they know these leaders are task experts and even know about the details of the tasks. These leaders also focus on developing employees to become experts in the job tasks—in taking them from novices to experts (see Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2003).

3.2.1.2. Relationship-Oriented Wise Leadership Style

In situations where communication and teamwork are important, and the work is very technical, wise leaders usually do not enter the details of the work. They rely on the expertise of the employees. Leaders move work forward by building positive relationships within and outside of the unit and, sometimes, outside of the organization. The nature of the work of these situations is that leaders do not need to be aware of all the details of projects being done in the unit. These leaders have effective conflict-resolution strategies and consider employees' personal lives and interests. The wise leaders motivate their employees to create good relationships with them to foster satisfactory completion of their tasks. The wise leaders have a systematic way of thinking so that they know with whom they should build relationships and with whom to network.

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3.2.2. Transformationally Wise Leadership

Wise leaders want to open new doors to the unit and their organizations and create positive values for all parties. They may break the rules to improve the position of the unit/organization and gain more legal power and influence. They like to try new things and can handle ambiguity better than do non-transformational wise leaders. They choose this approach because of the special nature of the tasks and work in that unit or a special situation. Transformationally wise leaders are very good at change management, show excellent critical thinking, and can use diverse sources of information rapidly for making decisions.

Each of these three styles can be effective in particular situations and in relation to the nature of the task and structure at hand. Hence, all of the styles together are needed for a wise leader to help them vary these three styles based on situational and contextual needs.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Wisdom is too often overlooked in leadership. However, it is important for leadership because it seeks an ethical common good for all affected decision-making parties. Also, it shows that the leader-leadership dichotomy (Day, 2000, 2021) can be solved with a wise leader. It is possible, if a bit difficult, to study wisdom in leadership. And the novel way we propose is through a possibly unique combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. These methods reveal that wise leadership has five dimensions and 3 styles: transactionally wise (consisting of task-oriented and relationship-oriented wisdom), and transformationally wise leadership. These three styles tie in with previous work (Burns, 1978; Fiedler, 1964, 1967). However, this connection shows that the two wise leadership dimensions are not mutually exclusive. A leader does not have one or another; rather, an effective leader is someone who wisely knows when to use which style.

Wisdom and contextual factors interact (Grossmann, 2017; Grossmann & Kung, 2017; Sternberg, 1990, 1998, 2004; Sternberg et al., 2023). Ethical, servant, authentic, and virtuous leadership were previously defined as separate leadership styles to solve the problem of models that do not consider the dark-side characteristics of leaders. This study showed that these styles consider different parts of wise leadership and can be integrated into one leadership

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style. To explore this role, the questions of " What is wise leadership" and "What are the different styles of wise leadership?" were addressed.

The wise-leader model consists of 5 general dimensions: Personal traits, Process, Conscientiousness, Going beyond the responsibilities, and Intrapersonal skills. Moreover, Each of the two wise leadership styles, namely, transactional wise leadership (consisting of task-oriented wise leadership and relationship-oriented wise leadership), and transformational wise leadership extracted from Cluster Analysis is more effective in a particular kind of situation than others. No one style is preferred across all situations to another. Situational characteristics and personal skills and preferences of the leader predict the effectiveness of the particular wise leadership style in a particular situation. For example, a unit might not be ready for transformational change because the employees' needs are different than those of the employer. Perhaps employees need more emotional support or the unit's structure needs to be better organized.

In conclusion, leadership theories should move toward wise leadership which has five dimensions and is a combination of three styles. These leaders are effective because they have skills, knowledge, and abilities that help people succeed. They are 'good' because they have positive ethical values that lead their actions and decisions. Wise leaders strive for the common good. They empower and support employees, laying the foundations of collective leadership. When choosing or training leaders for positions, the position and situation should first be examined. Then, the examination should be used to find or develop the optimal person for that position. Also, an ideal developmental goal is to develop all three styles because they are all needed at different times and places in this complex world. In short, the distinct characteristics of a wise leader and the availability of all three styles make a wise leader distinct from other leaders. Styles are malleable (Zhang & Sternberg, 2002), so there is always hope that leaders can be educated to demonstrate the flexibility they need to be effective in a wide variety of situations. This study was conducted in Iran and in one organization. Because there might be cultural differences across countries, generalization of the results should be considered cautiously, as would be the case for any study conducted in any single country, organization, or culture. Ultimately, one would want to study the wisdom of leaders cross-culturally. We hope to do so in our future work.

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Abstract

Wisdom is proposed as a bridge between leader and leadership. It is necessary to explore what characteristics wise leaders have and what approaches they use to solve problems. In this study, we suggest a unique approach involving qualitative and quantitative research methods to seek the essence of wise leadership and its styles.

The research employed Cognitive Task Analysis (CTA) to conduct interviews with nine wise leaders in management positions. The data were then analyzed using a circular mixed method combining Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to delve into the participants' job experiences and cluster analysis through R software to extract the categories.

Results identified five key themes: personal traits, processes, conscientiousness, going beyond assigned responsibilities, and intrapersonal skills. Additionally, two distinct approaches-- transformational wise leadership, and transactional wise leadership--were highlighted.

The wise-leader model and its styles can be used for leadership- development programs, recruitment, and evaluation of leaders.

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