

THE ROLE OF SKILLED LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS IN IMPROVING JOB POLARIZATION-ANALYTICAL RESEARCH OF THE OPINIONS OF A SAMPLE OF EMPLOYEES AT AL-ITTIHAD FOOD INDUSTRIES LIMITED

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Abstract

The current research aimed to study the relationship between skilled leadership behaviors and employee polarization at Al-Ittihad Food Industries Limited Company in Babylon Governorate. The main research problem focused on clarifying the role that skilled leadership behaviors play in improving the employee polarization process and attracting competent human resources capable of efficiently accomplishing their tasks. The researcher adopted a descriptive analytical approach, collecting data from a sample of 74 individuals using a questionnaire. 68 questionnaires valid for statistical analysis were retrieved. The research reached a set of conclusions, the most important of which was that there is a strong positive relationship between skilled leadership behaviors and employee polarization, indicating the importance of these leadership behaviors in improving polarization processes.

Keywords: Skilled leadership behaviors, Employee polarization, Al-Ittihad Food Industries Company

Introduction

All business organizations face continuous and significant changes in the work environment at an accelerating pace, which poses a major challenge for them. For organizations to have a dynamic system that enables them to adapt to these changes, they must exploit and seize opportunities and attract competent human resources capable of advancing the organization's reality and guiding it to safety. This can only be achieved through the presence of wise and skilled leadership in employing human resources that enjoy intellectual and knowledge growth and possess skills that are commensurate with the nature of the organization's work. This research addresses two important variables that play a prominent role in the success of organizations because they are primarily based on human resources, considered the driving force for all activities they undertake.

From this perspective, the research has been divided into four sections:

Section One: Scientific Methodology

Section Two: Theoretical Aspect of the Research

Section Three: Practical Aspect of the Research

Section Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

First Section: Scientific Methodology of the Research

First: Research Problem

Business organizations are witnessing increasing developments and accelerating changes in various technological, economic, and other sectors, which requires them to develop their capabilities in order to remain able to survive and compete in local and global markets. It is known that human resources are the driving force of these organizations and their main element, and that their success is based on the efficiency of their employees and their ability to accomplish tasks with high efficiency to achieve the goals that the organization seeks. This requires the presence of skilled leadership in the organization that excels in selecting and employing qualified human resources suitable for the nature of the organization's work and its orientations. From this perspective, the main research problem emerges in the following question:

(What is the role of skilled leadership behaviors in improving employee polarization in business organizations?)

From this, the following questions arise:

1. To what extent do skilled leadership behaviors exist in the studied organization?
2. To what extent are employee polarization standards applied in the studied organization?

Second: Research Importance

Human resources are considered one of the most important elements in an organization and its fundamental pillar. Therefore, it is necessary to exercise the utmost caution in selecting and employing human resources that possess high experience and skills commensurate with the nature of the organization's work and the activities it undertakes. This is achieved through the presence of skilled leadership in the organization capable of attracting the best employees to the organization. Hence, the importance of this research emerges as it sheds light on skilled leadership behaviors that contribute significantly to improving the employee polarization process, which leads to the organization's success, development, and prosperity.

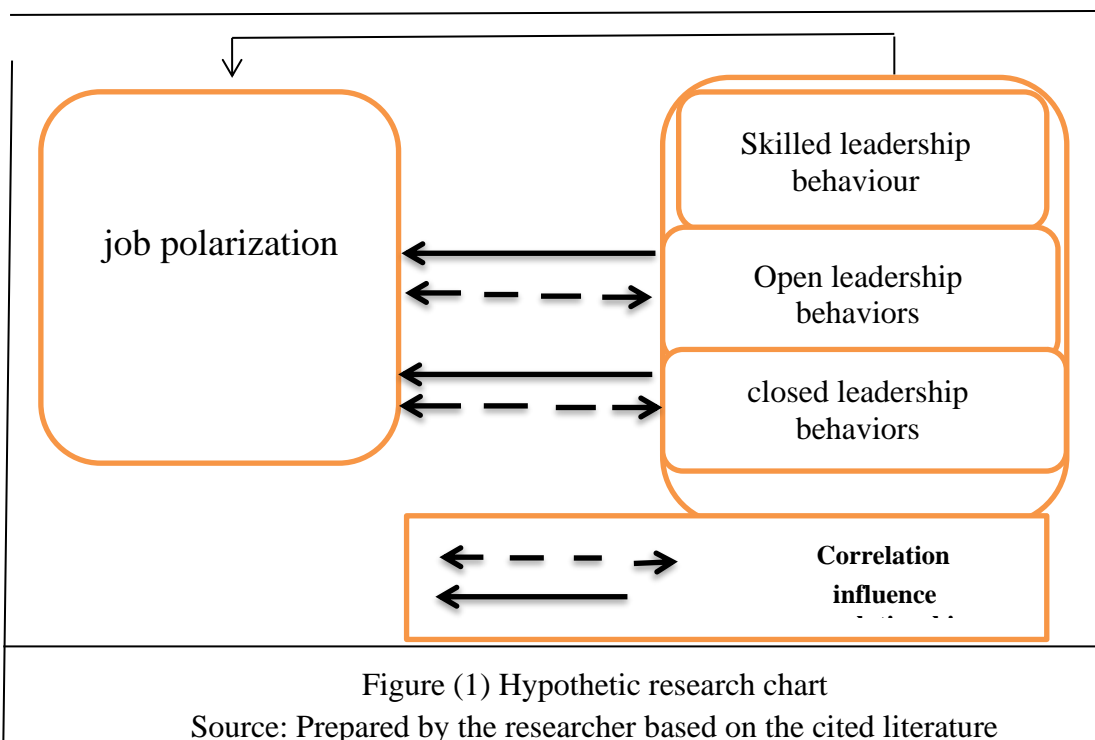
Third: Research Objectives

The current research seeks to strengthen the relationship between the study variables in their various dimensions to identify the role that skilled leadership behaviors play in improving the employee polarization process. The research objectives can be summarized in the following points:

1. To identify the nature of the relationship and impact between skilled leadership behaviors and employee polarization in the studied organization.
2. To demonstrate the extent of availability of skilled leadership behaviors in the studied organization.
3. To identify the strengths and weaknesses in the employee polarization process and the extent of clear standards for it followed by the studied organization.

Fourth: Hypothetical Research Model

Figure (1) illustrates the hypothetical model that shows the nature of the interconnected relationships between the research variables.

**Fifth: Research Hypotheses****Correlation Hypotheses**

Main Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant correlation between skilled leadership behaviors and job polarization at the aggregate level. This main hypothesis gives rise to the following sub-hypotheses:

- **Sub-hypothesis 1:** There is a statistically significant correlation between open leadership behaviors and job polarization.
- **Sub-hypothesis 2:** There is a statistically significant correlation between closed leadership behaviors and job polarization.

Effect Hypotheses

Main Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant effect relationship between skilled leadership behaviors and job polarization at the aggregate level. This main hypothesis gives rise to the following sub-hypotheses:

- **Sub-hypothesis 1:** There is a statistically significant effect relationship between open leadership behaviors and job polarization.
- **Sub-hypothesis 2:** There is a statistically significant effect relationship between closed leadership behaviors and job polarization.

Sixth: Research Population and Sample

Al-Ittihad Food Industries Limited Company in Babylon Governorate was chosen as the research population due to the company's good reputation and prestigious position, as it is

considered one of the leading companies in its field of specialization. As for the research sample, it consisted of 74 employees to whom questionnaires were distributed, and 68 questionnaires valid for statistical analysis were retrieved.

Second Section: Theoretical Framework of the Research

First : Skilled leadership behaviors

1. The concept of Skilled leadership behaviors

Skilled leadership is one of the important and vital terms in the world of business management. The emergence of this type of leadership is attributed to the continuous and increasing complexity that accompanies the strategies used in business organizations. Hence, the need arises for leaders who possess appropriate behavior and accumulated knowledge that enables them to employ competent human resources. Researchers and specialists have not agreed on a specific definition of skilled leadership. (Coleman, 2016: 19) defined it as a series of sequential actions that influence an individual or a group of individuals working in the organization to perform a set of interconnected tasks in order to achieve the goals that the organization seeks to attain. (Beletskiy & Fey, 2021: 869) view skilled leadership as an individual's ability to simultaneously focus on exploratory and expansionary activities in organizational learning processes, leading to the exploration of new capabilities and the expansion of current capabilities with equal skill. Meanwhile (Daghim , Rashed, 2023 :8) emphasized that skilled leadership is the ability to support exploitative and exploratory methods in individuals by creating a balance between increasing and decreasing variation in their behavior. This requires the leader to be flexible and efficient in their work.

2. The importance of Skilled leadership behaviors

Researchers have emphasized the increasing importance of skilled leadership and the necessity of adopting it in business organizations, especially in light of the uncertainty and excessive competition that organizations are experiencing. This is due to its significant role in making effective decisions that serve the organization's interests. Therefore, its importance appears in enabling organizations to adapt to their internal and external environments and achieve the goals that the organization seeks (Coleman, 2016: 19). (Papachroni, et al., 2015 :75) affirm that the importance of skilled leadership lies in its ability to improve the organization's capacity to anticipate and confront expected events, as well as the complexities that occur in the surrounding work environment. This is achieved through adequate attention to both flexible and normative cultures, and meeting the requirements of individuals that positively affect their stability and motivation. (Benefiel , 2014: 175) sees that its importance is highlighted in:

1. Achieving the strategic objectives of the organization
2. Helping individuals working in the organization to extract their best skills and encouraging them to continuously improve
3. Paying attention to human resources in general and creating an organizational culture dominated by cooperation and respect

3. Dimensions of Skilled leadership behaviors

Skilled leadership is characterized by openness in order to know and explore what is happening around it to achieve its future goals, while at the same time it must be closed to protect its activities from exploitation. (Yousif & Khudhur , 2023: 60), (Kadhim & Fadhila, 2022: 58), (Al-Hassawi ,2023) agreed that the dimensions of skilled leadership behaviors are:

Open Leadership Behaviors: These behaviors motivate employees to break established rules and search for solutions. They allow for working in different ways and can be defined as a set of behaviors that encourage individuals to accomplish tasks differently and independently, especially in situations that require individuals to explore and generate new ideas, leading to a notable increase in innovative results (Klonek, et al., 2020: 9).

Closed Leadership Behaviors: This refers to working within specific constraints set by the leader by reducing variation among subordinates. The leader establishes rules and procedures, monitors goal achievement, and takes corrective actions. In other words, it allows employees to accomplish tasks in a specific way exclusively under the leader's supervision, motivating them to utilize current knowledge to the highest possible level. These behaviors emphasize achieving efficiency and reducing variation in employee behaviors, such as adhering to routines and ensuring the application of established laws (Jianfeng, et al., 2018: 2).

Second: Job polarization

1. The concept of job polarization

The human element is the primary driver for the success of business organizations. It plans, implements, and performs all required tasks, and its success is largely linked to the success of the organization and its objectives. It is one of the most important and valuable resources in the organization. Therefore, business organizations must excel in selecting competent human resources capable of accomplishing their assigned functions with the required quality (Al-Qamousi, 2019: 226). (Al-Heiti , 2010: 91) views employee polarization as the total activities carried out by the organization's management in searching for candidate workers to fill job vacancies with the required number and quality, at the appropriate time and place for the organization. (Nikolaou ,2015: 1) explained that employee polarization is one of the activities carried out by business organizations to search for their needs of highly skilled and efficient working individuals. (Torrington et al. ,2020: 165) affirm that employee polarization is the activities and matters undertaken by the organization through which it seeks to identify and appoint potential employees who will be employed in the organization.

2. The importance of job polarization

After the organization determines the available positions, the number of individuals who will occupy them, and the required specifications for their occupants, the process of recruiting qualified workers to fill these positions begins. This requires the presence of wise

administrative leadership that attracts the best workers who possess sufficient skills to perform these functions optimally (Al-Arafi & Nour Al-Huda, 2022: 7). From here the importance of employee polarization emerges. (Saida ,2017: 38) mentioned that this importance lies in:

1. It serves as a link between planning and selection of competent human resources.
2. It significantly affects the organization's productivity and the level of services provided to customers.
3. It helps in reducing expenses related to training and qualifying employees.
4. It is the first step in building an effective workforce through which the organization's effectiveness and its ability to achieve its goals are determined.

(Al-Qamousi ,2019: 226) explained that the importance of employee polarization is highlighted in:

1. Delivering sufficient information to the labor market about vacant positions in the organization and the qualifications required for applicants to fill them.
2. Helping to increase employee stability in the organization by attracting competent candidates and retaining desired employees.
3. Achieving the legal, ethical, and social responsibility of human resource management by adhering to the correct search process and securing the rights and privileges of job applicants.

The third section: the applied aspect of the research

First: Testing the reliability of the scale

The stability of the scale should be tested to determine the extent of correlation between the contents of the research scale and the obtained answers, that is, to determine the degree of internal consistency of the scale. This was done by extracting Cronbach's alpha coefficient, as shown in Table (1).

Table (12) Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the research scale

Crombach's alpha coefficient						
The dimension	variable	The symbol	The dimension	The symbol	The main variable	
.832	.886	OLB	Open leadership behaviors	AL	Brilliant leadership behaviour	1
.790		CDB	Closed driving behaviors			
	0.858			JP	Job polarization	2

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical program SPSS V.

Based on the results of Table (1), it is clear that the research scale, with all its main and sub-variables, achieved the required internal consistency. The reliability criteria ranged between (.886 - .858), which is higher than the acceptance rate of (70%) according to researchers (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Second: Descriptive Analysis of Research Data

Preface: This section deals with the tests for descriptive analysis of the variables (skilled leadership behaviors, job polarization) by extracting indicators (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, percentages) based on the data obtained from the research sample of (68) individuals, as follows

First: Descriptive analysis of the skillful leadership behavior variable

The descriptive statistics indicators for the independent variable 'skilled leadership behaviors' were calculated, and the results appeared in Table (2). These results show that the independent variable 'skilled leadership behaviors' obtained a general arithmetic mean of (3.6939), which is an arithmetic mean exceeding the hypothetical mean of (3), as the current research relied on a five-point Likert scale. The standard deviation for the variable 'skilled leadership behaviors' was (0.646), which is a low value indicating homogeneity in the respondents' answers, with a high level of interest reaching (73%). This indicates that there is a clear perception in the researched organization that skilled leadership behaviors are one of the important elements that can be invested in supporting the organization's success. As for the items of this variable, they were all close in levels of interest with good interest rates, which is evidence of their importance in work, as shown in Table (3).

Table (3): Statistical description of the independent variable: skillful driving behaviors

The level of interest	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Paragraph symbol
.74174	.66474	3.7087	OLB1
.74488	.63161	3.7244	OLB2
.7307	.65434	3.6535	OLB3
.72756	.53154	3.6378	OLB4
.70552	.65806	3.5276	CDB1
.75984	0.6435	3.7992	CDB2
.72914	.72176	3.6457	CDB3
.7708	.6651	3.8543	CDB4
73.878	0.646	3.6939	General Average

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical program SPSS V. 26

Second: Descriptive analysis of the job polarization variable

The descriptive statistics indicators for the dependent variable 'job polarization' were calculated, and the results appeared in Table (4). These results show that the dependent variable 'job polarization' obtained an arithmetic mean of (3.6508), which is an arithmetic mean exceeding the hypothetical mean of (3), as the current research relied on a five-point Likert scale. The standard deviation for the dependent variable 'job polarization' was (0.6280), which is a low value indicating homogeneity in the respondents' answers, with a high level of interest reaching (73%) . This indicates that there is a clear perception in the researched organization about the importance of job polarization. As for the items of this variable, they were all close in levels of interest with good interest rates, which is evidence of their importance in the organization.

Table (4): Statistical description of the job polarization variable

The level of interest	standard deviation	Arithmetic mean	Paragraph symbol
.71772	.6468	3.5886	Jp1
.73858	.56842	3.6929	Jp2
.7244	.77592	3.6220	Jp3
.69764	.62249	3.4882	Jp4
.70078	.66065	3.5039	Jp5
.7748	.68373	3.8740	Jp6
.75984	0.6435	3.7992	Jp7
.72756	.42298	3.6378	Jp8
73.016	0.6280	3.6508	General Average

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical program

SPSS V. 26

Third: Testing the research hypotheses

First: Testing the correlation hypotheses

The association hypotheses between the main and sub-research variables will be tested:

The first main hypothesis: The skillful leadership behavior variable is significantly related to the job polarization variable at the overall level of the two research variables, and the following hypotheses were derived from it:

1. Open leadership behaviors are significantly related to the job polarization variable.
2. Closed leadership behaviors are significantly related to the job polarization variable.

These were tested using the statistical program (SPSS v.26) and my agencies:

Table (5) Test of correlations

		AL	OLB	CDB
JP	Pearson Correlation	.784**	.665**	.680**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	68	68	68
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical program

SPSS V. 26

The clear results in Table (5) indicate that the independent variable (skilled leadership behaviors) has a positive and significant correlation with the dependent variable (job polarization) at the overall level of the research variables. The correlation coefficient between them reached (0.784) with a significance level of (0.000). Based on these results, the first main correlation hypothesis between the research variables is accepted. Moreover, taking into account the results of Table (5), all sub-correlation hypotheses are accepted, as they came below the significance level of (0.05).

Second: Testing the impact hypotheses

The impact hypotheses between the main and sub-variables of the research will be tested as follows:

The Second Main Hypothesis: skilled leadership behaviors have a significant impact on the dependent variable job polarization at the overall level of the research variables. To test this hypothesis, a structural model was built to show the path of the impact relationship between the two variables (skilled leadership behaviors and job polarization). The results were extracted based on the statistical program (Smart PLS), and the results came as shown in Table (6). It is evident from the results shown in Table (6) that there is a significant impact of the independent variable skilled leadership behaviors on the dependent variable 'job polarization' with a magnitude of (0.735) and a significance level of (0.000). This means that the job polarization variable increases by (73.5%) with a one-unit increase in the skilled leadership behaviors variable. Also, the skilled leadership behaviors variable explains (54%) of the changes that occur in the job polarization variable, which is the value of the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.541$). Based on these results, the main impact hypothesis, which states that (skilled leadership behaviors have a significant impact on the dependent variable job polarization at the overall level of the research variables) is accepted

Table (6): Results of the main effect hypothesis

Hypothesis result	Moral level	value T	standard deviation	value R^2	Impact factor β	Hypothesis path
Acceptable	0.000	11.308	0.067	0.41	0.639	skilled leadership behaviors -> job polarization

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical program SPSS V. 26

As for the sub-hypotheses emanating from the main influence hypothesis, which stated that there is a significant effect of the dimensions of skilled leadership behaviors (open leadership behaviors, closed leadership behaviors) on the dependent variable, job polarization.

The results shown in Table (7) indicate the following:

1. It was found that open leadership behaviors have a significant impact on the job polarization variable, as the impact coefficient value between them was (0.463), with a significance level

of (0.003), which is less than the acceptable and specified significance limit of (0.05). Based on these data, this hypothesis is accepted

2. It became clear that closed leadership behaviors have a significant impact on the job polarization variable, as the impact coefficient value between them reached (0.433), with a significance level of (0.000), which is less than the acceptable and specified significance limit of (0.05). Based on these data, this hypothesis is accepted.

Moreover, the dimensions of the skilled leadership behaviors variable collectively explain (58%) of the total changes occurring in the job polarization variable, while the remaining percentage is due to other variables not addressed by the research test model.

Table (7) Results of testing the sub-hypotheses of influence

Hypothesis result	Moral level	value T	standard deviation	value R ²	Impact factor β	Hypothesis path
Acceptable	0.000	15.346	0.085	0.58	0.463	Open leadership behaviors -> Job polarization
Acceptable	0.000	15.109	0.093		0.433	Open leadership behaviors -> Job polarization

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of the statistical program SPSS V. 26

Section Four: Conclusions and recommendations

First: conclusions

1. skilled leadership behaviors are considered an important concept in business management, combining open and closed behaviors of leaders, which indicates the importance of flexibility and balance in leadership styles.

2. Job polarization is considered a vital and important activity for organizations to attract competent human resources, which significantly affects the organization's performance and its ability to achieve its goals.

3. There is a strong positive relationship between skilled leadership behaviors and job polarization, indicating the importance of these leadership behaviors in improving polarization processes.

4. The response of the surveyed sample to the dimensions of the skilled leadership behaviors variable was acceptable but not at the required level, as shown by the descriptive statistical analysis. The highest response from the surveyed sample was for the item (The organization's leadership adopts the principle of imposing penalties on current employees in case they make mistakes at work), and the lowest response was for the item (The organization's leadership works to increase homogeneity and reduce variance between the performance of employees in the organization).

5. The response of the surveyed sample to the dimensions of the job polarization variable was acceptable but not at the required level, as shown by the descriptive statistical analysis. The highest response from the surveyed sample was for the item (The organization's leadership relies on personal interviews and tests when recruiting new employees), and the lowest response was for the item (The organization's leadership prepares an accurate and

clear description of vacant positions to ensure that the qualifications of candidates match these positions).

Second: Recommendations

1. The organization should develop training programs to enhance skilled leadership behaviors. These programs should focus on achieving a balance between open and closed behaviors and enhancing the ability to adapt to different situations.
2. The organization should review and update job polarization strategies based on skilled leadership behaviors. This may include developing more flexible and innovative polarization processes to attract diverse talents.
3. A performance evaluation system for leaders in business organizations should be established, taking into account skilled leadership behaviors. This will help motivate leaders to adopt these behaviors and improve their performance.
4. Encourage a culture of continuous learning and self-development within the organization, which helps enhance the exploratory and exploitative capabilities of leaders.
5. Develop effective communication channels within the organization to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and ideas between leaders and employees, which enhances the effectiveness of skilled leadership behaviors.
6. Work on increasing organizational flexibility to facilitate the application of skilled leadership behaviors and enable the organization to respond quickly to changes in the work environment.
7. Encourage innovation and creativity at all levels of the organization, which supports the exploratory aspect of skilled leadership behaviors.

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