



# The Impact of Strategic Leadership Styles and Knowledge Sharing on Employee Performance (Case Study: Employees of Imam Khomeini Airport)

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## Abstract

In this regard, the aim of the present study was to investigate the impact of strategic leadership styles and knowledge sharing on employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs. This study was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-survey in terms of data collection method. The statistical population of this study consisted of all managers and employees of Imam Khomeini Customs, from whom 197 individuals were selected using Cochran's formula and convenience sampling. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to collect the required data. Its validity was finalized after applying the supervisor's comments, and its reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (greater than 0.70). The findings were analyzed using structural equation modeling and Smart PLS software. The research findings indicated that transformational leadership style affects employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs. Transactional leadership style affects employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs. Charismatic leadership style affects employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs. Transformational leadership style affects knowledge sharing at Imam Khomeini Customs. Transactional leadership style affects knowledge sharing at Imam Khomeini Customs. Charismatic leadership style affects knowledge sharing at Imam Khomeini Customs. Knowledge sharing affects employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs. The results showed that transformational leadership style ( $\beta = 0.271$ ), transactional leadership style ( $\beta = 0.232$ ), and charismatic leadership style ( $\beta = 0.153$ ) have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Furthermore, these three leadership styles had a positive and significant effect on knowledge sharing, and knowledge sharing also influenced employee performance ( $\beta = 0.288$ ). The mediating role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between leadership styles and performance was confirmed. Customs managers can improve employee performance by strengthening strategic leadership styles and fostering a culture of knowledge sharing.

**Keywords:** Strategic leadership styles, knowledge sharing, employee performance, Imam Khomeini Customs

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## 1. Introduction

In today's highly competitive and knowledge-driven organizational environment, employee performance has become one of the most important determinants of organizational success and sustainability. Organizations operating in dynamic and technology-oriented contexts increasingly recognize that traditional managerial approaches are no longer sufficient for maintaining effectiveness, adaptability, and innovation. In this regard,

leadership has emerged as a critical organizational capability that shapes employee attitudes, behaviors, and performance outcomes. Strategic leadership styles, particularly transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership, have attracted considerable scholarly attention due to their ability to influence organizational effectiveness and employee productivity. Contemporary organizations require leaders who can inspire employees, facilitate collaboration, encourage learning, and create environments that support knowledge exchange and continuous improvement [1-3].



The increasing complexity of organizational structures and technological developments has further intensified the importance of leadership approaches that can integrate strategic thinking with employee development and organizational learning processes.

Strategic leadership refers to a leader's ability to anticipate future challenges, formulate appropriate organizational directions, and motivate employees toward achieving organizational goals. Transformational leadership, as one of the most influential strategic leadership styles, emphasizes inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and vision creation. Transformational leaders encourage employees to transcend personal interests for collective organizational objectives and foster environments characterized by trust, creativity, and collaboration. Previous studies have shown that transformational leadership significantly enhances employee engagement, organizational commitment, and performance outcomes by motivating employees to contribute more effectively to organizational processes [4-6]. Transformational leadership also plays a vital role in promoting adaptability and innovation within organizations undergoing digital transformation and environmental uncertainty [2, 7]. Employees working under transformational leaders are more likely to share expertise, support colleagues, and participate in organizational learning activities because such leaders create supportive and empowering organizational climates.

Transactional leadership, another important leadership style, focuses on structured exchanges between leaders and followers through rewards, supervision, and performance monitoring. Although transformational leadership is often associated with innovation and organizational change, transactional leadership remains highly relevant in operational environments where clarity, accountability, and task efficiency are essential. Transactional leaders establish clear expectations, define responsibilities, and use performance-based rewards to achieve organizational objectives. In organizational contexts such as customs administration and airport operations, where precision, compliance, and procedural efficiency are highly important, transactional leadership may contribute significantly to employee effectiveness and operational consistency. Research indicates that transactional leadership can positively influence employee productivity and knowledge-sharing behaviors when employees perceive fairness, support, and recognition within organizational systems [8, 9]. Furthermore, transactional leadership can complement

transformational leadership by ensuring operational discipline while simultaneously encouraging performance improvement.

Charismatic leadership has also emerged as an influential leadership style in modern organizational research. Charismatic leaders possess strong communication abilities, confidence, and vision that enable them to inspire followers emotionally and psychologically. Employees often perceive charismatic leaders as role models capable of motivating collective action and enhancing organizational identification. Such leaders are particularly effective in uncertain or rapidly changing environments because they generate confidence and commitment among organizational members. Research findings suggest that charismatic leadership contributes positively to employee motivation, innovative behavior, and organizational performance by creating emotional attachment and fostering trust-based relationships [10, 11]. In organizations characterized by complex interactions and operational demands, charismatic leadership may strengthen employees' willingness to cooperate, share knowledge, and achieve organizational objectives collaboratively.

Alongside strategic leadership styles, knowledge sharing has become a central concept in organizational management and knowledge-based economies. Knowledge sharing refers to the process through which employees exchange information, expertise, skills, and experiences with colleagues to improve organizational learning and performance. In contemporary organizations, knowledge is increasingly recognized as a strategic resource capable of generating innovation, competitive advantage, and long-term sustainability. Organizations that successfully encourage knowledge-sharing behaviors among employees are better positioned to improve decision-making, problem-solving, creativity, and operational efficiency [12, 13]. Knowledge sharing enables organizations to prevent knowledge loss, reduce redundancy, and facilitate continuous learning processes across different organizational units.

The relationship between leadership and knowledge sharing has received significant scholarly attention in recent years. Leadership behaviors strongly influence employees' willingness to share knowledge because leaders shape organizational culture, communication patterns, trust levels, and psychological safety. Employees are more likely to engage in knowledge-sharing activities when leaders encourage participation, collaboration, and mutual respect. Transformational leaders, in particular, foster open

communication and collective learning environments that promote knowledge exchange among employees [5, 14]. Similarly, authentic and ethical leadership styles have been shown to enhance trust and intrinsic motivation, which subsequently facilitate knowledge-sharing behaviors [14, 15]. Knowledge-oriented leadership practices contribute to the development of organizational cultures where employees perceive knowledge sharing as beneficial for both individual and organizational growth.

The emergence of digital transformation and technological advancement has further amplified the importance of knowledge sharing within organizations. Digital technologies have changed the ways organizations create, distribute, and utilize knowledge, making digital leadership capabilities increasingly important. Leaders are now expected not only to manage traditional organizational functions but also to guide employees through technological transitions and digital innovation processes. Digital leadership emphasizes the integration of technological competence, strategic thinking, and organizational adaptability to improve performance and innovation outcomes [2, 3]. Research demonstrates that digital transformational leadership significantly improves organizational innovation capability through effective knowledge-sharing mechanisms [1, 7]. Organizations operating in technologically intensive environments require leadership approaches capable of leveraging digital resources while simultaneously fostering employee collaboration and learning.

Knowledge sharing has also been identified as a mediating mechanism linking leadership styles to organizational outcomes. Leadership behaviors often influence employee performance indirectly through the enhancement of communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. Employees who actively participate in knowledge-sharing activities tend to demonstrate higher creativity, adaptability, and task performance because they benefit from collective expertise and organizational learning resources. Several studies have confirmed the mediating role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between leadership and organizational effectiveness [6, 16]. For instance, empowering leadership has been found to improve adaptive employee performance through enhanced knowledge sharing and organizational agility [6]. Similarly, servant leadership and ethical leadership contribute to organizational value and employee effectiveness by strengthening knowledge management processes and collaborative behaviors [15, 16].

Employee performance itself represents a multidimensional construct encompassing efficiency, productivity, innovation, quality of work, and goal achievement. Organizations increasingly depend on employee performance to maintain competitiveness and achieve strategic objectives in rapidly changing business environments. Leadership and knowledge-sharing processes play crucial roles in shaping employee performance because they influence employees' motivation, capabilities, and access to organizational resources. Research findings indicate that organizations with strong knowledge-sharing cultures and effective leadership practices experience higher levels of employee engagement, creativity, and operational effectiveness [8, 17]. Knowledge-sharing environments encourage employees to collaborate more effectively, solve problems collectively, and continuously improve work processes.

In service-oriented and operational organizations such as customs administrations and airport environments, employee performance is particularly important because organizational efficiency directly influences service quality, operational accuracy, and public trust. Customs organizations are responsible for facilitating trade processes, enforcing regulations, and ensuring operational security within highly dynamic and complex environments. Employees in such organizations must demonstrate strong coordination, communication, and decision-making abilities to perform effectively. Leadership styles that encourage collaboration, adaptability, and knowledge sharing may therefore contribute significantly to improving organizational performance in customs settings. Strategic leadership practices may help employees manage operational complexity, adapt to regulatory changes, and improve organizational responsiveness to environmental demands [9, 13].

Although numerous studies have investigated leadership, knowledge sharing, and employee performance independently, limited research has simultaneously examined the effects of transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership styles on employee performance through the mediating role of knowledge sharing within customs organizations. Furthermore, many previous studies have focused primarily on educational institutions, technology firms, or private-sector organizations, while fewer studies have explored these relationships in governmental and customs environments characterized by operational sensitivity and procedural complexity [17, 18]. Therefore, examining the relationships among strategic

leadership styles, knowledge sharing, and employee performance within Imam Khomeini Customs can contribute valuable theoretical and practical insights for organizational management and leadership development.

Accordingly, the present study aimed to investigate the impact of strategic leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership, on employee performance with the mediating role of knowledge sharing among employees of Imam Khomeini Customs.

## 2. Methodology

The present study was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-survey in terms of data collection method. Applied research aims to provide practical solutions for real-world organizational problems, while descriptive-survey studies focus on describing existing conditions and examining the relationships among research variables. The statistical population of the study consisted of all managers and employees working at Imam Khomeini Customs. According to the information provided by the relevant authorities, the total number of managers and employees was 403 individuals. The inclusion criteria for participation in the study included holding at least a bachelor's degree, willingness to participate in the survey process, and possessing sufficient knowledge and understanding regarding the concepts and indicators examined in the research. Based on Cochran's sampling formula and considering a 95% confidence level, an error level of 0.05, and  $p = q = 0.50$ , the sample size was determined to be 197 participants. The participants were selected using a convenience sampling method due to the accessibility of respondents and the operational conditions of the organization.

Data collection in this study was conducted through both library-based and field methods. In the library phase, books, scientific articles, previous studies, and online academic resources were reviewed in order to develop the theoretical foundations and research literature related to strategic leadership styles, knowledge sharing, and employee performance. In the field phase, the required empirical data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire designed specifically for the objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section included demographic questions related to participants' gender, educational level, and years of work experience. The second section included 31 specialized

items designed to measure the main variables of the study. Among these items, 17 questions measured strategic leadership styles, including transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and charismatic leadership; 8 questions measured knowledge sharing; and 6 questions assessed employee performance.

More specifically, transformational leadership was measured through 5 items, transactional leadership through 5 items, charismatic leadership through 7 items, knowledge sharing through 8 items, and employee performance through 6 items. The questionnaire items were developed based on the theoretical foundations and previous empirical studies relevant to the research topic. To ensure the validity of the instrument, content validity was employed. After conducting a preliminary review of the literature and identifying the dimensions of the variables, the initial version of the questionnaire was prepared and reviewed by the research supervisor and several academic experts in the fields of management and organizational studies. Their comments and recommendations were applied in revising the wording, structure, and clarity of the questionnaire items, and the final version of the instrument was subsequently approved.

The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient in order to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. The obtained alpha coefficients demonstrated satisfactory reliability for all research variables, as all values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Specifically, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.86 for transformational leadership, 0.88 for transactional leadership, 0.84 for charismatic leadership, 0.86 for knowledge sharing, and 0.82 for employee performance. These results confirmed the reliability and consistency of the questionnaire for measuring the constructs of the study.

The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. In the descriptive statistics section, measures such as frequency, percentage, and mean were used to summarize and describe the demographic characteristics of the participants and the general status of the variables. In the inferential statistics section, structural equation modeling (SEM) with the partial least squares (PLS) approach was employed to test the research hypotheses and examine the relationships among the variables. The statistical analyses were conducted using Smart PLS software version 3.3.3. The use of the PLS-SEM approach was considered appropriate due to its suitability for predictive research models, its ability to analyze complex

relationships among latent variables, and its effectiveness in handling relatively small sample sizes.

### 3. Findings and Results

The descriptive findings of the study showed that the majority of the participants held a bachelor’s degree (54%), while 39% had a master’s degree and 7% held a doctoral degree. In terms of work experience, most respondents had

between 11 and 15 years of professional experience (47%), followed by 23% with 6 to 10 years of experience, 17% with less than 5 years, and 13% with more than 16 years of experience. Regarding gender distribution, 87% of the respondents were male and 13% were female. These findings indicate that the participants generally possessed adequate educational background and professional experience relevant to the organizational context of the study.

**Table 1.** Results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test for Normality of Variables

Variables	Kolmogorov–Smirnov Statistic	Significance Level	Result
Transformational Leadership	1.41	0.075	Normal
Transactional Leadership	1.37	0.088	Normal
Charismatic Leadership	1.46	0.053	Normal
Knowledge Sharing	1.29	0.066	Normal
Employee Performance	1.50	0.082	Normal

The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test demonstrated that the significance values for all research variables were greater than 0.05. Specifically, the significance values ranged from 0.053 to 0.088, indicating that the data distribution for transformational leadership,

transactional leadership, charismatic leadership, knowledge sharing, and employee performance followed a normal distribution. Therefore, the assumptions for applying parametric statistical techniques and structural equation modeling were satisfied.

**Table 2.** Construct Validity Indices of the Research Variables

Variables	AVE	CR
Transformational Leadership	0.601	0.882
Transactional Leadership	0.576	0.820
Charismatic Leadership	0.525	0.845
Knowledge Sharing	0.510	0.875
Employee Performance	0.595	0.860

The construct validity of the measurement model was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR). The results indicated that all AVE values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.510 to 0.601, which confirmed adequate convergent validity for all constructs. In addition, all CR

values were higher than 0.70, ranging from 0.820 to 0.882, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability of the constructs. These findings confirmed that the measurement model possessed appropriate construct validity and reliability.

**Table 3.** Correlation Matrix of the Research Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Transformational Leadership	0.89				
2. Transactional Leadership	0.85	0.86			
3. Charismatic Leadership	0.79	0.81	0.83		
4. Knowledge Sharing	0.74	0.75	0.78	0.80	
5. Employee Performance	0.70	0.71	0.72	0.74	0.76

The correlation matrix results demonstrated significant positive relationships among all research variables at the 95% confidence level. Transformational leadership showed a strong positive correlation with transactional leadership ( $r$

$= 0.85$ ) and charismatic leadership ( $r = 0.79$ ). Knowledge sharing was positively associated with transformational leadership ( $r = 0.74$ ), transactional leadership ( $r = 0.75$ ), and charismatic leadership ( $r = 0.78$ ). Furthermore, employee

performance exhibited significant positive correlations with transformational leadership ( $r = 0.70$ ), transactional leadership ( $r = 0.71$ ), charismatic leadership ( $r = 0.72$ ), and

knowledge sharing ( $r = 0.74$ ). These findings indicate that improvements in strategic leadership styles and knowledge sharing are associated with higher employee performance.

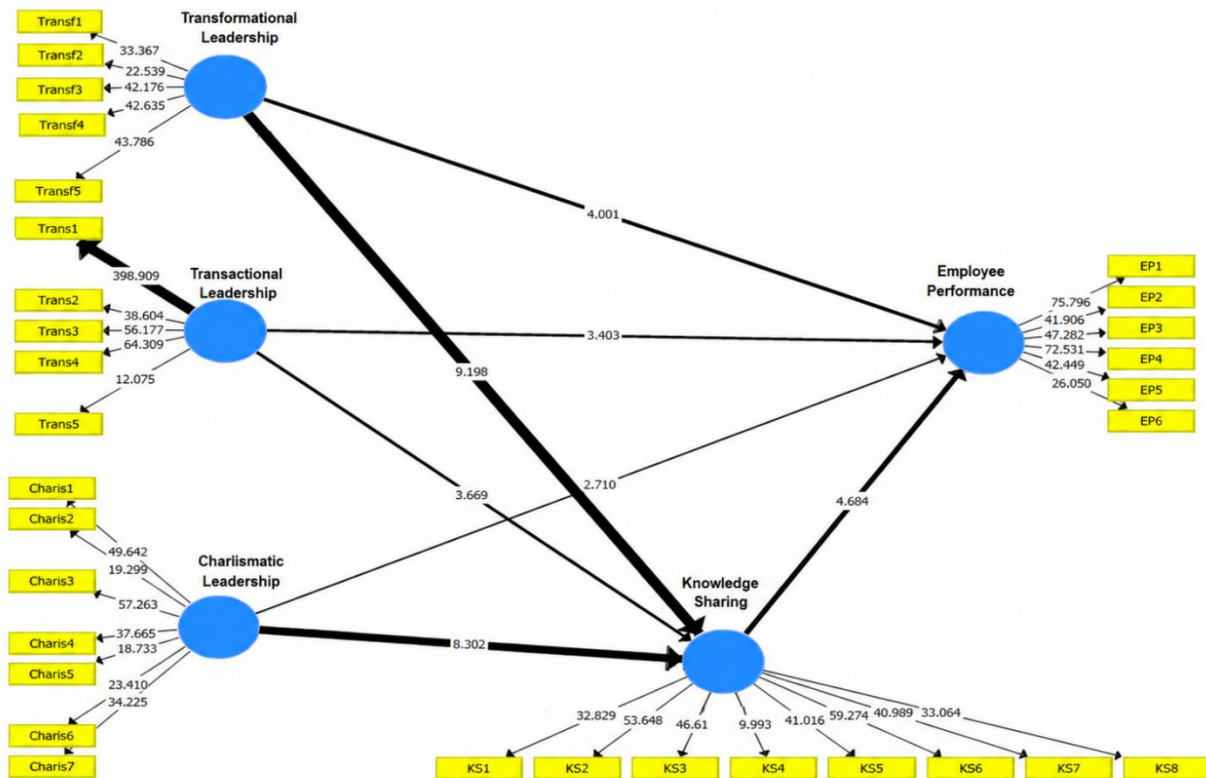


Figure 1. Structural Equation Model in Standardized Coefficients and t-Values

The structural equation modeling results revealed that all proposed hypotheses were supported, as the t-values for all relationships exceeded the critical value of 1.96 at the 95% confidence level. Among the direct effects on employee performance, transformational leadership demonstrated the strongest effect ( $\beta = 0.271$ ,  $t = 4.001$ ), followed by transactional leadership ( $\beta = 0.232$ ,  $t = 3.403$ ) and charismatic leadership ( $\beta = 0.153$ ,  $t = 2.710$ ). In terms of the effects on knowledge sharing, transformational leadership

had the strongest influence ( $\beta = 0.440$ ,  $t = 9.198$ ), followed by charismatic leadership ( $\beta = 0.345$ ,  $t = 8.302$ ) and transactional leadership ( $\beta = 0.216$ ,  $t = 3.669$ ). Moreover, knowledge sharing had a significant positive effect on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.288$ ,  $t = 4.684$ ). These findings confirm the significant role of strategic leadership styles in enhancing employee performance directly and indirectly through knowledge sharing.

Table 4. Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypotheses	Path Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Result
Transformational leadership positively affects employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs	0.271	4.001	Confirmed
Transactional leadership positively affects employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs	0.232	3.403	Confirmed
Charismatic leadership positively affects employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs	0.153	2.710	Confirmed
Transformational leadership positively affects knowledge sharing at Imam Khomeini Customs	0.440	9.198	Confirmed
Transactional leadership positively affects knowledge sharing at Imam Khomeini Customs	0.216	3.669	Confirmed
Charismatic leadership positively affects knowledge sharing at Imam Khomeini Customs	0.345	8.302	Confirmed
Knowledge sharing positively affects employee performance at Imam Khomeini Customs	0.288	4.684	Confirmed

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study investigated the impact of strategic leadership styles, including transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership, on employee performance with the mediating role of knowledge sharing among employees of Imam Khomeini Customs. The findings demonstrated that all proposed hypotheses were confirmed and that strategic leadership styles significantly influence both knowledge sharing and employee performance. Furthermore, knowledge sharing was found to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance and also played a mediating role in the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance. These findings highlight the importance of leadership approaches that promote communication, collaboration, and organizational learning in improving employee effectiveness within operational and service-oriented organizations.

The results revealed that transformational leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding indicates that leaders who inspire employees, provide intellectual stimulation, encourage innovation, and create a compelling organizational vision can significantly improve employee productivity and effectiveness. Transformational leaders motivate employees to exceed routine expectations and become more committed to organizational goals. In the context of customs organizations, where employees operate in dynamic and highly regulated environments, transformational leadership can create a sense of purpose and motivation that enhances work quality and operational performance. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that transformational leadership positively affects employee engagement, innovative behavior, and adaptive performance [4-6]. Similarly, the findings align with studies emphasizing the strategic role of transformational and digital leadership in improving organizational capabilities and performance outcomes during periods of organizational transformation and technological development [1, 2, 7].

The findings also showed that transactional leadership had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This result suggests that reward-based management practices, clear performance expectations, supervision, and structured organizational systems contribute positively to employee productivity in customs organizations. Transactional leadership may be particularly effective in environments where operational precision,

procedural compliance, and accountability are essential. Employees working under transactional leaders may demonstrate improved performance because they clearly understand organizational expectations and receive recognition for accomplishing assigned tasks. This finding supports previous studies indicating that transactional and structured leadership practices can enhance employee effectiveness when employees perceive fairness and organizational support [8, 9]. In operational organizations such as customs administrations, transactional leadership may complement transformational leadership by ensuring discipline and efficiency while simultaneously supporting organizational objectives.

Another important finding of the study was the positive and significant effect of charismatic leadership on employee performance. Charismatic leaders often possess strong communication skills, confidence, and emotional influence that inspire employees and strengthen organizational commitment. Employees who perceive their leaders as charismatic may develop stronger emotional attachment to organizational goals and demonstrate greater willingness to contribute to organizational success. In customs organizations, where employees may experience operational stress and complex responsibilities, charismatic leadership can foster motivation, optimism, and trust among employees. This finding is consistent with studies demonstrating that charismatic and resonant leadership positively influence employee creativity, organizational commitment, and performance through emotional inspiration and interpersonal influence [10, 11]. Charismatic leaders are capable of creating psychologically supportive work environments that encourage employees to perform more effectively and collaboratively.

The results further demonstrated that transformational leadership had a significant positive effect on knowledge sharing. This finding suggests that transformational leaders create environments characterized by trust, collaboration, intellectual stimulation, and open communication, all of which facilitate knowledge exchange among employees. Employees are more willing to share experiences, expertise, and information when they perceive organizational support and inspirational leadership. Transformational leaders encourage teamwork and collective learning, thereby strengthening organizational knowledge flows. This finding is in line with prior studies indicating that transformational leadership promotes knowledge-sharing behavior through organizational support, trust, and knowledge-centered cultures [5, 14]. Additionally, studies on digital

transformational leadership emphasize that transformational leaders are essential for facilitating organizational learning and innovation in technologically evolving environments [1, 2].

The findings also indicated that transactional leadership positively influenced knowledge sharing. Although transactional leadership is generally associated with structured management and performance monitoring, the results suggest that clearly defined organizational systems and reward mechanisms may encourage employees to participate in knowledge-sharing activities. Employees may become more willing to exchange knowledge when organizational structures support collaboration and recognize cooperative behaviors. In operational organizations such as customs administrations, procedural clarity and systematic communication may facilitate effective information exchange among employees and departments. This result is supported by previous research emphasizing the relationship between organizational management systems, leadership practices, and knowledge-sharing processes [8, 9]. Transactional leadership may therefore contribute indirectly to organizational learning by reinforcing formal communication channels and cooperative work behaviors.

Another important result was the significant positive relationship between charismatic leadership and knowledge sharing. Charismatic leaders often establish emotionally engaging and trust-based relationships with employees, which can reduce communication barriers and encourage employees to share ideas, experiences, and expertise more openly. Employees may feel psychologically safer and more motivated to participate in collaborative learning activities under charismatic leaders. This finding aligns with studies highlighting the role of inspirational and resonant leadership in promoting organizational creativity and collaborative knowledge exchange [10, 11]. Charismatic leadership may therefore enhance knowledge-sharing cultures by fostering enthusiasm, trust, and interpersonal cohesion within organizations.

The study further demonstrated that knowledge sharing had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding confirms that organizational knowledge exchange contributes directly to employee effectiveness, operational quality, and problem-solving capability. Employees who actively share knowledge gain access to broader organizational expertise, learn from colleagues' experiences, and improve their ability to perform tasks efficiently. In customs organizations, where

operational processes require coordination, timely information exchange, and procedural accuracy, knowledge sharing may significantly improve service quality and organizational responsiveness. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that knowledge-sharing behavior enhances employee agility, adaptive performance, creativity, and organizational innovation [6, 11, 13]. Furthermore, knowledge-sharing practices contribute to organizational learning and help organizations respond more effectively to environmental and technological changes.

One of the most important findings of the present study was the mediating role of knowledge sharing in the relationship between leadership styles and employee performance. This result suggests that leadership styles improve employee performance not only directly but also indirectly by strengthening organizational knowledge-sharing processes. Strategic leaders create organizational climates characterized by trust, collaboration, communication, and support, which encourage employees to exchange knowledge and expertise. These knowledge-sharing activities subsequently enhance employee capabilities, learning, and work effectiveness. The mediating role identified in this study is consistent with previous research emphasizing that knowledge sharing serves as a critical mechanism linking leadership behaviors to organizational outcomes [6, 15, 16]. Similarly, studies on digital leadership and organizational innovation have shown that leadership capabilities improve organizational performance through enhanced knowledge management and collaborative learning systems [17, 18].

The findings of this study also contribute to the growing literature on leadership and knowledge management in the context of digital transformation and knowledge-based organizations. Modern organizations increasingly depend on strategic leadership capabilities that can integrate technological adaptation, employee development, and organizational learning. The positive relationships identified among strategic leadership styles, knowledge sharing, and employee performance suggest that organizational success depends significantly on leadership approaches that foster learning-oriented and collaborative cultures. Studies focusing on digital leadership and digital entrepreneurship development similarly emphasize that effective leadership is essential for enhancing innovation capability, organizational adaptability, and employee engagement in rapidly changing environments [1, 3, 19]. Therefore, customs organizations and other governmental institutions may improve organizational performance by investing in leadership

development programs that encourage communication, trust-building, and knowledge-sharing behaviors.

The results also highlight the importance of organizational culture in facilitating the relationship between leadership and employee outcomes. Leadership styles influence employees' perceptions of organizational support, trust, fairness, and collaboration, all of which shape employees' willingness to participate in knowledge-sharing activities. Organizations characterized by supportive leadership and learning-oriented cultures are more likely to achieve higher levels of innovation, creativity, and operational performance. Previous studies have similarly emphasized that organizational culture and leadership jointly influence knowledge management practices and organizational effectiveness [8, 14, 17]. Therefore, customs managers should not focus solely on operational efficiency but should also create organizational climates that encourage communication, collaboration, and continuous learning among employees.

Another implication of the findings is that leadership effectiveness in governmental and customs organizations requires a balanced combination of inspirational, relational, and performance-oriented leadership behaviors. Transformational leadership encourages innovation and motivation, transactional leadership ensures discipline and accountability, and charismatic leadership strengthens emotional commitment and trust. The integration of these leadership styles may create comprehensive organizational systems capable of improving both employee performance and organizational adaptability. Previous studies have similarly highlighted that leadership effectiveness often depends on combining different leadership approaches according to organizational needs and environmental conditions [9, 10]. Consequently, organizational leaders should adopt flexible and multidimensional leadership strategies to address operational challenges and support employee development effectively.

One limitation of the present study was that the research was conducted only among employees of Imam Khomeini Customs, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other governmental or private-sector organizations. In addition, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be influenced by response bias or social desirability bias. Another limitation was the cross-sectional nature of the study, which restricted the ability to examine causal relationships over time. Furthermore, other organizational factors such as organizational climate, employee personality traits, job

stress, and technological infrastructure were not included in the conceptual model and may influence employee performance and knowledge-sharing behaviors.

Future research is recommended to investigate the relationships among strategic leadership styles, knowledge sharing, and employee performance in different organizational contexts and industries in order to improve the generalizability of the findings. Researchers may also employ longitudinal designs to examine changes in leadership effectiveness and knowledge-sharing behaviors over time. Future studies could incorporate additional mediating or moderating variables such as organizational trust, psychological empowerment, digital literacy, organizational innovation, or employee resilience. Comparative studies between public and private organizations or between traditional and digital work environments may also provide deeper insights into the role of leadership in organizational effectiveness.

From a practical perspective, customs managers and organizational policymakers should prioritize the development of strategic leadership competencies among managers and supervisors. Leadership training programs should focus on enhancing transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership skills in order to improve communication, motivation, and organizational collaboration. Organizations should also establish supportive systems and organizational cultures that encourage knowledge sharing through teamwork, digital communication platforms, and employee participation in decision-making processes. Furthermore, reward systems and performance evaluation mechanisms should recognize collaborative behaviors and knowledge-sharing activities to strengthen organizational learning and improve employee performance.

### **Authors' Contributions**

Authors equally contributed to this article.

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### **Declaration of Interest**

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

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