

Wise Leadership for Virtual Team Learning: The Mediating Role of Organisational Storytelling within Educational Organisations

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Abstract

The increasing reliance on virtual teams has transformed organisational learning from an individual activity into a collective capability that depends heavily on effective leadership and knowledge-sharing practices. Despite extensive research on leadership and team learning, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how Wise Leadership (WL) promotes Virtual Team Learning (VTL) through Organisational Storytelling (OS), particularly within educational organisations. Addressing this gap, the present study develops and empirically tests an integrated conceptual model examining the direct and indirect relationships among WL, OS, and VTL in the Representative Offices of the Iraqi Ministry of Education operating in the Kurdistan Region. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to employees and team leaders working in virtual teams. The proposed model was analysed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to assess both the measurement and structural models. The findings demonstrate that WL exerts a significant positive influence on OS and VTL. Furthermore, OS significantly enhances VTL and partially mediates the relationship between WL and VTL, indicating that leaders who effectively communicate organisational experiences through meaningful narratives substantially strengthen collaborative learning processes. The study contributes to the leadership, knowledge management, and organisational learning literature by introducing one of the first empirical models integrating WL, OS, and VTL within a single framework. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of developing leaders' practical wisdom and storytelling capabilities to improve knowledge sharing, collaboration, and continuous learning in virtual educational environments.

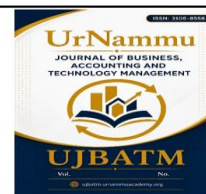


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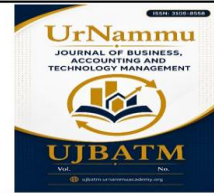


Appendix A. Study Questionnaire Items

The study questionnaire consisted of three principal constructs measuring Wise Leadership (WL), Organisational Storytelling (OS), and Virtual Team Learning (VTL). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

A.1 Wise Leadership (WL): Wise Leadership refers to leaders' capability to integrate practical wisdom, contextual judgement, ethical decision-making, and knowledge creation to guide organisational members towards achieving the common good (Abdulmuhsin & Tarhini, 2020; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2019).

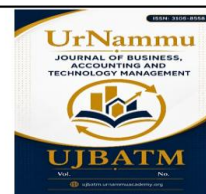
Code	Item
Good Judgement	
WL1	Our leaders create a shared context for knowledge exchange.
WL2	Our leaders create a shared context that encourages diverse viewpoints.
WL3	Our leaders create opportunities for employees to exchange experiences and opinions.
Sharing Contexts with Others	
WL4	Our leaders establish a shared environment that sustains communication among knowledge contributors.
WL5	Our leaders encourage teamwork and collaborative working.
WL6	Our leaders promote active participation while discouraging free-riding within teams.
Grasping the Essence of Situations	
WL7	Our leaders strengthen team members' insight to better understand collaborative work.
WL8	Our leaders develop employees' ability to anticipate future work requirements accurately.
Reconstructing Underlying Assumptions	



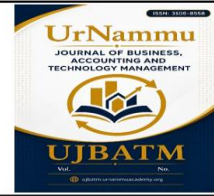
Code	Item
WL9	Our leaders maintain clear policies that support continuous communication.
WL10	Our leaders encourage organisational storytelling to stimulate creativity and innovation. <i>(Deleted after CFA)</i>
WL11	Our leaders enhance employees' oral and written communication skills.
Realising the Common Good	
WL12	Our leaders make decisions based on ethical principles and organisational values.
WL13	Our leaders emphasise organisational social responsibility when making decisions.
Cultivating Wisdom	
WL14	Our leaders cultivate wisdom through workplace training.
WL15	Our leaders cultivate wisdom through learning based on examples and guiding principles.

A.2 Organisational Storytelling (OS): Organisational Storytelling refers to the strategic use of narratives to communicate experiences, create shared meaning, transfer knowledge, and support collective organisational learning (Hartman et al., 2019).

Code	Item
User Requirements	
ST1	Organisational stories contain sufficient detail. <i>(Deleted after CFA)</i>
ST2	Organisational stories help me understand work-related issues more effectively.
ST3	Organisational stories empower me to perform my work confidently.
ST4	Organisational stories motivate me to learn more about the topic being discussed.
ST5	Organisational stories help me identify clear goals to achieve.
ST6	Organisational stories improve my ability to communicate with colleagues.
ST7	I trust the information conveyed through organisational stories.

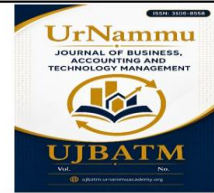


Code	Item
Emotional Appeal	
ST8	The storyteller expresses appropriate emotions.
ST9	The storyteller uses suitable visual cues.
ST10	The storyteller uses appropriate verbal cues.
ST11	The storyteller is an effective colleague for discussing work-related issues.
ST12	The storyteller considers my personal feelings during communication.
ST13	The storyteller behaves similarly to a real person.
Perceived Realism	
ST14	The storyteller uses appropriate hand gestures. <i>(Deleted after CFA)</i>
ST15	The storyteller uses appropriate facial expressions.
ST16	The storyteller uses appropriate head movements.
ST17	The storyteller maintains appropriate eye contact.
Technical Characteristics	
ST18	I experienced no interruptions or communication problems during storytelling sessions.
ST19	The digital platform provided good audio quality.
ST20	The digital platform provided good video quality.
Interaction	
ST21	Organisational stories clearly define time and place.
ST22	Interacting with the virtual storyteller is more effective than face-to-face communication.
ST23	The virtual storyteller regularly asks about my personal goals.
ST24	The digital storytelling platform has a clear and well-organised interface.
ST25	The virtual storyteller effectively supports my learning.



A.3 Virtual Team Learning (VTL): Virtual Team Learning refers to the collective process through which team members acquire, share, integrate, reflect upon, and apply knowledge to improve team performance (Chiu et al., 2020).

Code	Item
Knowledge Sharing	
LP1	My colleagues willingly share their knowledge and ideas with others.
LP2	Team members openly express their ideas. <i>(Deleted after CFA)</i>
LP3	Team members with specialised knowledge are willing to help me.
LP4	My team effectively uses knowledge obtained from external sources.
LP5	Our team knows how to utilise the knowledge of its members.
LP6	Team members keep their best ideas to themselves. <i>(Reverse coded)</i>
LP7	Team members willingly share their knowledge and ideas.
Co-construction and Constructive Conflict	
LP8	Our team discusses different ways of achieving its goals. <i>(Deleted after CFA)</i>
LP9	Problems are examined from different perspectives.
LP10	When things do not go as planned, we analyse the underlying causes.
LP11	We reconsider our work methods when circumstances change.
LP12	We regularly question our goals to improve them.
LP13	We analyse why we were successful as a team.
LP14	We discuss whether our team works effectively.
LP15	We reflect on how decisions are made within our team.
LP16	We reflect on how we communicate with one another.
Boundary-Spanning Learning	
LP17	Team members consult individuals possessing relevant expertise when necessary.
LP18	Team members search inside and outside the organisation for useful ideas and expertise.



Code	Item
LP19	Team members actively seek relevant information across the organisation.
LP20	Team members can access individuals with appropriate technical expertise.
Team Reflexivity	
LP21	Our team usually makes well-considered decisions.
LP22	We review our working methods in response to environmental changes.
LP23	We discuss alternative ways of achieving our objectives.
LP24	Problems are discussed only after they become critical. <i>(Reverse coded)</i>
LP25	We reflect on what we have learned from previous activities.
LP26	Before starting work, we ensure that everyone shares the same understanding of the problem.
LP27	During task execution, we periodically evaluate whether we are progressing appropriately.
LP28	Team members openly discuss problems as soon as they are identified.
LP29	We consider the long-term consequences of our activities.
LP30	We evaluate whether our activities achieved the expected outcomes.
Knowledge Storage and Retrieval	
LP31	We use electronic documents created by the team to support future work.
LP32	We store team documents in a shared electronic archive.
LP33	We maintain our organisational knowledge in electronic repositories.
LP34	We use archived team documents as guidance for future activities.
LP35	We record team meetings using audio and video technologies. <i>(Deleted after CFA)</i>

Note: All items were assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. Items identified as deleted after Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were removed from the final measurement model to improve construct validity and model fit. Reverse-coded items were recoded prior to statistical analysis.