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Participative Leadership and Organizational Identification in SMEs in the MENA Region: Testing the Roles of CSR Perceptions and Pride in Membership

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore the process linking participative leadership to organizational identification. The study examines the relationship between participative leadership and internal CSR perceptions of employees and also investigates the role that pride in membership plays in the affiliation of CSR perceptions with organizational identification. By studying these relationships, the paper aspires to contemplate new presumed mediators in the association of participative leadership with organizational identification as well as determine a possible novel antecedent of employee CSR perceptions. Empirical evidence is provided from data that was collected through a survey distributed to employees working for small and medium sized enterprises in three countries in the Middle East and North Africa region, particularly the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, and Tunisia. Findings show that participative leadership leads to positive internal CSR perceptions of employees and that these CSR perceptions lead to pride in membership which, in turn, results in organizational identification. Implications of these findings are also discussed.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility; Organizational Identification; Participative Leadership; Pride in Membership; SMEs; the MENA Region

Introduction

The leader-follower relationship is one of the most central discussions in the corporate world today. A good leader is essential to attain good results out of employees and enhance their emotional aspects positively (Choudhary et al., 2013). Limited number of studies have explored the role that leadership plays on employees' organizational identification (OI). Those studies have mainly concerted on transformational and transactional leadership (e.g., Epitropaki and Martin, 2005; Zhu et al., 2012). Participative leadership, however, is relatively a newcomer on the prospect of leadership research (Martin, 2015). This style of leadership that favours consultation and discussion over direction (Amabile et al., 2004) has proven to be positively related to desirable employee outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviour, and team innovation (e.g., Chen at al., 2011; Huang et al., 2010; Miao et al., 2014; Somech, 2005), but has not yet been linked to OI. OI is the vision of a member's belongingness to an organization so that the membership to that organization converts into a substantial portion of the person's self-definition (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Moreover, research calls for the examination of potential mediators in the affiliation of participative leadership with the different employee elements as this profoundly lacks examination (e.g., Hassan et al., 2013; Miao et al., 2014). This study intends to address these gaps by investigating how participative leadership possibly leads to increased OI. This study's sequential mediation model tested in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region proposes that participative leadership instigates positive internal corporate social responsibility (CSR) perceptions that lead to OI through pride in membership (PIM).

CSR refers to the endorsement of virtuous causes and philanthropy in a company's business practices which mirror its ethical and moral position (Kotler and Lee, 2005). Perceived CSR of employees is defined as the degree to which the employees view whether or not the company is involved in CSR practices (Choi and Yu, 2014). The way an organization's CSR activities

are perceived by employees seems to be significant in understanding these activities' effects at the individual level (Shin et al., 2016). A few studies have focused on determining antecedents of CSR perceptions such as the employees' perceived fit between corporate culture and the company's CSR activities and the manager's perceived in-role CSR-specific performance (Lee et al., 2013; Vlachos et al., 2014). There have been calls for ascertaining further perceived CSR antecedents (e.g., Tian et al., 2015). Therefore, by examining the relationship between participative leadership and CSR perceptions in reference to the social information processing theory (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978), this study is among the first studies to propose that participative leadership is an antecedent of positive employee CSR perceptions. Moreover, in spite of the augmented curiosity in the link between leadership and CSR, startlingly little research which explores this intersection exists (Strand, 2011). The few studies that have linked leadership to CSR have mainly concerted on the ethical, transformational, and transactional leadership styles (e.g., Groves and La Rocca, 2011; Tian et al., 2015; Zhu et al., 2014). Nevertheless, additional studies on leadership styles and their relationship with CSR are essential as leadership remains to be a paramount construct which lacks investigation (Martin, 2015).

Furthermore, several studies have explored the association of CSR with OI (e.g., Carmeli et al., 2007; De Roeck and Delobbe, 2012; Jacinto and Carvalho, 2009; Kim et al., 2010). The findings of most of the studies designate that CSR intensifies employees' OI (e.g., Carmeli et al., 2007; Jacinto and Carvalho, 2009). Still, De Roeck et al. (2014) call future research to find potential mechanisms in the relationship between CSR perceptions and OI. They also recommend researchers to investigate PIM in terms of the CSR literature. PIM expresses how much individuals feel a sense of self-respect as a consequence of their membership in the organization (Jones, 2010). Moreover, there have been calls to study how pride influences OI (e.g., Ayse et al., 2015; Tracy and Robins, 2007). This study answers these research calls by

testing the possible mediating effects of PIM on the relationship between internal CSR perceptions and OI in reference to the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

In addition to this, there has been a recent shift of interest to CSR in developing nations, predominantly in the MENA region (Jamali, 2014). The term MENA refers to the region spreading from Morocco to Iran, covering all the Middle Eastern and North African countries. Developing countries often have some unique CSR agenda challenges that are relatively distinct than those tackled in the developed nations (Visser, 2008), mainly since the concept of CSR has newly appeared in many developing countries, including the MENA region (Shehadi et al., 2013). Very little research on the extent and nature of CSR in developing nations exist (Visser, 2008). Moreover, scant literature that explains the involvement of small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in CSR exists (Inyang, 2013). SMEs, enterprises with less than 250 employees (Hall et al., 2009), constitute more than 90% of the world's companies, prompting almost 60% of employment worldwide (Jamali et al., 2009). More attention is needed to understand the SMEs' potential distinctions and contributions with regard to CSR (Inyang, 2013). This paper intends to address these literature gaps by testing the proposed model in SMEs in the MENA region.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, the theoretically-grounded framework established in this paper contributes to the leadership literature as it explores the link between participative leadership and OI (Hassan et al., 2013; Miao et al., 2014). Second, by testing the relationship between participative leadership and internal CSR perceptions, this study contributes to the CSR literature because it seeks to determine a possible new antecedent of employee CSR perceptions (Strand, 2011; Tian et al., 2015). Third, by testing the mediating effect of PIM on the relationship between CSR and OI, this study contributes to the psychology of emotions literature because it aims to show how the employees' PIM can be experienced

and how it can affect their identification (Ayse et al., 2015; De Roeck et al., 2014). Finally, by testing the model in the context of SMEs in the MENA region, the paper makes an empirical contribution to the CSR literature because it looks at CSR in SMEs which is relevant to expanding the core of the CSR theory (Inyang, 2013; Spence, 2014; Vázquez-Carrasco and López-Pérez, 2013). It also focuses on the freshly shifted attention to CSR in developing nations, particularly in the MENA region, where most companies are SMEs (Jamali et al., 2015).

Theoretical Framework

Participative Leadership and CSR Perceptions

Several scholars argue that the most humanistic approach to leadership is the participative style (e.g., Amabile et al., 2004; Jong and Hartog, 2007). Under a participative leadership style, the leader meets with the employees to confer about the company's issues prior to making some decisions (Chen and Tjosvold, 2006). A participative leader, instead of making autocratic decisions, modestly encourages the involvement of employees in both decision-making and problem-solving (Miao et al., 2013). It has long been addressed by a number of scholars that the participation of employees in some decisions is deserving of empirical focus as their participation is projected to be a great value to both the company and its employees (e.g., Chen and Tjosvold, 2006; Kaufman, 2001). Although participative leadership can be considered one of the slower types of decision-making, when a decision is made collectively, harmony is created within the company and both the morale of the employees and the support they feel within the organization are improved (Muindi, 2011). Somech (2005) believes that the process of open communication inaugurated in participative leadership can assist in lowering the hurdles present among organizational members. It settles conflicts by building cohesive team work as it increases the understanding of the business as well as the acceptance of the decisions made (Sorenson, 2000). Bryman (2013) affirms that participative leadership supposedly creates

happier and more productive employees because they feel that they have a say and, hence, some kind of control over certain events within the company.

Strand (2011) asserts that the role that participative leadership can play in CSR propounds a promise for research. CSR goes further than seeking self-interest or profit and abiding by the law (Aguilera et al., 2007) as it focuses around doing some social good (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). It has been pondered as the fundamental activity in the formation of stakeholder relationships (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). It can be separated into two categories. The first category is external CSR which comprises of activities related to a cause distinct from the enterprise, directed toward external stakeholders. This can take the form of getting involved in a social project such as sponsoring an event or making donations to a charity organization. The second category is internal CSR which comprises of activities related to employees and to the way the enterprise operates internally (Basil and Erlandson, 2008). These activities are directly associated with the psychological and physical work environment (Turker, 2009), and relate to the well-being, health, and safety of employees (Vives, 2006). This can take the form of providing safety policies or having a well-grounded code of ethics (Basil and Erlandson, 2008). They are also expressed as activities that show concern for employees' training, equal opportunities, and work-life balance (Vives, 2006). Examples include having non-discrimination work policies and a clear statement on working hours (Welford, 2005).

Since the concept of CSR is cross-disciplinary in nature (Lockett et al., 2006), the human resource aspect is a key theme of CSR (Berber et al., 2014). Under this aspect, significant features of internal CSR comprise of human resources management (HRM) practices related to staff composition, training, equal treatment, working hours, fair wage distribution, education, benefits, and health and safety. HRM is a foremost component of internal CSR as companies ought to operate responsibly in all of their human resource functions, from the

recruitment stage till retention. For this reason, an overlapping between HRM practices and internal CSR activities exist (Kochar and Bisht, 2014). Jamali et al. (2015) agree that for CSR to accomplish its intended purposes, it should be approached as a prearranged tactic which is entrenched within the enterprise and translated into managerial practices, including HRM practices. Vountisjarvi (2006) also mention several groups of CSR activities related to HRM such as values and ethics, training and staff development, employee involvement, equal opportunities, and work-life balance. Therefore, strong connections between CSR and HRM exist as internal CSR requires a dependence on HRM (Gond et al., 2011).

According to Cornelius et al. (2008), differentiating between external and internal CSR is useful since many enterprises tend to overlook important internal human resource matters while concentrating on serving the community. Most research on CSR involves a company's responsibilities towards external stakeholders and thus there is less attention directed towards internal CSR (Cornelius et al., 2008; Rok, 2009). This paper focuses on the internal CSR activities, excluding the external CSR of the enterprises. The reason for this focus, besides that the study considers employee perceptions, is that even though in many regions of the world the external facet of CSR is a given, in the MENA region, external CSR remains hard to define, especially that the concept of CSR has freshly emerged in that region (Jamali, 2007).

The proposed association of participative leadership with internal CSR perceptions of employees is supported by the social information processing (SIP) theory (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). The SIP theory states that people build their perceptions on the basis of information cues and social factors beyond the impact of individual personalities (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). In the employment context, employees obtain information from the nature of their work environment which helps them put pieces together and develop their perceptions (Zafar, 2013). Boekhorst (2015) believes that the significant sources of social information usually stem from

people with a high status or power. According to Zafar (2013), leadership forms the work context of employees in significant ways as it can offer important cues that direct the employees' thinking. The SIP theory explains that the perceptions of work characteristics are not fixed but rather affected by the informational relationships that an individual is embedded in (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Boekhorst (2015) asserts that because leaders serve as a prominent source of social information, they are particularly influential in determining employee perceptions of internal organizational practices. Referring to Lord and Maher (2002), encoding and retrieving information are two important stages of information processing and have important implications for leadership. When an individual encodes information, it is simplified and transferred from the short-term memory to the long-term memory. In the retrieval phase, an individual recalls the information from the long-term memory and makes a judgment. When interactions among the leader and the employees take place, the employees encode and interpret certain social cues. The interpretations direct the employees' perceptions of their leader and his/her intentions and behaviours which, in turn, will affect their perceptions of the organizational practices (Zhang et al., 2011).

Bryman (2013) considers a participative leadership style to purportedly generate positive emotions for employees since they feel that they are heard within the organization. Dodge (1991) emphasizes that emotion is simply pertinent to processing information in a certain way. Therefore, by experiencing positive emotions with participative leadership, the employees would process the information positively and develop positive perceptions of the internal organizational practices, including internal CSR. Additionally, when employees participate in the decision-making process, they are more probable to feel confident that their interests are being expressed in the actions of the company (Chen and Hung-Baesecke, 2014). The involvement of employees will enable them to invest in the things that they consider important and that would ultimately benefit them (Stawiski et al., 2010). According to Kolk et al. (2010),

participative leadership can initiate trickle-up effects of internal CSR activities as participative leaders may consequently discourse the expectations and interests of the employees in their business actions, amplifying their positive perceptions regarding the organization's practices. Therefore, based on all the above, participative leadership is expected to lead to positive internal CSR perceptions of employees.

Hypothesis 1: Participative leadership is positively related to internal CSR perceptions of employees.

CSR Perceptions and Pride in Membership

An organizational culture which promotes CSR can manifest in employee emotions such as pride (Onkila, 2015). Employees are more likely to be proud of their membership in an enterprise when it demonstrates CSR initiatives, predominantly ones directed towards them (Stawiski et al., 2010). Although the concept of pride has been given plenty of focus in research, PIM, recognized as significant in controlling daily social actions, remains to lack attention (Helm, 2013; Yilmaz et al., 2015).

The proposed relationship between internal CSR perceptions and PIM is supported by the social identity theory (SIT; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). The theory explains the process by which people perceive and categorize themselves. It states that individuals categorize themselves into diverse social categories and view their membership in a specific category on the basis of specific social factors (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). The theory is known to form the roots of pride (Blader and Tyler, 2009). According to SIT, the group to which individuals belong is a major source of confidence and pride (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). The distinguishing character of a specific company can be shown through its CSR initiatives which partly identify it (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001), and the importance of these initiatives in the eyes of the employees promotes PIM (Arnett et al., 2002). When the company reveals values significant to employees,

they are more likely to feel proud of their membership (Reade, 2001). According to De Roeck et al. (2014) and Gond et al. (2010), employees develop stronger feelings from internal CSR actions than from the CSR actions directed towards the diverse social groups. However, how people feel about their organizational membership is not solely shaped by the individual's own perceptions of the organization but also by how people external to the organization perceive it (Brown et al., 2006; Peterson, 2004).

Companies that show socially responsible behaviour towards their employees often receive positive feedback from people outside the organization for their good treatment of employees (Gond et al., 2010). Several studies have revealed that the leading factor pertaining to rating a company's CSR by the public is built upon their perceptions of whether or not its employees are treated fairly (Googins et al., 2007; Rok, 2009). Employees will feel proud to be members of an organization acknowledged for its reputation of being socially responsible towards them (Gond et al., 2010). Nevertheless, membership in companies that have poor reputations in regard to the treatment of employees may result in negative employee emotions, changing pride into uneasiness and embarrassment (Dutton et al., 1994). Thus, pride originates from both self-appraisals and the opinions of outsiders (Verbeke et al., 2004).

In addition to this, the Group-Value Model (Lind and Tyler, 1988), a model based on SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), can further explain the connection between internal CSR perceptions of employees and PIM. The model addresses that when people perceive that high-quality treatment and fair procedures exist within the organization, positive feelings such as pride and respect, which contribute to their sense of self-worth, are developed (Tyler et al., 1996). The perceptions of unbiased organizational procedures that show justice make the employees feel more valued by the organization and constitute major indicators of whether people can take pride in their membership to a certain group (Sousa and Vala, 2002). This indicates that

employees' positive perceptions of internal CSR are expected to lead to positive emotions such as pride. Hence, from all the above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Internal CSR perceptions are positively related to pride in membership.

From Hypotheses 1 and 2, it is expected that CSR plays a mediating role in the relationship between participative leadership and PIM, and thus the next hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between participative leadership and PIM is mediated by internal CSR perceptions.

Pride in Membership and Organizational Identification

Tracy and Robins (2007) claim that pride is a key emotion because it results in important everyday consequences. It has been suggested to contribute to several imperative concepts, particularly to OI (Sousa and Vala, 2002). When individuals feel a strong identification with their company, the company is believed to be more effective and more capable of attaining its goals (Pratt, 1998; Van Dick et al., 2007). Therefore, exploring how PIM is connected to OI is important (Smidts et al., 2001).

OI is recognized as the fundamental psychological process underlying the social identity theory as it is considered an explicit form of social identification (Ashforth and Mael 1989). According to SIT, social identification is associated with several affective components such as pride, self-esteem, and self-concept (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Feelings that are derived from organizational membership, such as pride, have long been incorporated in the operationalization of OI. The SIT explains that employees' OI is increased when PIM is boosted as this ultimately satisfies the employees' need for belongingness (De Roeck and Delobbe, 2012). Additionally, when employees feel proud of their organizational membership, they are motivated to identify with the company in order to enhance other feelings, such as

self-worth (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). The Group-Value Model (Lind and Tyler, 1988) also suggests that respect and pride contribute to the formation of identification in order to, consequently, develop self-worth feelings. This paper builds on the theoretical framework of Blader and Tyler (2009) and Tyler and Blader (2000) who argue that because respect and pride are related to feelings of self-worth and self-esteem, they are essential in the formation of strong employee identification with their company.

According to Hogg and Terry (2001), experiencing PIM can result in employees acting in accordance with the company's values and goals. Therefore, when employees experience PIM, they are more probable to internalize the company's values and goals as their own (Van Knippenberg, 2000). This internalization defines OI (Ekwutosi and Moses, 2013). Thus, pride directly helps employees achieve identification with their organization (Blader and Tyler, 2009). Additionally, since pride shows people's judgments regarding the status of a group (Ines, 2012), the pride that employees obtain by working at a company acknowledged for its internal CSR strengthens their self-esteem and emboldens them to identify with the organization (Dutton et al., 1994). Hence, the perceptions regarding the company practices allow for employees to indirectly identify with the company by boosting their PIM (Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000), and thus the following two hypotheses are developed:

Hypothesis 4: PIM is positively related to organizational identification.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between internal CSR perceptions of employees and OI is mediated by PIM.

Based on the above hypotheses, the subsequent conceptual model is developed:

[Insert Figure 1 here]

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Context of the Study

The sequential mediation model proposed in this paper is tested in the MENA region. Three countries from that region were selected for the study as they represent three different case studies. The first country, United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), is located in the Middle East and is one of the Arabian Gulf countries. The second country, Lebanon, is situated in the Middle East on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The third country, Tunisia, is located in North Africa, adjoining the Mediterranean Sea. Although the workplaces of these three countries are influenced by similar religious values and an Arab culture, the nature and stability of the workplace differ from one country to the other. Unlike Lebanon and Tunisia, the nature of the U.A.E.'s workplace is dominated by expatriates that comprise almost 85% of the country's population (UN, 2016). This mixed employee population is uniquely distinct from the homogeneous population in other nations (Lasrado and Bagchi, 2011). Employee salaries in this oil-rich country are higher than other MENA nations, especially because, unlike Lebanon and Tunisia, the U.A.E. has a tax-free regime (Mercer, 2014). Nonetheless, Lebanon, instead of being a destination for expatriates, has become a destination for refugees as the Syrian war displaced over 1.1 million Syrians to Lebanon, which intensely shifted the Lebanese labour market (Habib, 2015). Low salaries have driven hundreds of thousands of Lebanese to become self-initiated expatriates in the U.A.E. (Jamali et al., 2005). With low salaries and limited expatriates, Tunisia's workplace is the most unstable among the three following the Arab Spring of 2011, a revolution which, until today, is changing the country's workplace laws and policies (Breuer et al., 2015).

It has long been believed that Arab managers in the MENA region are, in general, inclined towards consultation and the adoption of a participative leadership style (e.g, Al-Jafary and Hollingsworth, 1983; Ali at al., 1997; Suliman and Thomas, 2014). Because the cultures in the

MENA countries are considered collective cultures, leadership styles that preserve and strengthen consensus are preferred (Ali et al., 1997).

In developing nations like the MENA countries, CSR has not yet been given efficient focus (Jamali, 2014). While the concept was initially considered largely in developed nations, there has been a shifting interest to CSR in developing nations (Jamali et al., 2015). Because the concept of CSR is relatively new in many developing nations, these countries look at CSR differently than the developed countries (Visser, 2008). Companies in the MENA region seldom arrange for their CSR initiatives to address national problems like reducing poverty or getting involved in actions such as donating money to charities. As a result of this, compared to internal CSR, external CSR has less impact on the society in that region. Companies in the region do not essentially look beyond core internal concerns (Shehadi et al., 2013). Moreover, there is a difference in the notions of what CSR ought to achieve among the developed and developing nations which emerges from dissimilar intensity of CSR interest and different levels of CSR awareness raising and advocacy (Jamali, 2007).

The companies considered for this study are SMEs. The existing literature looks at SMEs as a significant base for the attainment of a blooming growth in the economy. These enterprises are considered a vivacity that employ and foster fresh entrepreneurial skills and create systemic effective capabilities which function to raise both innovation and competition (Jamali et al., 2009). Nevertheless, little is known about CSR in SMEs (Inyang, 2013).

Method

Participants and Procedure

As mentioned before, data for this study was collected from employees working for SMEs in the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia. All of the selected enterprises operate in the services and trading sectors. Five companies in the U.A.E., seven companies in Lebanon, and five

companies in Tunisia participated in the study. Access to the participating SMEs was obtained through personal contacts. The employees were asked to complete a questionnaire accompanied with a cover letter that explained the objectives of the study, clarified the voluntary nature of participation, and assured confidentiality of the responses. In the U.A.E., the questionnaire was forwarded by the supervisors to their subordinates through internal email. Supervisors at the designated enterprises in Lebanon and Tunisia distributed the questionnaires by hand to the subordinates. In every company, a file box was placed where the respondents had the chance to anonymously place the questionnaire upon completion. The boxes were then collected by a person assigned by the researchers.

In the U.A.E., a total of 260 usable questionnaires out of the 475 questionnaires forwarded were returned, yielding a response rate of 54.74%. Of the 260 respondents, 56.54% were males. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 31 and 40 years old (32.31%) and between the ages of 41 and 50 years old (31.92%). Moreover, 66.92% of the respondents reported that their highest level of education was a Bachelor's degree. Most of the participants reported a tenure between 5 and 10 years (36.54%).

In Lebanon, a total of 268 usable questionnaires out of the 420 questionnaires distributed were returned, yielding a response rate of 63.81%. Of the 268 respondents, 60.07% were males. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 30 years old (27.24%) and between the ages of 31 and 40 years old (27.99%). Additionally, 81.72% of the respondents reported a Bachelor's degree as their highest level of education. Most of the participants reported a tenure of less than 5 years (39.93%).

Finally, in Tunisia, a total of 212 usable questionnaires out of the 415 questionnaires distributed were returned for a 51.08% response rate. Of the 212 respondents, 58.02% were males. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 31 and 40 years old (32.08%). Moreover,

77.83% of the respondents reported that their highest level of education was a Bachelor's degree. Most of the participants reported a tenure of less than 5 years (41.04%).

Measures

In the U.A.E. and Lebanon, the questionnaire was provided in English since it is a language regularly spoken in these two countries (Diab, 2006; Randall and Samimi, 2010). However, following Brislin's (1980) recommendations on the back-translation process, the English questionnaire was translated into French before it was distributed to employees in Tunisia since French is one of the two commonly spoken languages in that country (Stevens, 1983). The initial translation was done by a professional translator. The translated questionnaire was then back-translated into English by a bilingual academic. Only minor differences were found when the two English versions of the questionnaire were compared. The questionnaire was then pretested by three professionals who were not involved in the study.

The questionnaire items (presented in the appendix) were measured on a Likert Scale with response options ranging from (1) 'strongly disagree' to (7) 'strongly agree'.

Participative leadership. A 6-item scale developed by Arnold et al. (2000) was used to measure participative leadership. Sample items include 'My supervisor listens to my ideas and suggestions' and 'My supervisor gives all work members a chance to voice their opinions'. The participants were asked to refer to their direct supervisor. The scale's alpha reliability of the studies in the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia is 0.91, 0.95, and 0.91, respectively.

Internal CSR. An 8-item scale selected from Maignan and Ferrell's (2001) scale derived from Carroll's (1979) CSR classification was used to measure perceptions of internal CSR. Carroll's classification is believed to be useful in looking at how CSR is displayed in a developing nation context (Visser, 2008). Maignan and Ferrell (2001) came up with several items to measure the

economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary responsibilities of businesses proposed by Carroll (1979). Advice to use this scale was offered after contacting several managers in the three considered countries. In order to operationalize the internal CSR definition from the existing scale, it was essential to identify the company activities which typify the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary CSR towards the employees. The selected items were then compared to another popular CSR scale (Turker, 2009) that includes items which specifically measure the perceptions of CSR activities directed towards employees. Sample items include 'My company has internal policies that prevent discrimination in the employees' compensation and promotion' and 'My company supports employees who want to acquire additional education'. The alpha reliability of the scale of the studies in the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia is 0.91, 0.90, and 0.90, respectively.

Organizational identification. A 6-item scale adapted by Homburg et al. (2009) from Mael and Ashforth's (1992) scale was used to measure OI. Sample items include 'When someone criticizes this company, it feels like a personal insult' and 'When I talk about this company, I usually say "we" rather than "they"'. The scale's alpha reliability of the studies in the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia is 0.88, 0.92, and 0.91, respectively.

Pride in membership. A 4-item scale was used to measure PIM. The items in this scale were developed by Cable and Turban (2003) and Helm (2013). Sample items include 'I am proud to identify myself personally with this company' and 'I am proud when others associate me with this company'. The alpha reliability of the scale of the studies in the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia is 0.84, 0.91, and 0.89, respectively.

Control variables. The control variables consist of gender, age, level of education, and tenure. Gender has previously been linked to pride in the workplace (Magee, 2015) and to OI (Aryee and Luk, 1996). Pride and OI have also been found to change with age (Magee, 2015;

Bergmann et al., 2016). Moreover, education and organizational tenure have been proven to have an effect on pride (Kraemer and Gouthier, 2014; O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986) and to be significantly related to OI (Kreiner and Ashforth, 2004; Stinglhamber et al., 2015).

Data Analytic Strategy

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed using the Stata 14 software in order to test the proposed hypotheses. The selection of this method is based on SEM's strong competency to deal with latent variables and their observable indicators as well as provide the comparison of the model hypothesized to the empirical data by delivering the fit-statistics (Nachtigall et al., 2003). SEM is also known for simplifying mediation analysis because it tests different mediation hypotheses in only one analysis (MacKinnon, 2008).

The two-step approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was followed. The measurement model which specifies the relation between the observed items and their corresponding constructs was first analysed in order to deliver a confirmatory analysis of both the convergent and discriminant validities (Campbell and Fiske, 1959). Subsequently, the structural model which specifies the causal relations of one construct to the other constructs was analysed in order to assess the nomological validity (Cronbach and Meehl, 1955; Zabkar, 2000).

Results

Validity Analysis

Subset-item parcelling was applied in order to attain a better subject-parameter-ratio (Matsunaga, 2008). The items with the highest and lowest factor loadings were averaged and then treated as indicators of their respective construct (Little et al., 2002). CSR was formed of four parcels, participative leadership and OI were formed of three parcels, and PIM ended up with two parcels.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to test how well the observed variables represent their underlying construct (Suhr, 2006). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), the Standardized Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR), and the Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) were used to test the goodness of fit of the model to data. A CFI value greater than 0.90, a TLI value greater than 0.80, a SRMR value less than 0.08, and a RMSEA value less than 0.10 have been suggested (Byrne, 2010; Hu and Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005; MacCallum et al., 1996). Results of the CFA conducted showed that the measurement model has an adequate fit to data from the three countries: $\chi^2/df=3.50$, CFI=0.92, TLI=0.88, SRMR=0.03, and RMSEA=0.09 for the U.AE.; $\chi^2/df=3.11$, CFI=0.95, TLI=0.93, SRMR=0.03, and RMSEA=0.08 for Lebanon; and $\chi^2/df=2.82$, CFI=0.93, TLI=0.90, SRMR=0.05, and RMSEA=0.09 for Tunisia.

In addition to this, the CFA results revealed that the composite reliability scores of the variables ranged between 0.80 and 0.96, exceeding the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1994). Also, following Fornell and Larcker's (1981) guidelines, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each variable exceeded 0.5, ranging between 0.66 and 0.89. Thus, convergent validity is supported.

Tables 1, 2, and 3 show the correlation matrices for the three samples. The bold numbers in the matrices' diagonals represent the square roots of the AVEs of the constructs. Discriminant validity is achieved if the square root of the AVE of a construct is greater than the correlations between this construct and other constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In the three matrices, these square roots are larger than the correlations between the given construct and other constructs. This supports the discriminant validity of the scales used.

[Insert Table 1 here]

[Insert Table 2 here]

20

Common Method Bias

In order to address the common method bias problem, remedies recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003) were followed. While the data was being collected, obscurity and confidentiality of the responses were assured to the respondents in order to reduce evaluation apprehension and social desirability. Moreover, the potential impact of common method bias was statistically tested using Harman's single factor test. The fit statistics of the single-factor model were: χ^2/df=4.47, GFI=0.72, CFI=0.78, SRMR=0.33, and RMSEA=0.12 for the U.AE.; χ^2/df=3.84, GFI=0.75, CFI=0.85, SRMR=0.40, and RMSEA=0.10 for Lebanon; and χ^2/df=3.00, GFI=0.75, CFI=0.83, SRMR=0.13, and RMSEA=0.10 for Tunisia. These indicate a poor model fit for the three countries, suggesting that common method bias is not a significant issue in this research. For further confirmation, since the tendency of people to show themselves positively or in a 'socially desirable' manner while completing questionnaires is often assumed to be a cause of common method variance, the partial correlation procedure was applied by partialling out social desirability. This statistical procedure requires that the researcher control the effects of common method variance (by controlling for social desirability) and then compare the differences in the partial correlations among the different variables (Posdakoff et al., 2003). Socially desirable responding was measured by a 4-item scale developed by Donavan et al. (2004). The inspections of the partial correlations after controlling for social desirability suggested that there is a slight change in the strength of some of the correlations. For the U.A.E., the correlations only faintly changed among the variables. For example, the correlation between internal CSR perceptions and OI increased by 0.01. Similarly, for Lebanon and Tunisia, the correlations among the different variables slightly changed. This means that controlling for social desirability responding had a very little effect on the strength of the

relationships among the variables, signifying that the probability for common method bias in the study's data is low.

Hypothesis Tests

Estimation through Maximum Likelihood was performed to test the proposed hypotheses. Figure 2, which represents the partial sequential mediation model, shows the results of the SEM analysis for the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia, respectively. As is shown, the path from participative leadership to CSR perceptions (β=0.52, p < .01 for the U.AE.; β=0.50, p < .01 for Lebanon; β=0.35, p < .01 for Tunisia) is positive and significant. This provides evidence that supports Hypothesis 1 which states that participative leadership is positively related to internal CSR perceptions of employees. Similarly, the path from internal CSR perceptions to PIM (β=0.51 for the U.A.E./0.28 for Lebanon/0.21 for Tunisia; p < .01) and the path from PIM to OI (β=0.51, p < .01 for the U.AE.; β=0.31, p < .01 for Lebanon; β= 0.14, p < .05 for Tunisia) are positive and significant. This presents support for Hypothesis 2 which posits that CSR perceptions are positively related to PIM and Hypothesis 4 which suggests that PIM is positively related to OI. Taken together, the SEM findings in Figure 2 provide evidence that there is some mediation, supporting Hypotheses 3 and 5 which posit that the relationship between participative leadership and PIM is mediated by internal CSR perceptions of employees and that the relationship between internal CSR perceptions and OI is mediated by PIM.

[Insert Figure 2 here]

Mediation Analysis

A comparison between an alternate model, which only allows for full mediation, and the partial mediation model (depicted in Figure 2) was made. The fully mediated model (illustrated in Figure 1) showed the following model fit: For the U.A.E., χ^2 (91) =361.68, χ^2/df=3.97,

CFI=0.89, TLI=0.86, SRMR=0.09, and RMSEA=0.11; for Lebanon, $\chi^2(91)$ =453.08, χ^2/df=4.98, CFI=0.89, TLI=0.86, SRMR=0.14, and RMSEA=0.12; and for Tunisia, $\chi^2(91)$ =409.98, χ^2/df=4.51, CFI=0.84, TLI=0.80, SRMR=0.17, and RMSEA=0.13. The partial mediation model showed a better fit to the data from the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia, respectively: χ^2 (88) =306.44/278.76/247.75; χ^2/df=3.48/3.16/2.81; CFI=0.91/0.94/0.92; TLI=0.89/0.93/0.90; SRMR=0.06/0.06/0.07; and RMSEA=0.09/0.09/0.09. The difference in fit was statistically significant: $\Delta\chi^2$ (3) =55.24/174.32/162.23, p < .01 for the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia, respectively.

Additionally, bootstrapping was used to cross-validate the mediation results of the SEM. Following the guidelines recommended by Shrout and Bolger (2002), 5,000 bootstrap samples were created for each country. The indirect effects of participative leadership on PIM and the indirect effects of internal CSR perceptions on OI were estimated with the bias-corrected percentile method (Efron and Tibshirami, 1993). The outcomes from the bootstrap sample from the U.A.E. reveal that the indirect effect of participative leadership on PIM via internal CSR perceptions is 0.27, obtained by multiplying the path coefficients of PL to CSR (β=0.52) and CSR to PIM (β=0.51). This indirect effect is significant with a p < .01 and a corresponding 95% confidence interval (CI) ranging between the values 0.10 and 0.36. Moreover, the indirect effect of internal CSR perceptions on OI via PIM for the U.A.E. is 0.26, obtained by multiplying the path coefficients of CSR to PIM (β=0.51) and PIM to OI (β=0.51). This indirect effect is significant with a p < .01 and a 95% CI ranging from values 0.08 to 0.48. Similarly, the results from the Lebanese bootstrap sample show that the indirect effect of participative leadership on PIM via internal CSR perceptions is 0.14 ($\beta_{PL \to CSR}$ =0.50 * $\beta_{CSR \to PIM}$= 0.28). This indirect effect is significant (p < .01) with a 95% CI ranging between the values 0.04 and 0.24. The indirect effect of internal CSR perceptions on OI via PIM for Lebanon is 0.09 ($\beta_{CSR \to PIM}$= 0.28 * $\beta_{PIM \to OI}$= 0.31). This effect is significant (p < .01) with a 95% CI ranging

from values 0.03 to 0.20. Applying the same procedures, the results from the bootstrap sample from Tunisia show that the indirect effect of participative leadership on PIM via internal CSR perceptions is 0.07 ($\beta_{PL \to CSR} = 0.35 * \beta_{CSR \to PIM} = 0.21$). It is significant with a p < .01 and a bootstrapped 95% CI ranging between values 0.01 and 0.25. Lastly, the indirect effect of internal CSR perceptions on OI via PIM for Tunisia is 0.03 ($\beta_{CSR \to PIM} = 0.21 * \beta_{PIM \to OI} = 0.14$), and is significant with a p < .1. Therefore, the presented outcomes provide support for the results of the mediation hypotheses.

Discussion

Despite the heightening importance of the impact that participative leadership can have on employees, this leadership style has not been linked to OI. Also, mechanisms through which participative leadership can lead to desirable employee outcomes lack examination (Hassan et al., 2013; Miao et al., 2014). The purpose of this study was to determine if and how participative leadership leads to higher OI. Findings showed that participative leadership eventually generates OI. Results supported the hypothesis which signifies that participative leadership leads to positive internal CSR perceptions of employees. Results also provided support for the hypotheses suggesting that positive internal CSR perceptions lead to PIM which, in turn, leads to OI. Additionally, evidence was provided for the hypotheses indicating that internal CSR perceptions mediate the relationship between participative leadership and PIM, and that PIM mediates the relationship between internal CSR perceptions and OI. Nevertheless, the mediation relationships were found to be partial. This suggests that there are other mediators worthy of investigation. For example, high levels of trust in the leader may play a mediating role in the relationship between participative leadership and PIM since participative leadership may demonstrate that the leader has respect, concern, and confidence in the employees (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Miao et al., 2013). Other mechanisms may also be involved in the relationship between CSR and OI, such as the degree of importance of an individual's job to his/her self-

image since it is believed that employees identify more with the organization when they view their job to be important to their self-image (Katrinli et al., 2009).

The studied relationships are the strongest for the U.A.E., followed by Lebanon and then Tunisia. The leaders in the U.A.E. are believed to have to put in added effort to communicate and listen to their subordinates' needs since handling the current workplace diversity has become a priority for many enterprises in the U.A.E. (Al-Jenaibi, 2012). A special type of relationship based on mutual respect and trust is believed to be emerging between the diverse employees and the leaders in the companies in the U.A.E. in order to successfully generate positive work outcomes (Suliman and Al-Kathairi, 2012). Moreover, Lebanon's different religious and political parties have made tolerance and understanding special elements for positive coexistence in the workplace (Jamali et al., 2005). Both the U.A.E. and Lebanon, compared to other Arab countries, are more open to developed nations and understand the importance of achieving positive employee outcomes (Jamali et al., 2005; Lasrado and Bagchi, 2011). Tunisia, nevertheless, is still considered somewhat reserved, and its workplace constitutes a fragile setting where many standards and rules are only partially effective in the eyes of the employees (Stanton, 2015).

The finding that participative leadership leads to positive internal CSR perceptions of employees provides support for the social information processing theory. This finding is consistent with the notion that employees develop their perceptions of internal organizational practices by collecting information cues from their work environment and that their leader serves as a significant source of that information (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). Additionally, the finding contributes to the social information processing theory by expanding the understanding of this theory in an employment context. This finding also helps expand the core of the CSR theory by determining that participative leadership is an antecedent of CSR

perceptions, and by looking at CSR in the context of SMEs in developing nations as this is relevant but lacking (Jamali et al., 2015; Spence, 2014). Furthermore, the findings that internal CSR perceptions lead to PIM, that PIM leads to OI, and that PIM plays a mediating role in the relationship between internal CSR perceptions and OI provide support for the social identity theory. These findings are consistent with the notion that identification is shaped by the employees' perceptions of the organization and its practices which instil feelings of pride in the employees (Tajfel and Turner, 1979).

Conclusion

In an attempt to explain the process linking participative leadership to OI and determining a novel antecedent of CSR perceptions, a sequential mediation model was formulated and tested in SMEs in the MENA region. The results provided evidence that participative leadership leads to positive internal CSR perceptions of employees which lead to PIM that, in turn, results in OI. Furthermore, internal CSR perceptions mediated the relationship between participative leadership and PIM, and PIM mediated the relationship between internal CSR perceptions and OI in the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia.

The results of this study open a window for company leaders who seek higher OI from their employees. It is well known that employees who highly identify with their company display positive attitudes and behaviours in the workplace which help the company achieve its goals and be more effective (Pratt, 1998; Van Dick et al., 2007). Therefore, managers can adopt a more participative approach while interacting with their subordinates in order to foster a positive psychological state of employees where they feel proud of their membership in the organization and thus identify with it. In addition to this, because positive perceptions of internal CSR in the sequel lead to increased OI, some alteration in the human resource management (HRM) practices can benefit both the company and the employees (Fajana et al.,

2011). For example, incorporating internal policies which prevent discrimination in the employees' promotion and compensation if they are not already present or supporting employees who want to acquire additional education will be of value to the employees. Such practices, viewed as elements to measure internal CSR, will also reinforce the employees' positive perceptions of the company's internal CSR, eventually increasing their OI and thus benefiting the company (Gond et al., 2010; Turker, 2009).

Despite careful considerations, the current paper has some limitations. First, due to the context of the study, the external aspect of CSR was not reflected on since the MENA region still lacks initiatives that align with the diverse stakeholders' needs (Shehadi et al., 2013). Future research can test this paper's sequential mediation model in other geographical regions where external CSR perceptions can also be taken into consideration. Further, as mentioned earlier, the findings of the study revealed partial mediation relationships and therefore one research extension is to test other mechanisms in the relationship between participative leadership and PIM and the relationship between CSR and OI, such as high levels of trust in the leader and the degree of importance of the job to the individual's self-image. To add to this, since this study was only cross-sectional, future research can follow it up with a longitudinal study to track and describe individual changes over time (Menard, 2002). In spite of these limitations, this study provided intriguing findings that address current literature gaps and improve the knowledge in respect of the process which leads to higher OI.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

Ethical approval: All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee

and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

Informed consent: Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Appendix

Items used to measure participative leadership:

1. My supervisor encourages me to express my ideas and suggestions
2. My supervisor listens to my ideas and suggestions
3. My supervisor uses our suggestions to make decisions that affect us
4. My supervisor gives all work members a chance to voice their opinions
5. My supervisor considers my ideas when he/she disagrees with them
6. My supervisor makes decisions based only on his/her ideas

Items used to measure internal CSR perceptions:

1. My company closely monitors the employees' productivity
2. My company seeks to comply with all laws in hiring and giving employees benefits
3. My company has programs that encourage the diversity of its workforce (in terms of age, gender, or race)
4. My company has internal policies that prevent discrimination in the employees' compensation and promotion
5. My company has a comprehensive code of conduct
6. My company supports employees who want to acquire additional education
7. My company encourages employees to join civic organizations that support the community
8. My company has flexible policies which enable the employees to better coordinate work and personal life

Items used to measure organizational identification:

1. When someone criticizes this company, it feels like a personal insult
2. I am very interested in what others think about this company
3. When I talk about this company, I usually say "we" rather than "they"
4. This company's success is my success
5. When someone praises this company, it feels like a personal compliment
6. If a story in the media criticizes this company, I would feel embarrassed

Items used to measure pride in membership:

1. I am proud to be part of my company
2. I am proud to tell others that I work for this firm
3. I am proud to identify myself personally with this firm
4. I am proud when others associate me with this company

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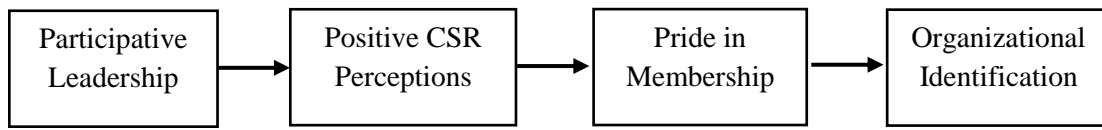
Figures

Participative Leadership	→	Positive CSR Perceptions	→	Pride in Membership	→	Organizational Identification

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

.19**/.49**/.55**

.28**/.47**/.53**

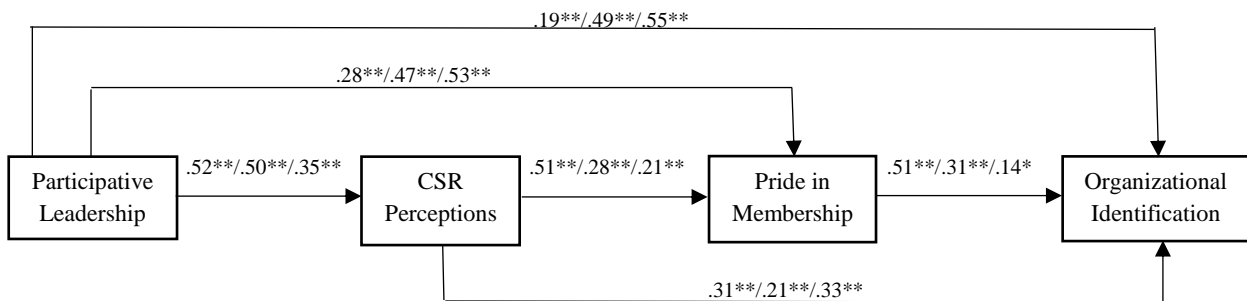| Participative Leadership	.52**/.50**/.35** →	CSR Perceptions	.51**/.28**/.21** →	Pride in Membership	.51**/.31**/.14* →	Organizational Identification

.31**/.21**/.33**

Figure 2: Structural Equation Modeling Results

Note. The effect of control variables are not shown; Values represent standardized estimates for the U.A.E., Lebanon, and Tunisia, respectively. * p < .05; ** p < .01 (two-tailed tests).

Tables

Table 1: Correlations among Study Variables in the U.A.E. Sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Gender								
2.Age	-0.29**							
3.Education	0.08	-0.19**						
4.Tenure	-0.19**	0.71**	-0.24**					
5.PL	0.06	0.06	0.09	0.07	**0.88**,(0.91)			
6.CSR	0.11	0.01	0.20**	-0.12	0.52**	**0.85**,(0.91)		
7.PIM	0.19**	0.08	0.19**	-0.05	0.55**	0.68**	**0.82**,(0.80)	
8.OI	0.09	0.09	0.16*	0.11	0.66**	0.73**	0.81**	**0.84**,(0.88)

Note. n **=** 260. All statistical significance tests were based on two-tailed tests. *p < .05. **p < .01.

The number in bold is the square root of the AVE. The number in brackets is the composite reliability. PL = participative leadership CSR = corporate social responsibility PIM = pride in membership OI = organizational identification

Table 2: Correlations among Study Variables in the Lebanese Sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Gender								
2.Age	-0.09							
3.Education	-0.01	-0.24**						
4.Tenure	-0.06	0.82**	-0.31**					
5.PL	-0.05	0.03	0.12	-0.10	**0.94**, (0.96)			
6.CSR	0.08	-0.1	0.07	-0.22**	0.50**	**0.83**,(0.90)		
7.PIM	-0.003	-0.09	0.12*	-0.26**	0.63**	0.55**	**0.95**,(0.95)	
8.OI	0.01	-0.41	0.11	-0.12*	0.78**	0.62**	0.72**	**0.90**,(0.93)

Note. n **=** 268. All statistical significance tests were based on two-tailed tests. *p < .05. **p < .01.

The number in bold is the square root of the AVE. The number in brackets is the composite reliability. PL = participative leadership CSR = corporate social responsibility PIM = pride in membership OI = organizational identification

Table 3: Correlations among Study Variables in the Tunisian Sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Gender								
2.Age	-0.09							
3.Education	0.02	-0.18**						
4.Tenure	-0.03	0.79**	-0.27**					
5.PL	-0.09	0.01	0.07	-0.11	**0.88**,(0.91)			
6.CSR	0.08	-0.23**	0.06	-0.21**	0.35**	**0.83**,(0.90)		
7.PIM	-0.03	0.01	0.08	-0.12	0.62**	0.38**	**0.87**,(0.86)	
8.OI	-0.05	-0.10	0.08	-0.07	0.74**	0.58**	0.58**	**0.88**,(0.91)

Note. n **=** 212. All statistical significance tests were based on two-tailed tests. *p < .05. **p < .01.

The number in bold is the square root of the AVE. The number in brackets is the composite reliability. PL = participative leadership CSR = corporate social responsibility PIM = pride in membership OI = organizational identification