Servant and authoritarian leadership: Differential influences on value co-creation with moderating effects

服務型與威權型領導：對價值共創的差別性影響及調節效應

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Abstract: With the transformation of economic change, companies have gradually transformed their mode from the traditional one-way of goods-dominant logic to interactive two-way of service-dominant logic, which is known as value co-creation. It is therefore important to understand why employees are willing to participate in value co-creation. We design a research framework which reflects the social exchange theory; and to explore the influence of two extremely different leadership styles: servant leadership and authoritarian leadership on value co-creation. Additionally, based on social exchange theory, the variables of implicit reciprocity (collective strategic vision) and extrinsic rewards (perceived organizational justice) were selected as two moderators to further investigate the relationship between leadership style and value co-creation under different situations. A total of 397 valid questionnaires from 91 groups were collected and hierarchical linear regressions were adopted for statistical analyses. The results showed a positive association between servant leadership and value co-creation and a negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and value co-creation,

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which demonstrated the impact of value co-creation on organizations from different leadership styles. Moreover, based on social exchange theory, this study identified implicit reciprocity and extrinsic rewards as two distinct moderators of the relationship between leadership styles and value co-creation; and finally, this study underscored the particularly interesting finding that the negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and value co-creation is weakened when supervisors adopt authoritarian leadership styles and employees perceive lower organizational justice.

Keywords: Servant leadership, authoritative leadership, value co-creation, collective strategic vision, perceived organizational justice.

摘要: 隨著經濟模式的轉型，企業逐漸從傳統的單向商品主導邏輯轉變為互動式的服務主導邏輯，即價值共創。因此，了解員工為何願意參與價值共創變得尤為重要。本研究設計了一個基於社會交換理論的研究框架，探討兩種極端領導風格：服務型領導與威權型領導，對價值共創的影響。此外，根據社會交換理論，本研究選取非收實質性互惠（集體策略願景）及外在報酬（知覺組織正義）作為調節變項，進一步研究在不同情境下，領導風格與價值共創之間的關係。本研究共收集了來自 91 個團體的 397 份有效問卷，並採用階層線性回歸進行統計分析。結果顯示，服務型領導與價值共創之間存在正向關聯，而威權型領導與價值共創之間存在負向關聯，揭示了不同領導風格對組織價值共創的影響。此外，基於社會交換理論，本研究確認集體策略願景與知覺組織正義是領導風格與價值共創關係的兩個重要調節變項；最後，本研究指出一項特別有趣的發現：當主管採取威權型領導風格且員工感知較低的組織正義時，威權型領導與價值共創之間的負向關係會被削弱。

關鍵詞: 服務型領導、威權型領導、價值共創、集體策略願景、知覺組織正義

1. Introduction

In an era of increasing global competition, economic development has progressively shifted towards a service-dominant (S-D) logic, emphasizing the importance of value co-creation (VCC). This paradigm shift redefines the role of customers from passive consumers to active co-creators of value through collaborative interactions with producers (Vargo and Lusch, 2014; Vargo *et al.*, 2008). As described by Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a), value co-creation is the collaborative process through which businesses and stakeholders, including customers, come together to generate value, ultimately benefiting the business through the provision of products or services.Despite extensive research on VCC from both corporate and management perspectives, a critical research gap remains regarding the internal organizational mechanisms that drive employee engagement in VCC activities. Previous studies have predominantly explored VCC through the lens of corporate strategy (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b) and the interactions between companies and external customers (Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Hsiao *et al.*, 2015; Lee *et al.,* 2016), highlighting that value is increasingly co-created rather than solely provided by firms. Furthermore, Marshall *et al.* (1998) classified business customers into external and internal categories, with external customers being those who purchase goods or services and internal customers being employees or departments that work collaboratively within the company.

However, the exploration of how internal organizational factors, particularly the mechanisms that engage employees as co-creators, influence VCC remains underdeveloped. Employees, viewed as "internal customers," are pivotal in the co-creation process, and their engagement can significantly influence the effectiveness and innovation of VCC initiatives. Yet, current literature lacks a detailed analysis of how these internal dynamics operate to enhance employee involvement in VCC (Vargo and Lusch, 2014; Vargo *et al.*, 2008).To address this gap, this study will examine the internal mechanisms within organizations that foster employee engagement in VCC, with a particular focus on leadership styles and their influence. By filling this gap, the research aims to provide a

comprehensive understanding of how internal factors contribute to successful VCC implementation, offering valuable insights for organizations   seeking to optimize their service-dominant strategies.

Research indicates that value co-creation is essential for organizational transformation, innovation, and performance improvement (Musa *et al.*, 2020; Saarijärvi *et al.*, 2013). As organizations shift towards this model, it becomes crucial to understand the internal mechanisms that promote employee engagement, particularly the influence of leadership. Eva *et al.* (2019) argue that the effectiveness of leadership styles, such as servant and authoritarian leadership, is often moderated by cultural contexts, affecting employee involvement in various ways. Zhang *et al.* (2021) further reveal that while authoritarian leadership may achieve short-term compliance, it fails to foster long-term engagement and innovation, which are vital for sustained organizational growth. In contrast, Hoch *et al.* (2018) demonstrate that servant leadership, unlike other leadership models, significantly enhances organizational commitment and employee participation, aligning well with value co-creation principles. This study, therefore, focuses on comparing these two leadership styles—servant and authoritarian—to understand their distinct impacts on employee involvement in value co-creation. By contrasting these approaches, the research underscores the importance of selecting the most effective leadership style to optimize value co-creation activities, highlighting its necessity within the organizational framework.

The concept of Servant Leadership (SL) was first introduced by Greenleaf (1977), who believed that true great leaders prioritize serving others, the organization, and society over their own interests, with "service" being a core feature. This leadership style aligns with the service-oriented concept of value co-creation, which is why this study incorporates SL as an "interpersonally oriented" leadership style (CH Chan and Mak, 2014). In contrast, the more hierarchical Authoritative Leadership (AL), prevalent in traditional Eastern management culture, may inhibit employee creativity and participation due to its authoritarian structure (Chen and Farh, 2010; Redding, 1990). As such, this study also includes AL, a leadership style focused on task achievement and control (Hunter *et al.*,

2013), as the second type of leadership style. The research examines the impact of two extreme leadership behaviors—altruistic and egoistic—on employee participation in value co-creation.

The study examines how two contrasting leadership styles—servant and authoritarian leadership—affect VCC under varying conditions. Despite extensive research on leadership's impact on organizational outcomes, a significant gap persists in understanding how these styles specifically influence employee engagement in VCC, particularly when moderated by contextual factors (Eva *et al.*, 2019; Zhang *et al.*, 2021). To bridge this gap, the study introduces two moderating variables: Perceived Organizational Justice (POJ) at the individual level and Collective Strategic Vision (CSV) at the group level. These variables are essential as they offer insights into the specific conditions that either amplify or constrain the effectiveness of leadership behaviors in fostering VCC (Hoch *et al.*, 2018).

CSV, as a group-level variable, represents the alignment of employees with organizational goals and acts as implicit reciprocity. Leaders who effectively communicate the organization's vision create a shared sense of purpose among employees, encouraging their active participation in VCC activities (Bertocci, 2009; Graham, 1991; Zhang *et al.*, 2021). This collective alignment is critical, as it motivates employees to engage in innovation and collaboration, essential for effective VCC. On the individual level, POJ reflects employees' perceptions of fairness in the organization's practices, such as decision-making and resource allocation. When employees perceive high levels of fairness, they develop trust in the organization and its leaders, reinforcing positive behaviors such as active engagement in VCC efforts (Hoch *et al.*, 2018). The dual consideration of CSV and POJ highlights the need to address both group-level and individual-level motivational structures within organizations, offering a comprehensive view of how contextual factors shape the relationship between leadership styles and VCC. This integrated approach provides a deeper understanding of leadership effectiveness, addressing critical gaps in existing literature and advancing the study of VCC dynamics within organizations.

By utilizing Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 2017), the study posits that leadership styles create different interaction dynamics between leaders and employees based on trust and reciprocity. Servant leadership, with its emphasis on support and empowerment, aligns closely with the principles of VCC, encouraging collaborative exchanges that foster engagement. In contrast, authoritarian leadership, which is control-oriented, may limit these collaborative opportunities (Eva *et al.*, 2019). The inclusion of POJ and CSV as moderating variables allows the study to assess how perceptions of fairness and collective alignment influence the effectiveness of these leadership styles in driving employee engagement in VCC.

This study makes a significant contribution to the understanding of VCC by offering a multi-dimensional analysis of how contrasting leadership styles—servant and authoritarian—shape employee engagement within organizational contexts. By shifting the focus to internal stakeholders (employees), it addresses a critical gap in the existing literature, which has predominantly emphasized external customer interactions. Integrating CSV and POJ as moderating variables allows the study to investigate the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of leadership styles in fostering VCC. This approach highlights the importance of both group-level alignment and individual perceptions of fairness, demonstrating how these dynamics interact to either facilitate or impede employee participation in VCC. Drawing on SET, the study not only underscores the reciprocal nature of leader-employee relationships but also advances the theoretical understanding of how organizational conditions modulate these effects. Consequently, this research provides a comprehensive framework for optimizing leadership strategies to enhance VCC, bridging critical gaps and offering practical implications for organizational development. As a summary, the research framework drawn by this research is shown in Figure 1 below.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

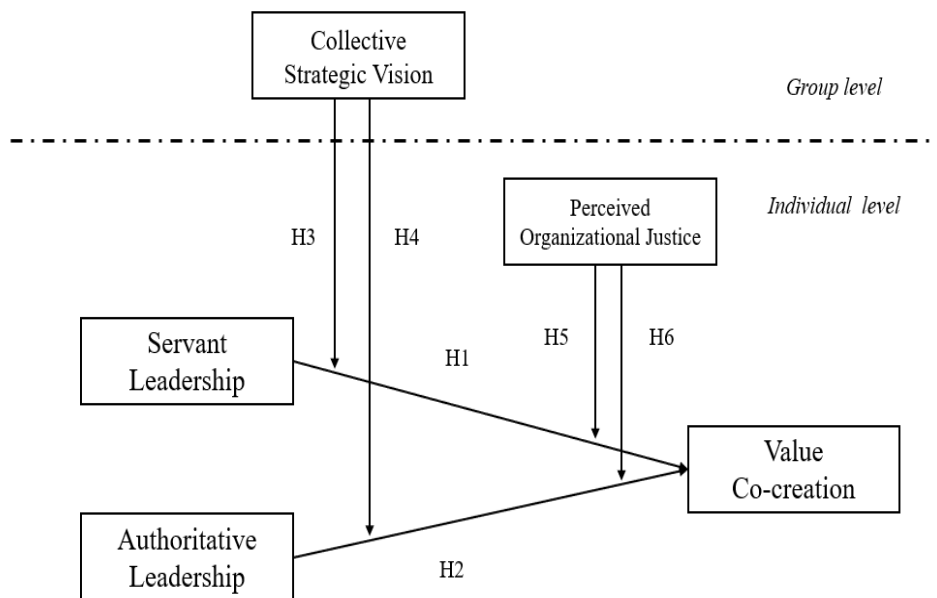### 2.1 Hypothesis of servant leadership on value co-creation

Figure 1
Research model

Servant leadership is characterized by a leader's genuine commitment to serving their subordinates, recognizing that the success of the organization is intrinsically linked to the personal and professional development of its members. In the VCC process, employees play a pivotal role as intermediaries who translate customer insights into actionable strategies that enhance enterprise value creation (Mohrw-Jackson, 1991). Employees engage in continuous dialogue with customers, sharing critical insights and feedback regarding their service needs and preferences. This collaborative interaction allows both parties to jointly construct an experiential environment, where mutual understanding and co-development occur (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004b).

Servant leaders prioritize the needs, growth, and well-being of their team, fostering an environment of trust, respect, and collaboration (Hale and Fields, 2007; Van Dierendonck, 2011). This leadership style aligns closely with the principles of VCC, where employees are empowered to contribute meaningfully

to organizational goals through active participation and collaboration. Servant leaders facilitate a culture where employees feel valued and motivated to go beyond mere compliance, engaging in behaviors that enhance the overall value creation process. According to SET, when employees perceive their leaders as supportive and invested in their success, they are more likely to reciprocate with proactive behaviors that contribute to VCC (Blau, 2017). This creates a positive feedback loop where employees' efforts in co-creation activities are reciprocated by increased organizational support and recognition, further reinforcing their commitment to VCC. As a result, the unique environment cultivated by servant leadership fosters a higher level of engagement and innovation, ultimately enhancing the VCC process. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Servant leadership has a positive influence on value co-creation.

2.2 Hypothesis of authoritarian leadership on value co-creation

Conversely, authoritarian leadership is characterized by strict control and power dynamics that prioritize hierarchical authority over employee empowerment. Leaders with an authoritarian style often emphasize obedience, compliance, and adherence to rules, which can stifle employee initiative and creativity (Cheng *et al.*, 2004; Schaubroeck *et al.*, 2017). While some studies suggest that this leadership style can result in immediate compliance and task completion, it often leads to long-term negative outcomes, such as decreased job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and diminished organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Chiang *et al.*, 2021; Wu *et al.*, 2012).

In the context of VCC, authoritarian leadership may hinder the open communication and collaborative spirit necessary for successful co-creation. The suppressive environment fostered by authoritarian leaders can lead to a decline in employees' willingness to engage in innovative and cooperative behaviors that are critical for effective VCC. Employees in such environments may feel undervalued and less motivated to actively participate in co-creation efforts and share valuable insights that drive organizational growth. The lack of autonomy and support can result in employees feeling undervalued, reducing their motivation to actively

participate in co-creation efforts and share valuable insights that drive organizational growth. Additionally, the increased pressure and rigid control associated with authoritarian leadership can generate feelings of resistance, boredom, and frustration among employees, further inhibiting their ability to contribute positively to the VCC process. Consequently, this leadership style may ultimately hinder the organization's ability to harness the full potential of VCC, leading to suboptimal outcomes. Based on these observations, we posit the following hypothesis:

H2: Authoritarian leadership has a negative influence on employees' value co-creation.

2.3 Hypotheses on collective strategic vision, servant leadership, and employee value co-creation

In the research of servant leadership and CSV, Russell and Stone (2002) mentioned that the characteristics of servant leaders are to build the future goals of the organization in an inspiring, empowering, and motivating manner. Many scholars have also pointed out that servant leaders have the ability to communicate their vision. Graham (1991) proposed that an ideal leader is visionary, practical and inspirational, clearly knows the future direction of the organization, and can elicit employees' goals and motivations. Covey (2006) believed that, only when leaders respect employees, see their value and potential, empower them to participate in organizational activities, and put serving others above themselves, can they truly inspire followers and create a common vision with them.

Servant leaders attach importance to the strategic vision of employee development and prioritizing employees' interests, along with building a sense of identity among employees by listening, explaining the vision, and conveying organizational goals, so that they feel hopeful about the future of the organization (Page and Wong, 2000). According to social exchange theory, this can be regarded as a kind of implicit reciprocity. Because servant leaders place significant importance on employees' self-development rather than their own interests, (Greenleaf, 1977), employees are willing to demonstrate more VCC behaviors.

This study holds that the more servant leaders can help employees to see the overall strategic vision, the more employees can identify with their leadership behaviors, and the more they can feel that leaders regard employee development as part of their overall vision. Therefore, employees are more willing to participate in and generate OCB. For example, when a leader can effectively explain the importance of the tasks performed by each member of the organization and motivate and inspire employees, they will comply with the requirements of all departments and fulfill their due responsibilities. Or, when a leader sees employees' growth as their prime concern, employees will share this information with their colleagues, thus increasing their positive VCC behaviors.

We believe that CSV plays a significant moderating role between SL and VCC. CSV represents a shared understanding of future goals and expectations within an organization. When servant leaders are able to effectively communicate CSV to employees, it not only helps enhance employees' alignment with organizational goals but also makes them feel valued in their personal development. CSV helps employees understand how their work fits into the overall strategic vision, thereby motivating their willingness to participate and collaborate. This process strengthens the positive impact of servant leadership, making employees more inclined to exhibit VCC behaviors, such as active participation and interaction. Based on this reasoning, we consider CSV to be a key moderating variable that can enhance the relationship between servant leadership and VCC. Specifically, when leaders possess a higher level of CSV, it will amplify the positive influence of servant leadership on VCC. In other words, when leaders are able to clearly convey and align the organizational strategic vision, employees are more likely to identify with their role in this vision and thus exhibit more OCB and VCC. Conversely, when leaders have a lower CSV, this positive effect may diminish.

Based on the above inferences, this study holds that CSV is the key moderating variable that can motivate servant leaders to elicit employees' VCC, and thus posit the following hypothesis:

H3: Collective strategic vision will moderate the positive relationship

between servant leadership and value co-creation. In other words, when leaders possess higher collective strategic vision, the positive relationship between servant leadership and value co-creation will be stronger than when leaders possess lower collective strategic vision.

2.4 Hypothesis on collective strategic vision, authoritarian leadership, and employee value co-creation

Servant leaders convey the vision in a supportive, inclusive, and motivating manner. They actively engage with employees, listen to their concerns, and incorporate their feedback into the strategic vision. This approach makes employees feel valued and aligned with organizational goals, resulting in a hopeful outlook on the organization's future (Page and Wong, 2000; Russell and Stone, 2002). Servant leaders emphasize employees' personal growth and development, which enhances motivation and engagement. In contrast, although authoritarian leaders also communicate the vision, their approach is typically top-down and directive. Authoritarian leaders stress strict adherence to organizational goals and often overlook individual employees' contributions and developmental needs (Chiang *et al.*, 2021). Their communication style involves minimal feedback or consideration of personal goals, leading to a more detached and compliance-oriented atmosphere. When formulating organizational vision, authoritarian leaders usually emphasize the legitimacy of their own power (Halbesleben *et al.*, 2010), expounding on the vision and conveying the organizational goals to employees in a way that ignores employees' performance and contributions, thus failing to resonate with the employees, who, in turn, see no future with the organization.

By fostering a respectful and caring environment, servant leaders build strong relationships with employees. This relationship instills hope and increases employees' commitment to their work (Covey, 2006; Greenleaf, 1977). Employees are more likely to view their roles as meaningful and aligned with the organizational vision, thus demonstrating higher levels of OCB and VCC behaviors (Graham, 1991; Page and Wong, 2000). On the other hand, the control

and compliance focus of authoritarian leadership often leads to employee alienation. Subordinates may feel that their contributions are not recognized or valued, which can reduce morale and engagement. While authoritarian leaders can set clear goals, their communication style often undermines employees' sense of purpose and hope (Wu *et al.*, 2012; Silin, 1976).

Although both leadership styles involve communicating the vision, the underlying methods and impacts on employees differ significantly. Servant leaders promote hope and engagement by aligning the vision with employees' personal growth and well-being, whereas authoritarian leaders focus on control and compliance, often neglecting individual contributions and developmental needs. According to the negative reciprocity in social exchange theory, when the reciprocal relationship between two parties is perceived as negative, one party will exhibit negative behavior toward the other (Chang *et al.*, 2009; Rosen *et al.*, 2009), which can also be seen as implicit reverse reciprocity. Therefore, if authoritarian leaders place greater emphasis on displaying their own power in expressing CSV, more VCC behaviors beneficial to the organization will be inhibited. When employees under authoritarian leadership merely follow directives, assume the leader's authority, and execute prescribed behaviors, they are likely to avoid unnecessary behaviors that could lead to poor performance and criticism (Redding, 1990).

Thus, when leaders have a higher CSV, they are better able to align with employees' personal development needs, which means that even if the negative traits of authoritarian leadership are present, high CSV will amplify the negative impact of authoritarian leadership on VCC. In high CSV situations, employees are more acutely aware of the gap between their work and the organizational vision, which exacerbates their dissatisfaction with authoritarian leadership and suppresses VCC behaviors. Conversely, when leaders have a lower CSV, the vision and organizational goals may not effectively align with employees' needs, potentially weakening the negative impact of authoritarian leadership, as the lack of clarity in the organizational vision may already diminish their sense of engagement. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Collective strategic vision will moderate the negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and value co-creation. Specifically, when leaders have a higher collective strategic vision, the negative impact of authoritarian leadership on value co-creation will be stronger compared to when leaders have a lower collective strategic vision.

2.5 Hypothesis on perceived organizational justice, servant leadership, and employee value co-creation

Adams (1965) found in his equity theory that organizational equity is an important factor for organizational members' job involvement, satisfaction, and identification with the organization. The perception of fairness is one of the most important issues in an organization. Organizational justice is not only directly related to employees' work results, work performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and trust (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001), but it can also affect employees' trust, positive evaluation, and obedience to leaders (Tyler and Lind, 1992). Lind (2001) defined perceived organizational justice as a comprehensive evaluation of individuals' perception of fairness encountered within an organization. Many previous studies have corroborated that POJ directly affects individuals' reactions to events they encounter at work (Greenberg, 2001), and that it can influence employees' sense of identity with the organization, thus shaping their attitudes, emotions, and behaviors (Ambrose and Schminke, 2009; Van Knippenberg and Hogg, 2003). When employees feel supported by the organization, they will be more willing to devote themselves to and have a long-standing tenure with the organization (Loi *et al.*, 2006).

Related studies have pointed out that when the level of organizational justice is high, employees will integrate their own concepts with the ideas of the organization and leaders, and this kind of identification will affect employees' attitudes and behaviors, of which the recognition and approval of leaders' behaviors is one of the important outcomes (De Cremer *et al.*, 2005). This is because servant leadership characteristically attaches importance to the needs of the team members and the relationship between leaders and subordinates (Hale

and Fields, 2007; Van Dierendonck, 2011). If servant leaders can help team members to recognize organizational justice by empowering employees and adopting their suggestions fairly while managing the interactive relationship between the members of the organization, then servant leaders can more effectively manage the relationship between trust and identity, making it easier to help employees recognize and accept the influence exerted by leaders (Olkkonen and Lipponen, 2006). Van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) also pointed out in their research that employees' perception of fairness can directly or indirectly affect their response to and acceptance of leaders' behaviors. Therefore, according to the principle of reciprocity in social exchange theory, employees with a higher level of POJ will trust leaders more, which will encourage one party to demonstrate positive behaviors toward the other (Chang *et al.*, 2009; Rosen *et al.*, 2009). Therefore, they will have a higher social approval of leaders' behavior and more willingness to accept their influence (Lord and Brown, 2004; Van Dijke *et al.*, 2010), thus generating a higher connection with VCC behavior. This study puts forward the following hypothesis:

H5: Perceived organizational justice can moderate the positive correlation between servant leadership and value co-creation. In other words, when employees possess higher perceived organizational justice, the positive relationship between servant leadership and value co-creation will be stronger than when employees possess lower perceived organizational justice.

2.6 Hypothesis on perceived organizational justice, authoritarian leadership, and employee value co-creation

When authoritarian leaders prefer to retain absolute power for themselves and are unwilling to empower their subordinates and when they tend to make decisions that are leader-centered, leaving few opportunities for employees to participate in decision-making, employees will then realize their own responsibilities, abide by rules and organizational guidelines, and demonstrate VCC behaviors. However, if authoritarian leaders attach importance to employees' work performance, severely criticizing and admonishing those who underperform, employees will be more

likely to achieve the excellent behaviors expected by leaders. According to social exchange theory, when employees perceive that the organization treats its members fairly and can make a fair judgment on the whole, the fairness experienced by employees in the organization, which can be regarded as an explicit tangible resource, is then demonstrated with corresponding behaviors, such as responsible behaviors in the VCC process (De Cremer and Tyler, 2007).

Therefore, when employees perceive a high level of fairness within the organization, this positive perception may serve as a buffer, reducing their negative reactions to authoritarian leadership in terms of value co-creation. According to social exchange theory, employees might believe that although the authoritarian leader's management style is strict, the organization treats them fairly regarding compensation, promotion, and job opportunities. As a result, they are more likely to continue contributing to organizational value co-creation rather than entirely abandoning their commitment and engagement with the organization due to the leadership style. Therefore, combining the above theories and empirical inferences, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Perceived organizational justice can moderate the negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and value co-creation; in other words, when employees possess higher perceived organizational justice, the negative influence of authoritarian leadership on value co-creation will be weakened to a greater extent than when employees possess a lower perceived organizational justice.

3.   Research and methodology

3.1   Participants and procedures

The total sample in this study included 467 participants from 101 groups. Questionnaire were mainly distributed to the full-time employees with direct supervisors of enterprises in Hsinchu Science Park, Taiwan. More than 3 people in each unit (department) received questionnaires, which took two forms: paper questionnaires and online questionnaires. Paper questionnaires were distributed (in sealed envelopes) by the secretariat to ensure the privacy of the tested

individuals, as per the requirements of this study. Overall, 467 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, 397 were retrieved from 91 groups, resulting in a valid response rate of 85.01%.

3.2 Measures

This study questionnaire included five variables, the questionnaire measure items by Ambrose and Schminke (2009), Conger and Kanungo (1994), Ehrhart (2004), Farh *et al.* (2000), and Yi and Gong (2013). Employees responded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree).

3.2.1 Individual level: Servant leadership

To measure SL, the 15 items SL scale developed by Ehrhart (2004) was used. The variables were structured to seven sub-dimensions: forming relationships with subordinates, empowering subordinates, helping subordinates grow and succeed, behaving ethically, having conceptual skills, putting subordinates first and creating value for those outside of the organization. According to the definition by Hale and Fields (2007), servant leadership is a practice of "leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader, emphasizing leader behaviors that focus on follower development and de-emphasizing glorification of the leader." Sample items included: "My department manager spends time to form quality relationships with department employees."

3.2.2 Individual level: Authoritarian leadership

To measure AL, the 14 items AL scale developed by Farh *et al.* (2000) was used. A triad model of paternalistic leadership with constructs and measurement included 5 dimensions: dignity, autocracy, concealment, austerity, and doctrine.

3.2.3 Individual level: Value co-creation

To measure VCC, the 29-items VCC scale developed by Yi and Gong (2013) was used. The scale included 8 dimensions：information seeking, information sharing, responsible behavior, personal interaction, feedback, advocacy, helping,

tolerance that each dimension had for about 3~5 items. Sample items included: " I have asked others for information on what this service offers. "

3.2.4 Individual level: Perceived organizational justice

To measure POJ, the 6 items POJ scale developed by Ambrose and Schminke (2009) was used. POJ was structured from two dimensions that individuals' personal justice experiences and the fairness of the organization generally. Sample items included: "Overall, I'm treated fairly by my organization." And "Most of the people who work here would say they are often treated unfairly."

3.2.5 Group level: Collective strategic vision

To measure CSV, the 6 items CSV scale developed by Conger and Kanungo (1994) was used. Sample items included: "Consistently generates new ideas for the future of the organization." and "Has vision, often brings up ideas about possibilities for the future."

3.3 Control variables

In the past research, certain demographic variables have a considerable level of correlation with organizational behavior and employees' psychological responses (Burke *et al.* , 2002; Cordes and Dougherty, 1993). Wu and Hu (2009) found in their study that male subordinates received more negative treatment from supervisors than female subordinates. In terms of seniority and education, it is found that employees with longer work experience and a higher education level usually obtain more rights and resources in the organization, and thus have a more positive working attitude. Wu *et al.* (2002) pointed out in their research that employees with higher seniority have greater job satisfaction. Therefore, their research will probably affect the results of this study, but variables not related to the theory, such as gender, age, education level, and working years, are controlled to exclude their explanatory effect.

3.4 Data analysis

In this study, statistical package software of SPSS 20 and HLM 6.08 was used to test reliability, validity, and research hypothesis. A more detailed description of hierarchical linear modeling can be found in the work of Raudenbush (2002). HLM employs statistical regression to model parameters that vary at more than one level (Raudenbush, 2002). While the model can be seen as linear (in particular, linear regression) it can also extend to non-linear models. Variables in different levels are analyzed individually. Assuming a linear effect, the regression model for a group j at group member i can be expressed by Equation 1:

Level 1: $Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}X_{ij} + r_{ij}$ $\hspace{3cm}$ (1)

where Y_{ij} is the evaluation of the group j at group member i (X_{ij}). β_{0j} and β_{1j} are regression coefficients with β_{1j} representing the group-buying attitude or intentions of each group and r_{ij} representing the random residual term for that evaluation. In addition, r_{ij} represents the particular circumstances of a group when it is being evaluated, and this includes the combination and group members around group j and the varied consumer perception. It is important to note that the context effect is subsumed in r_{ij}.

Level 2: $\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$ $\hspace{3cm}$ (2)

$\hspace{1.5cm}$ $\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + u_{1j}$ $\hspace{3cm}$ (3)

where γ_{00} refers to the attitude or intention of group members, and u_{0j} represents the randomness (or the random effect) of the Level-1 intercept after factoring in members of the group. Similarly, Equation 3 describes the slope β_{1j} of Equation 1, as a function of grand mean slope of all group members (γ_{10}) and adjusts for the average independent variables of the group. Finally, u_{1j} represents the randomness in slopes that cannot be explained by independent variables.

4.   Results

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics of demographic variables in this study. A total of final samples were 397 white-collar workers for the further

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for demographic variable

Measure	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	197	49.6%
	Female	200	50.4%
Age	Under 25	22	5.5%
	26-30	56	14.1%
	31-35	72	18.1%
	36-40	95	23.9%
	41-45	103	25.9%
	46-50	28	7.1%
	Over 51	21	5.3%
Education	Middle school(including lower)	0	0%
	High school	4	1.0%
	Bachelor and associate degree	219	55.2%
	Master and doctoral degree	174	43.8%
Occupation	Medical	8	2.0%
	Financial sector	7	1.8%
	High-tech industry	275	69.3%
	Manufacturing	95	23.9%
	Service industries	7	1.8%
	Others	5	1.3%
Posting	Junior staff	303	76.3%
	Sector manager	26	6.5%
	Manager	61	15.4%
	Director	7	1.8%
Current tenure	Under 1 year	44	11.1%
	1~2 years	74	18.6%
	3~4 years	44	13.9%
	5~6 years	39	9.8%
	7~8 years	25	6.3%
	9~10 years	34	8.6%
	Over 11 years	128	31.7%

Note. N = 397 samples.

analysis. Most of them were female (50.4%), 41~45 years old (25.9%), bachelor and associate degrees (55.2%), high-tech industries (69.3%). Most of current tenure was more than 11 years (31.7%), and posting was junior staff (76.3%).

4.2 Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Table 2 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients

Table 2

Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Servant Leadership	3.44	.76	(.95)				
2. Authoritative Leadership	2.57	.78	-.55**	(.93)			
3. Collective Strategic Vision	3.27	.90	.77**	-.29**	(.93)		
4. Perceived Organizational Justice	3.47	.74	.63**	-.51**	.44**	(.89)	
5. Value Co-creation	3.86	.43	.29**	-.11**	.18**	.34**	(.94)

Note. (1) The values in the diagonal brackets represent the Cronbach's α coefficients of the variables. (2) **
$p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

for the variables, with the diagonal numbers representing the Cronbach's α values
for each variable. As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's α coefficients for all
variables are above 0.70. Additionally, reliability analysis was conducted for each
construct item, followed by further construct validity analysis.

4.3 Convergent and discriminant validity

The average variance extracted (AVE) for the five constructs in this study
ranges from 0.47 to 0.69. Furthermore, the standardized factor loadings for the
measurement indicators of the constructs are all above 0.7 ($p < 0.01$) , indicating
convergent validity. The results of convergent and discriminant validity were
shown in Table 3. The convergent validity of scale items was calculated on the
basis of reliability, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted
(AVE; Fornell and Larcker, 1981). All composite reliabilities exceeded the
threshold value of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Additionally, the AVE exceeded the
benchmark of 0.50 recommended by Hair *et al.* (1998), except for when evaluating
the SL. According to Jiang *et al.* (2002), AVE estimates less than 0.50 can be found
even when composite reliabilities exceed the recommended benchmark of 0.50.
Thus, the measurement scales for the proposed constructs exhibited satisfactory
convergent validity. The AVE values was .60 for the SL, .47 for the AL, .50 for the
VCC, .61 for the POJ, and .69 for the CSV. To examine discriminant validity, the

Table 3
Convergent and discriminant validity

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Servant Leadership	.60				
2. Authoritative Leadership	.30	.47			
3. Collective Strategic Vision	.59	.08	.69		
4. Perceived Organizational Justice	.40	.26	.19	.61	
5. Value Co-creation	.08	.01	.03	.12	.50

Note. The values on the diagonal represent the average variance extracted, while the off-diagonal values represent the squared standardized correlation coefficients.

results showed that the coefficients of correlation were less than the square root of AVE for each paired research variable, which indicates discriminant validity.

This study employed the AVE method (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) to examine the discriminant validity of each construct. As shown in Table 3, the squared standardized coefficients off the diagonal are all less than the average variance extracted, supporting the claim that there is discriminant validity among the variables in this study.

4.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

The measurement scale was tested for model validity using first-order confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). An RMSEA value less than 0.08 indicates reasonable fit (Browne and Cudeck, 1992), while a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) greater than 0.90 represents good fit (Bentler, 1990). The results of this study are either meeting or approaching these standards. The five-factor model fit indices were as follows: Chi-square (χ^2) = 9126, df = 2335, RMSEA = 0.079, CFI = 0.846, and NFI = 0.796. In the four-factor model, the two leadership styles (servant leadership and authoritarian leadership) were combined. The fit indices for this model were Chi-square (χ^2) = 9552, df = 2355, RMSEA = 0.075, CFI = 0.822, and NFI = 0.754. For the three-factor model, the two moderators (VCC and CSV) were combined, resulting in fit indices of Chi-square (χ^2) = 10082, df = 2370, RMSEA

$= 0.07$, CFI $= 0.80$, and NFI $= 0.724$.

Based on these results, the five-factor model demonstrates better fit compared to the other two models (four-factor and three-factor). The five-factor model has lower Chi-square and higher CFI and NFI values, indicating that it provides a more accurate and comprehensive representation of the data than the simplified models.

4.5 Aggregation testing

The average Rwg value for CSV is 0.82, meeting the standard of 0.7. ICC1 is 0.24, which is consistent with the comments by Bliese (2000). ICC2 is 0.79, according to the recommendations by Schneider *et al.* (2002).

4.6 Common method variance, CMV

Since this study uses a self-report scale for data collection, with the same respondents providing answers for all variables, there may be common method variance. However, the focus of this study is to examine the moderating effects of variables on the interaction between independent and dependent variables. According to the literature, the moderation effects (interactions) are less likely to be affected by common method variance (Dahling and Gutworth, 2017; Evans, 1985; Schmitt, 1994; Siemsen *et al.*, 2010). Nonetheless, following the recommendations of Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), this study performed Harman's single-factor analysis post hoc and used the extracted factors to determine the presence of common method variance. The criterion for judgment is if a single factor explains more than 50% of the variance for all variables, then common method variance is considered to be present.

Based on the analysis results, this study extracted 11 factors with eigenvalues greater than 1. The variance explained by the first principal component, without rotation, was 27.76%, which is below the 50% threshold. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant issue of common method variance in this study.

4.7 Hypothesis testing

Table 4 presents the hypothesis testing results. In support of H1, SL

significantly and positively influences VCC (γ_{10}=0.20, p<0.01). This supports our hypothesis that servant leadership positively influences value co-creation. In support of H2, which AL is negatively related to VCC (γ_{20}=-0.06, p<0.05). This result supports our hypothesis that authoritarian leadership has a positive relationship with value co-creation, though the relationship is marginally significant.

To verify the moderation effect of CSV, when VCC was used to dependent variable, the full model of HLM indicated that CSV is postively related to SL slope (γ_{11}=0.07, p<0.01), and negatively related to AL slope (γ_{21}=-0.08, p<0.01). The H3 and H4 were supported. These results support hypotheses H3 and H4, indicating that CSV moderates the effects of both servant leadership and authoritarian leadership on value co-creation.

To verify the moderation effect of POJ, when VCC was used to dependent variable, the full model of HLM indicated that POJ is positively related to SL slope (γ_{11}=0.13, p<0.01), and negatively related to AL slope (γ_{21}=-0.09, p<0.01). These results support hypothesis H5, demonstrating that perceived organizational justice moderates the relationship between servant leadership and value co-creation. However, hypothesis H6 is not supported, as perceived organizational justice does not significantly moderate the negative relationship between authoritarian leadership and value co-creation.

5.   Conclusions

This study contributes to the VCC literature by examining the differential effects of SL and AL within Taiwanese enterprises, incorporating CSV and POJ as moderating factors. Below, we elaborate on the results for hypothesis, interpret their alignment with existing literature, and provide possible explanations for any inconsistencies.

5.1 Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the VCC literature by examining the differential effects of SL and AL within Taiwanese enterprises, incorporating CSV and POJ as

Table 4

The results of HLM with value co-creation as the dependent variable

	Null model	Fixed effect regression model	Full model	
Individual level				
Average intercepts (γ_{00})	3.85***	2.99***	2.65***	2.84***
Servant Leadership (γ_{10})		0.20**	0.04*	0.22**
Authoritative Leadership (γ_{20})		-0.06*	-0.35***	-0.06*
Individual level				
Perceived Organizational Justice(γ_{11})			0.13**	
Perceived Organizational Justice (γ_{21})			-0.09**	
Group level				
Collective Strategic Vision (γ_{11})				0.07**
Collective Strategic Vision (γ_{21})				-0.08**
Difference between the groups Group Average (τ_{00})	0.02	0.02	1.00	0.70
Servant Leadership (τ_{11})			0.05	0.03
Authoritative Leadership (τ_{11})			0.03	0.03
Group differences (σ^2)	0.16	0.14	0.12	0.12

Note. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

moderating factors. Below, we elaborate on the results for hypothesis, interpret their alignment with existing literature, and provide possible explanations for any inconsistencies.

First, the study fills an important gap by empirically demonstrating that SL significantly enhances employees' VCC behaviors. Existing research has shown that SL positively influences employee engagement and organizational performance through a focus on trust, empowerment, and development (Liden *et al.*, 2008; Van Dierendonck, 2011). However, the specific application of SL within the VCC context has been underexplored. This study extends the VCC framework by showing how SL fosters an inclusive and reciprocal environment that directly facilitates VCC activities. By integrating SL into the VCC model, the findings emphasize that leaders who prioritize trust and relationship-building enable

employees to engage more actively in value co-creation. This empirical evidence contributes to the literature by establishing SL as a key driver in the VCC process, offering a mechanism through which leadership can systematically influence VCC outcomes (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden *et al.*, 2008). While much of the existing literature links SL to general organizational performance, the specific context of VCC remains underexplored. Our results extend this framework by empirically demonstrating how SL directly facilitates VCC activities. This finding provides a more targeted understanding of how leadership shapes collaborative outcomes, filling a notable research gap.

For hypothesis 2, the study refines the understanding of AL within the VCC framework, addressing a gap in how authoritarian behaviors impact VCC. Prior research has documented the negative effects of AL on team dynamics and subordinate performance, primarily through the suppression of autonomy and employee voice (Chan *et al.*, 2008; Farh and Cheng, 2000). This study empirically confirms that AL negatively affects VCC, showing that authoritarian leaders' emphasis on control and compliance reduces opportunities for employees to participate in decision-making and collaborative efforts. This refinement is particularly relevant in collectivist contexts like Taiwan, where hierarchical structures are dominant (Farh *et al.*, 2007). By identifying the pathways through which AL inhibits VCC, such as restricted communication and autonomy, the study enriches the theoretical understanding of AL's role in VCC and clarifies its limitations in culturally diverse organizations. In Taiwan's collectivist and hierarchical culture, where AL is more culturally accepted (Farh *et al.*, 2007), this negative effect may be moderated by contextual factors such as employees' tolerance for hierarchy. However, our study confirms that regardless of cultural acceptance, AL's suppression of employee autonomy and open communication significantly limits the effectiveness of VCC.

The research contributes by examining the moderating role of CSV in the relationship between leadership styles and VCC. Existing literature has highlighted the importance of vision articulation in leadership effectiveness (Judge and Piccolo, 2004; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1996). However, its specific impact as

a moderator within the VCC context has not been fully explored. Our findings support the hypothesis that CSV enhances the positive effects of SL on VCC. Leaders who communicate a compelling strategic vision align employee behaviors with organizational goals, thereby increasing engagement in VCC activities.Additionally, CSV partially mitigates the negative impact of AL on VCC. Even in rigid hierarchical structures, a clearly articulated vision fosters a sense of shared purpose and direction among employees (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). This suggests that while AL's negative impact persists, strategic vision can buffer some of its detrimental effects by creating a unifying goal for employees. This moderating effect fills a gap in understanding how strategic vision interacts with leadership styles to influence VCC outcomes.

The study confirms that POJ amplifies the positive effect of SL on VCC. the study addresses the gap in the literature regarding the role of POJ as a moderating factor in VCC. Theories of organizational justice have long suggested that fairness and transparency are fundamental for enhancing employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Walumbwa *et al.*, 2009). However, its moderating effect in the context of VCC has not been empirically tested until now.The findings indicate that higher levels of POJ amplify the positive effect of SL on VCC, supporting the notion that when employees perceive fairness in the organization, they are more motivated to engage in co-creative behaviors. By integrating POJ into the VCC framework, this study offers a new perspective, demonstrating that organizational justice is not merely a background factor but an active contributor to VCC processes. By integrating POJ into the VCC framework, this study contributes a new perspective, demonstrating that fairness is not merely a background factor but an active contributor to co-creative processes. This finding enriches the understanding of how justice perceptions interact with leadership styles to influence VCC outcomes.

Unexpectedly, our results reveal that higher levels of POJ do not mitigate the negative effects of AL on VCC. This finding contradicts initial assumptions and suggests that authoritarian leaders may selectively favor in-group members, as proposed by Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory (Graen and Uhl-Bien,

1995). This selective favoritism may exacerbate the negative effects of AL on VCC by fostering resentment or disengagement among out-group members, even in the presence of organizational fairness. This result highlights the complexity of leadership dynamics and fairness perceptions in VCC contexts, particularly in culturally diverse organizations. It calls for further investigation into how fairness perceptions interact with hierarchical leadership styles and group identification processes.

In summary, this study addresses significant gaps in the VCC literature by exploring the differential effects of SL and AL on VCC and examining the moderating roles of CSV and POJ. SL is shown to be a key driver of VCC, while AL inhibits value co-creation. CSV and POJ emerge as critical moderators, though their effects vary across leadership styles. The unexpected finding regarding POJ's inability to mitigate AL's negative impact highlights the need for further research on the interplay between fairness perceptions, leadership behaviors, and cultural context. By connecting these results to existing literature and identifying areas for future research, this study provides a more integrated understanding of VCC dynamics in Taiwanese enterprises. These insights contribute to advancing theory and offer practical implications for leadership development and strategic management in culturally diverse settings.

5.2 Management implications

Considering the two-way interactive S-D logic that the economic system has gradually transformed, the interactions among members of the organization tends to be more cooperative, and customers jointly create the value of the organization in the whole service value chain through active participation and partnership (Yi and Gong, 2013). Moreover, research on the subject has pointed out that enterprises should realize that the new model of VCC lies in "the interaction between individuals in the environmental system" (Ramaswamy, 2009). Therefore, the processes that leaders should focus on in managing an organization are the interactions among various stakeholders in such an ecosystem. Only by adjusting the leadership style can the benefits of VCC be effectively elicited for the

organization. This study focused on the VCC between organizations and internal customers, trying to find practical suggestions that can elicit VCC between organizations and employees.

Based on the study's findings, the following practical management recommendations are provided:

(1) Promote Servant Leadership:

Organizations should adopt a servant leadership style that emphasizes support, respect, and empowerment of employees. Leaders should understand and adapt to employees' abilities and needs, create a supportive environment, and assist in their development. This approach positively influences employees' work ethic and behaviors, encouraging them to engage in VCC. Leaders should avoid authoritarian behaviors that restrict employee participation and instead foster a culture of open communication and feedback.

(2) Use Authoritarian Leadership Cautiously:

Given the negative impact of AL on VCC, it should be used cautiously. Organizations should focus on creating an employee-centered culture and improving communication mechanisms. Leaders should undergo training to avoid authoritarian behaviors and promote effective leadership styles such as SL, which positively influence employees. This includes encouraging team participation, peer learning, and feedback to foster a positive work environment.

(3) Improve Perceived Organizational Justice (POJ):

To enhance the influence of SL on VCC when employees perceive high organizational justice, organizations should establish a fair work environment. This includes training supervisors on the importance of organizational justice, handling promotions, assessments, and bonuses fairly, and setting up regular feedback mechanisms. Open feedback channels can also enhance POJ. When employees perceive fairness, they are more likely to trust their leaders, commit to their work, and engage in VCC behaviors.

In summary, this study reveals the different impacts of SL and AL on VCC and highlights the moderating roles of CSV and POJ. Future research should explore other leadership styles' effects on employee behaviors to provide new

perspectives on organizational changes within the VCC framework.

5.3 Research limitations

The sample of this study is drawn from high-tech industries in Hsinchu Science Park, Taiwan, which have specific cultural backgrounds and operational models. Therefore, the findings may be limited to this particular context and may not be fully generalizable to other cultural or industry settings. Future research could be conducted in different regions and industries to verify the generalizability of our findings. The study primarily relies on questionnaire surveys to collect data, which may be subject to social desirability bias and self-report bias. Respondents might provide answers that are more socially acceptable. Future research could consider combining other data collection methods, such as interviews or observations, to reduce these biases.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

In examining the limitations of the current study and suggesting directions for future research, several avenues stand out. Firstly, this study's focus on the Taiwan region restricts its ability to generalize findings across different cultural settings. Future research could address this limitation by applying the research framework to various cultural contexts. Such cross-cultural comparative studies would provide insights into how different cultures influence leadership styles, perceptions of organizational justice, and value co-creation behaviors, thereby enhancing the external validity of the results. Additionally, while this study investigates the effects of servant leadership and authoritarian leadership on value co-creation behaviors, it does not consider other leadership styles that might play a significant role in organizations. Future research could explore additional leadership styles such as transformational, authentic, and empowering leadership. By expanding the scope to include these other leadership behaviors, researchers could achieve a more comprehensive understanding of how diverse leadership styles impact employees' value co-creation behaviors.

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