

Knowledge Sharing in Organization: Increasing Job Performance through Absorptive Capacity and Transformational Leadership

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Abstract

Currently, organizations across a range of industries actively encourage knowledge sharing to boost employee productivity and organizational competitiveness. However, despite enormous efforts made by organizations to encourage knowledge sharing among their staff, many individuals are hesitant to do so. Therefore, this study attempts to identify the antecedent and consequences of knowledge sharing. This study considers the role of transformational leadership as a contextual factor that acts as moderator in the linkage between absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing. By providing questionnaires to the samples, namely 200 bank employees in Bandung City, West Java Province, a quantitative approach with a survey method is used. Utilizing structural equation modeling (SEM), the data is examined with AMOS software. The results indicate that absorptive capacity has a favorable impact on knowledge sharing, which in turn has a beneficial impact on job performance. Knowledge sharing also acts as a mediator between absorptive capacity and job performance. In addition, absorptive capacity's impact on knowledge sharing is moderated by transformational leadership. This work adds to the body of research on knowledge management in organization by confirming the antecedents and consequences of knowledge sharing aspect, namely absorptive capacity and employee performance.

Keywords: absorptive capacity, knowledge sharing, transformational leadership, job performance.

1. Introduction

When knowledge is being viraled, knowledge-based economic systems are formed around the world (Zhao et al., 2020). Employees in organizations who have more knowledge will have the capacity to produce better performance and become an important asset for the success of the organization in achieving its goals. To achieve organizational goals, knowledge sharing is a crucial factor (Oliveira et al., 2020). According to Dwivedi et al (2020), knowledge is seen as an organizational resource and asset to achieve their goals. Knowledge sharing thus become one of the factors that lead individuals to be able to complete certain tasks and increase their effectiveness (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Na-Nan & Arunyaphum, 2021; Zhang et al., 2019).

In this regard, knowledge sharing can facilitate employees to drive an enhanced performance as well as competitive advantage for the organization (Kucharska, 2019). However, when employees have lack of knowledge, it is possible that it will lead to decreased performance (Hong et al., 2022; Widiyanto, 2021). In addition, Swanson et al (2020) stated that knowledge sharing is more likely to occur when individuals have the capability to absorb information around his circumstances.

Currently, organization in various industries, especially service industries, are actively promoting the act of knowledge sharing as a way to enhance individual performance as well as increase the organizational competitiveness (Kucharska, 2019; Lin et al., 2020; Uyun et al., 2020). Although employers frequently make major attempts to encourage employees to share knowledge, many workers do not wish to do so, and are more inclined to hide it intentionally (Saaed et al., 2020), thus it can affect employee performance.

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According to Muhammed et al (2020), knowledge sharing can be practiced by employees when they have the ability to absorb the information, knowledge, and whatever occurs around them. This ability is known as absorptive capacity. In addition, the role of leader is also important for employees to apply their knowledge sharing ability. Leaders act as the contextual factor that will influence the condition by which knowledge sharing occur in an organization.

Regarding this, there is a previous study which mention that in the discussion on the idea of absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing, it is unclear how they relate to employee performance in particular and it needs to be explored further (Saaed et al., 2020). Furthermore, the results of systematic literature review from Kucharska (2019) suggested that the research on knowledge sharing needs a new perspective, such as from the individual, group, and organizational-level characteristics. So far, a number of study have consider transformational leadership variable as the antecedent of absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing (Cui et al., 2020; Faris Hussain et al., 2022; Hong et al., 2022; Widiyanto, 2021). However, Zhao et al (2020) suggested that the role of leadership style in influencing absorptive capacity can be explored further.

Considering these limitations and recommendation, this study is carried out to fill the existing gaps from previous study. This study considers the role of transformational leadership as a contextual factor that acts as moderator in the relationship between absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing. This study also takes into account the importance of knowledge sharing in moderating the link between employee performance and absorptive ability. This study contributes by explaining the relationships between these variables in the context of banking industry in Indonesia, as well as emphasize the importance to consider both personal and contextual factors from employees to increase the knowledge sharing practice that occur, thus enhancing their performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Absorptive Capacity & Knowledge Sharing

The common perspective of learning that can develop capability is closely related with the firm's capacity to recognize and investigate knowledge obtained from external sources, which is also known as absorptive capacity (Khin Khin Oo & Rakthin, 2022). Cohen and Levinthal (1990) were the first to develop the idea of absorptive capacity (AC), which they described as the organizational capacity to realize the value of acquiring, assimilating, and applying new external knowledge together with its prior knowledge base (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Migdadi, 2022). According to Park et al (2022) absorptive capability is the underlying framework that enables the business to use the knowledge it has amassed.. This knowledge can be exploited externally, then translated into a form that can be used to achieve goals and create a competitive advantage through creativity and tactical adaptability (Aguiar & Gagnepain, 2022; Kang et al., 2022). Absorptive capacity is also referred to as a high-level dynamic ability that is common to all companies (Bouguerra et al., 2022), and is able to increase the core abilities and job performance. AC is an essential component of the business's capacity to produce new knowledge because it helps the business introduce external knowledge that can improve employee performance. Wang et al (2022) have proven the link between knowledge sharing and AC. This is because AC encourages knowledge sharing among employees to other individuals in the organization. Through this process, employees can disseminate their knowledge and use it to solve problems they face in their job (Cuvero et al., 2022; Hu et al., 2022)

H₁. Absorptive capacity has a positive influence on knowledge sharing

2.2. Knowledge Sharing & Job Performance

The process of identifying, seizing, capturing, and utilizing knowledge within an organization makes a major contribution to creating a competitive advantage for the organization itself (Kucharska, 2019). By sharing knowledge systematically between its members, an organization can obtain various kinds of information to support its work (Lin et al., 2020). In essence, Polanyi (1962) developed the idea of knowledge by viewing it as a resource or capital that improves a person's capacity for action and performance (Hong et al., 2022; Widiyanto, 2021). According to Yang et al (2018), knowledge is seen as a resource and important assets used by organization in achieving their goals.

Employees are often attempt to improve their performance by asking their colleagues to share their knowledge or insights (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Pongsathornwiwat et al., 2019). Knowledge sharing has been shown to improve employee performance towards their organization in numerous studies. According to Kurniawan et al (2020), knowledge sharing is one of the most crucial factor in establishing sustainable employee performance. In

organization, employees often not realizing that they can utilize their knowledge when they do not have the chance to share the knowledge itself.

H₂. Knowledge sharing has a positive influence on job performance

2.3. Knowledge Sharing as a Mediator

Furthermore, the relationship between absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing will become stronger when the environment in the organization or workplace facilitate or support the practice. According to Zhang et al (2019), knowledge sharing is a crucial component which existence must be maintained in the work environment. The aim of knowledge sharing is to ease employees in creating new knowledge, which will be useful for improving their performance (Na-Nan & Arunyaphum, 2021; Otair et al., 2022). Additionally, it is considered that information sharing can solve individual problems in organizational environment (Saaed et al., 2020)

Knowledge sharing is predicted to be able to mediate the relationship between absorptive capacity and job performance (Chang et al., 2018). This is because when an employee in an organization exploits the acquired knowledge, he must transfer it through knowledge sharing, so that other employees can have new knowledge, by which can boost their performance (Yang et al., 2018).

H₃. Absorptive capacity has a positive influence on job performance through knowledge sharing.

2.4. Transformational Leadership as a Moderator

According to Deng et al (2022) transformational leadership refers to the leadership style which encourage, inspire, and motivate employees to innovate and create changes. Transformational leadership often motivates employees to go beyond their personal interests for the benefit of the organization (Nguyen, Malik, et al., 2022; Nguyen, Siri, et al., 2022). Under high-level transformational leadership, employees tend to improve their performance. The study from Darwish et al (2020) Gad David et al (2021) and Rezaei Zadeh et al (2020) have indicated that the behavior of transformational leaders has a moderating influence on knowledge sharing. This is because transformational leaders can form an atmosphere that allows the exchange and absorption of knowledge. In addition, transformational leadership also provide incentives to employees to contribute to the organization, inspires them to achieve common goals, and generates positive attitudes towards knowledge sharing behavior (Ferrerias Méndez et al., 2018). Furthermore, Shafique (2018) emphasized that employee attitude and behavior in sharing knowledge and skills with their peers are affected by transformative leadership. Therefore, within this condition, employees will be able to support one another in overcoming obstacles and difficulties at work for achieving the organizational goals (Chang et al., 2018; Khan, 2021). Eric Swanson et al (2020) suggested that transformational leadership can moderate the relationship between absorptive capacity on knowledge sharing in organization. This is because the role of leader can strengthen the influence of absorptive capacity on knowledge sharing in the workplace (Ferrerias Méndez et al., 2018; Nguyen, Malik, et al., 2022). When the existing knowledge is shared, this will create a supportive climate for achieving employee performance.

H₄. Transformational leadership moderates the influence of absorptive capacity on knowledge sharing.

Based on these explanations, we create a conceptual framework to visualize the hypothesis we developed about the relationship between absorptive capacity, knowledge sharing, transformational leadership, and job performance. The conceptual framework was see in figure 1.

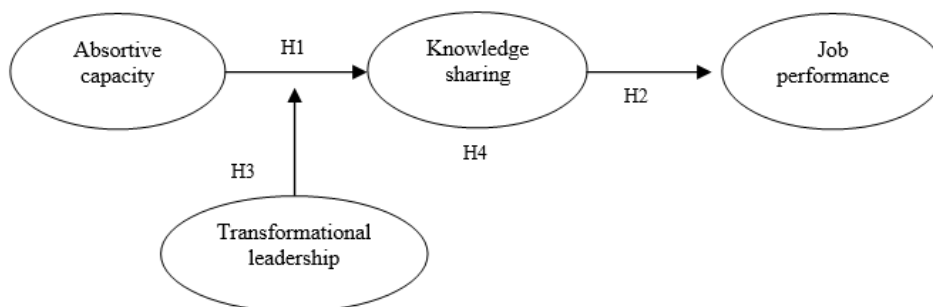


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

3. Research Method and Materials

This study is conducted with quantitative approach, with the objective to measure and understand the causal relationship between the variables. The population of this study is the employees of State-Owned-Enterprises (SOEs) bank in Bandung City, West Java. The sample is 250 respondents, which was obtained through the use of a purposive sample technique, with the employees' requirements of having been working in the company for at least 1 year. By providing questionnaires to the respondents, a survey is used to obtain the data. 200 surveys were ultimately returned and are available for additional data processing. This study follows the recommendation from Sekaran and Bougie (2010), that that when the questionnaire items were not answered, or when the questionnaire entered values that were not part of the original question sheet, then the questionnaire is rejected. AMOS software is used to evaluate the data collected for this investigation utilizing structural equation modeling.

3.1. Variable Measurement

Each item in the questionnaire is assessed using 5-point Likert scale, with points ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 represents a strong disagreement and 5 represents a strong agreement with the statement. The variable in this study was measured using the following source: (1) Absorptive capacity is measured using 6 items developed by Otair et al (2022); (2) Transformational leadership is measured using four items developed by Ferreras Méndez et al (2018) (3) Knowledge sharing is measured using five items developed by Widiyanto (2021); and (4) Job performance is measured using five items developed by Lin et al (2020)

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondents' Profile

This study is carried out in Bandung City, West Java Province, with 200 respondents. the author directly visited the bank, meet with the employees, and distributed the questionnaire. The respondents are chosen according to their characteristics, so that they met the criteria in this study, which is have been working in the company for at least a year. The data obtained from the respondents indicate that the majority of respondents are male, namely 113 respondents (56%), ranging from 31-40 years old, namely 109 respondents (55%), have bachelor degree as their education background, namely 137 respondents (69%), and have been working for at least 1-3 years, namely 125 respondents (63%).

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Amount	Percentage
Gender		
Male	113	56%
female	87	44%
Age		
21-30 years old	81	40%
31-40 years old	109	55%
> 40 years	10	5%
Education		
Bachelor	137	69%
Master	63	31%
Work Tenure		
1-3 years	125	63%
4-6 years	64	32%
> 6 years	11	5%

4.2. Data Reliability Test

Based on the findings of the estimated significance test of the standard loading value in the measurement model, it is determined objectively that every indicator in the latent variable has demonstrated a significant result, with a value of $p < 0.001$, and each loading value of the indicator is greater than 0.50. With these results, it can be inferred that for measuring the latent variable, all indicators are valid. Cronbach's alpha is used in this study's reliability test, which is

measured using SPSS 23 program, with the acceptance parameter of > 0.70. In addition, this study also consider the value of Construct Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which is determined manually using the following equation:

$$CR = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i)^2 + (\sum_{i=1}^n e_i)}$$

$$AVE = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^n \lambda_i^2)}{n}$$

Construct Reliability has the parameter that the value must be greater than 0.7, for the indicator to be declared reliable for measuring the latent variable. The AVE parameter's suggested value must be greater than 0.5. Based on data processing output, the value of Cronbach's Alpha, Construct Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in this study has met the requirement, so that the indicator used in this study are reliable.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Latent Variable	Indicator measurement	Standard Loading	Cα	CR	AVE
Absorptive Capacity	AC1	0.780	0.776	0.866	0.522
	AC2	0.690			
	AC3	0.850			
	AC4	0.710			
	AC5	0.620			
	AC6	0.660			
Transformational Leadership	TL1	0.810	0.795	0.828	0.549
	TL2	0.840			
	TL3	0.637			
	TL4	0.647			
Knowledge Sharing	KS1	0.610	0.793	0.840	0.515
	KS2	0.830			
	KS3	0.780			
	KS4	0.600			
	KS5	0.740			
Job Performance	JP1	0.750	0.752	0.877	0.588
	JP2	0.780			
	JP3	0.820			
	JP4	0.710			
	JP5	0.770			

4.3. Model Fit Test

The model fit test uses Chi-Square, CMIN/DF, AGFI, RMSEA, TLI, and CFI as parameters. The measuring model used in this work is compatible with the population activity's empirical conditions. Table 3 displays the outcomes of the study's model fit test.

4.4. Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity test is carried out to examine the validity of each estimated indicator, which is done by measuring the dimensions of the concept tested in this study. If each indicator has the critical ratio (C.R.) value twice greater than the standard error (S.E.), therefore a set of indicator can represent one latent variable that underlies it. From the result of data analysis, the value of regression weight indicates that the critical ratio (C.R.) is twice greater than the (S.E.), which means that For each latent variable in our investigation, all indicators are valid. Table 4 displays the regression weight for each component.

Table 3. Output of Model Fit Test

Statistical Test	Critical Value	Result	Conclusion
Chi Square	-	313.242	-
Degree of Freedom	-	166	-
p-Value	> 0.05	0.061	Fit
CMIN/DF	< 2.00	1.887	Fit
Root Mean Square Residual	> 0.05	0.054	Fit
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.040	Fit
GFI		0.919	Fit
AGFI		0.945	Fit
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.933	Fit
TLI		0.908	Fit

Table 4. Convergent Validity Test Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
AC1	<---	AbsCapacity	1.000			
AC2	<---	AbsCapacity	1.283	.075	17.150	***
AC3	<---	AbsCapacity	.612	.081	7.559	***
AC4	<---	AbsCapacity	.938	.124	7.566	***
AC5	<---	AbsCapacity	.344	.105	3.269	.001
AC6	<---	AbsCapacity	.533	.114	4.662	***
KS1	<---	KnowSha	1.000			
KS2	<---	KnowSha	1.418	.169	8.396	***
KS3	<---	KnowSha	1.269	.160	7.954	***
KS4	<---	KnowSha	.963	.148	6.519	***
KS5	<---	KnowSha	.829	.137	6.041	***
JP1	<---	JPerform	1.000			
JP2	<---	JPerform	3.429	1.145	2.996	.003
JP3	<---	JPerform	3.818	1.459	2.617	.009
JP4	<---	JPerform	1.798	.741	2.426	.015
JP5	<---	JPerform	1.184	.560	2.113	.035
TL4	<---	TransLead	1.000			
TL3	<---	TransLead	.602	.105	5.732	***
TL2	<---	TransLead	.934	.122	7.670	***
TL1	<---	TransLead	.746	.099	7.563	***

4.5. Model Causality Test

This test is conducted to determine the causal relationship between variables by measuring the strength of the relationship between two or more latent variables. The results of calculations with AMOS can be seen in Figure 2, Table 5, and Table 6.

Based on the significance of t-count in Table 6 with the probability (p) value of 0.05, it can be known that the latent variables have significant influence because they have smaller probability value than 0.05. In more details, the results are as follows:

- Absorptive Capacity has a significant positive influence on knowledge sharing with the probability value smaller than 0.05, with the CR value of 4.811 (H1 accepted).
- Knowledge Sharing has a significant positive influence on job performance with the probability value smaller than 0.05, with the CR value of 4.905 (H2 accepted).
- Transformational Leadership has a significant influence as moderating variable in the causal relationship between absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing, with the probability value smaller than 0.05, with the CR value of 4.875 (H4 accepted).

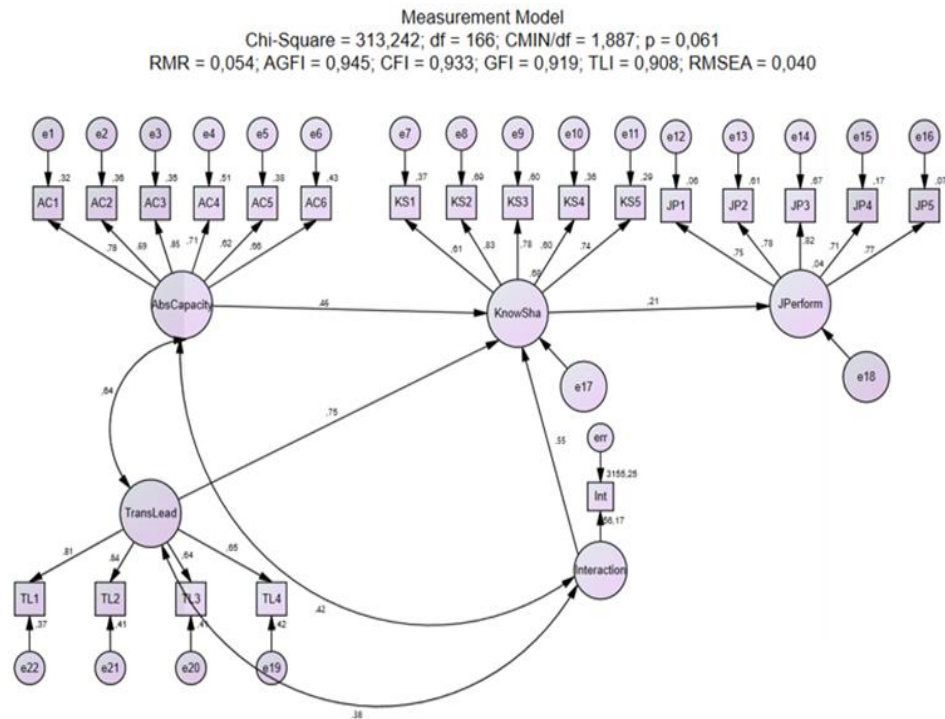


Figure 2. Output of Measurement Model

Table 5. Model Causality Test Results

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
KnowSha	<---	AbsCapacity	.457	.095	4.811	***
JPerform	<---	KnowSha	.206	.042	4.905	***
KnowSha	<---	AbsCapacity x TransLead	.546	.112	4.875	***

4.6. Mediation Analysis using Sobel Test

Sobel test is used to find out whether there is a relationship through the mediating variable, and to ascertain that whether the variable can significantly function as mediator in the causal relationship. In order to find out whether the mediating variable has a significant influence, it must be seen whether the value of Sobel test result is greater than z table (1,96) or not. In this regard, Sobel Test is carried out using manual calculation with the formulation as follows:

$$z = \frac{\frac{ab}{\sqrt{(b^2SE_a^2) + (a^2SE_b^2)}}}{0,457 \times 0,206}$$

$$z = \frac{\sqrt{(0,206^2 \times 0,095^2) + (0,457^2 \times 0,042^2)}}{z = 3,43438836}$$

From the results of manual calculation of Sobel Test, it is obtained the value of sobel test statistics of > 1.96, namely 3.434 > 1.96. According to these findings, the knowledge sharing variable can significantly act as mediating variable in the causal relationship between absorptive capacity on job performance (H3 accepted).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study intends to investigate how absorptive capacity affects knowledge sharing and how that affects job performance, while considering the moderating role of transformational leadership in employees of SOEs bank in Bandung City, with the number of sample of 200 respondents. The findings of hypothesis test indicate that all hypothesis proposed are accepted. First, we examine the direct influence of absorptive capacity on knowledge sharing. The findings indicate that employees' capability in absorbing external information will encourage the practice of knowledge sharing. Regarding this, Faris Hussain et al (2022) and Hong et al (2022) mentioned that an essential component of a company's ability to produce new information is its absorptive capacity.

Knowledge sharing practices are found to benefit from the ability to absorb information, and this finding complements earlier research by Lin et al (2020) and Widiyanto (2021). Moreover, this result also suggested that company should provide support and encourage their employees to absorb and explore the information or knowledge around them. This capability can be the initial capital as a means of sharing information and knowledge for employees in the organization. This study also investigates how knowledge sharing affects work performance. The results of this investigation indicate that knowledge sharing practice can improve employee performance. Knowledge sharing, according to Zhao et al (2020) is a procedure that can boost employee job performance. Oliveira et al(2020) added that knowledge sharing can be seen as HR competencies in utilizing information and disseminating it to their peers, thus they can achieve higher job performance. The existence of knowledge sharing practice enable employees to overcome problems that they face within their job. This finding strengthens the result from Dwivedi et al (2020) that knowledge sharing improves job performance.

Additionally, the act of knowledge sharing inside a company will buffer the link between absorption capacity and work performance. Khin Khin Oo & Rakthi (2022) stated that absorptive capacity can make employees able to improve their performance if they owned knowledge that is obtained from the practice of knowledge sharing. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that absorptive capacity influences employee performance through knowledge sharing is accepted. Finally, the moderating effect of transformational leadership on the link between absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing is also examined in this study. The findings of this study indicate that transformational leadership can become a factor that can strengthen the influence of absorptive capacity on knowledge sharing in organization. These results demonstrate that the traits of a transformational leader will facilitate individuals to conduct knowledge sharing process through the improvement of absorptive capacity. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is accepted. From the results obtained through the data analysis and discussion, it can be inferred that knowledge sharing is positively impacted by absorptive capacity, which will also affect employee performance. Furthermore, knowledge sharing is also found to be able to mediate the influence of absorptive capacity and job performance. This study has demonstrated that transformational leadership plays a moderating role in the effects of absorptive capacity and knowledge sharing.

This study contributes in a number of ways. First, this work adds to the body of research on knowledge management in organization by confirming the antecedents and consequences of knowledge sharing aspect, namely absorptive capacity and employee performance. This study also widens the literature by exploring the crucial role of leader who apply transformational leadership style as a contextual factor, which will also determine the strength of the absorptive capacity on knowledge sharing. Furthermore, this study also contribute to the practice by emphasizing that the improvement of employee performance can occur with absorptive capacity owned by employees, as it will drive the process of knowledge sharing. A leader must also realize that he plays a role within this process, because the leadership style adopted by the leader, namely transformational leadership, will facilitate the process of absorptive capacity in enhancing knowledge sharing and employee performance. This study is carried out using quantitative method with cross-sectional data. Although this process have been done using the proper scientific manner, future studies is still needed, and is suggested to use longitudinal approach in order to obtain a more robust data. Future studies is also suggested to be carried out in different context and region, thus the results can be generalized further.

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