

The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Knowledge Sharing with Trust as a Moderator Variable: The Case of Distro Employees in Citarum Village Bandung

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Abstract

This research investigates the impact of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing behavior, with trust serving as a moderating variable, within distro businesses located in the Citarum Subdistrict of Bandung. Operating within the creative economy sector, these businesses encounter intense competition from both domestic and international markets. To maintain their sustainability, it is crucial to enhance emotional intelligence, encourage knowledge-sharing activities, and establish trust among employees. Employing a quantitative approach through surveys, the study gathered data from 179 distro employees. Questionnaires were used as the primary data collection tool, and the data were analyzed using regression techniques. The findings reveal that emotional intelligence has a positive influence on knowledge sharing, and that trust significantly strengthens this relationship by amplifying the effect of emotional intelligence. These results highlight the vital role of trust in creative work settings and offer practical recommendations for distro business stakeholders to foster a collaborative work culture grounded in emotional intelligence and mutual trust.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Knowledge Sharing; Trust; Distro Business

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1. Introduction

In the era of knowledge-based economy, knowledge is no longer just an individual asset, but a strategic resource for organizations (Yaw, 2023). According to Riege (2005) a major obstacle in managing knowledge is encouraging individuals to share their knowledge with others, a process known as knowledge sharing. Although seemingly simple, knowledge sharing behavior is influenced by various psychological and social factors, including emotional states and the level of trust between individuals (Jeon & Lee, 2020).

One of the internal elements that is thought to have an impact on knowledge sharing is emotional intelligence (Mura et al., 2021). According to Ansari and Malik (2017) persons with advanced emotional intelligence skills tend to perform better in to understand, manage, and respond to emotions, both their own and others', in adaptive ways. In an organizational context, this ability allows one to build positive interpersonal relationships, manage conflict, and create a supportive work environment, which in turn can promote the sharing of knowledge among individuals voluntarily.

However, the effect of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing does not occur in a vacuum. Rechberg (2020). In practice, sharing behavior is highly dependent on the level of trust between individuals in the organization. Haesebrouck et al. (2021). In line with the opinion of Imam and Zaheer (2021) trust acts as a psychological foundation that allows a person to feel safe to share ideas, experiences, even failures, without fear of being criticized or taken advantage of. Therefore, based on research Ansari dan Malik (2017) trust can strengthen or weaken the relationship between emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing behavior.

Building on the preceding discussion, this study aims to examine the impact of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing, while also investigating the moderating role of trust within this relationship. The findings are anticipated to offer valuable theoretical contributions to the existing body of literature in knowledge management and organizational

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psychology. Moreover, they are expected to provide actionable insights for organizations seeking to cultivate a sustainable culture of knowledge sharing.

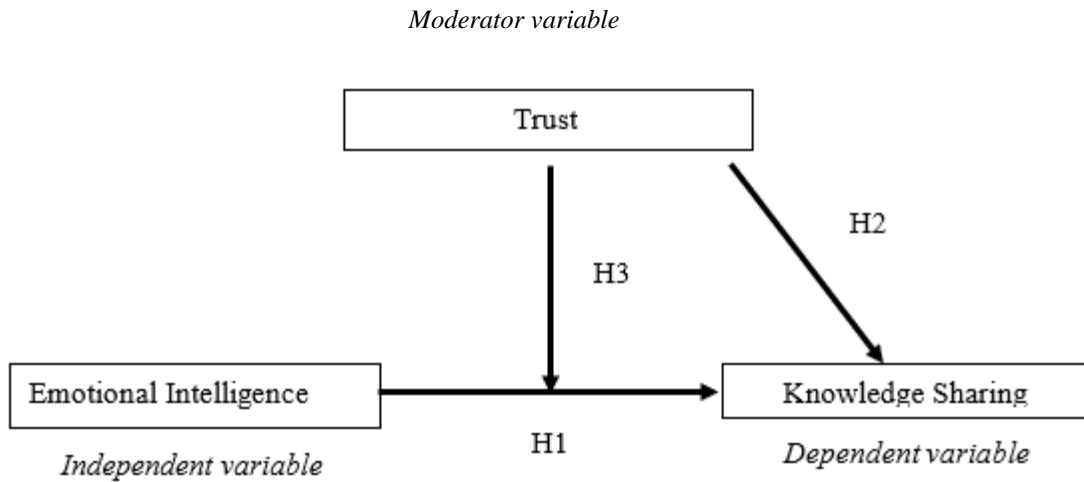


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2. Literature Review

Emotional intelligence has functioned as shown to play an important role in supporting knowledge sharing behavior in organizations. Zhang dan Xu (2024) indicating that emotional intelligence actually encourages knowledge sharing behavior through the mediation mechanism of psychological safety. Similar findings were also shown by Sathitsemakul dan Calabrese (2017) who found that emotional intelligence strengthens attitudes towards knowledge sharing in the banking sector.

However, the role of emotional intelligence is not always dominant Ummah et al.(2023) found that transformational leadership is more influential than emotional intelligence in increasing knowledge sharing behavior. Meanwhile, Li dan Li (2024) suggested that professional commitment and organizational support are key in optimizing the influence of emotional intelligence on tacit knowledge.

In organizational dynamics, trust plays an important role as a driving factor in relationships between individuals. Cook dan Wall (1980) defines trust as confidence in the intentions and competence of coworkers. Although Ansari dan Malik (2017) stated that trust does not moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing, other studies show that trust is able to increase the effectiveness of interpersonal relationships in organizations (Mura et al. 2021).

Based on this review, this study proposes that trust has the potential to strengthen the relationship between emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing, especially in an organizational environment that relies on knowledge as the basis for its operations.

3. Methods

This research adopts a quantitative approach through the survey method, because it is considered suitable for measuring the relationship between variables and testing hypotheses in an objective and structured manner. According to Sugiyono (2019), The quantitative approach starts with data collection based on existing theories and analyzed using statistical tools. The main focus of this research is to examine how emotional intelligence affects knowledge sharing, with trust as a moderating factor in the relationship. The survey method was chosen because it allows for the efficient collection of large amounts of data through questionnaire instruments that are structured based on theoretical indicators. According to Sembiring et al.(2024), data collection techniques represent a critical phase in any study aimed at gathering information through the measurement of research variables. The selection of appropriate methods and instruments must align with the nature of the data to be collected, as they form the foundation for subsequent analytical procedures. The population for this study comprised employees of distribution outlets located in Citarum Village, Bandung. Since the exact population size is uncertain, the determination of the sample size follows a specific

methodological approach of Hair et al. (2014), specifically, the sample size was calculated by multiplying the number of indicators (8) by 20, resulting in a total of 160 respondents. The sampling method employed is Non-Probability Sampling, utilizing a Purposive Sampling approach, whereby respondents are selected based on predefined criteria namely, distro employees who have been employed full-time for more than two months.

This study utilizes primary data collected directly from respondents via questionnaire distribution. The data gathered serves to assess variables including emotional intelligence, trust, and knowledge sharing behavior. The analysis begins with instrument evaluation, comprising validity testing to determine the appropriateness of each questionnaire item, and reliability testing to assess the consistency of respondents' answers using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Additionally, classical assumption testing is conducted to verify that the data satisfy the necessary conditions for regression analysis, thereby ensuring the validity and reliability of the results. (Hanif, 2022). Moreover, the classical assumption tests were conducted to confirm that the data satisfy the prerequisites for regression analysis. Normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to determine if the data followed a normal distribution. To identify potential multicollinearity issues, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis was performed, with VIF values below 10 indicating the absence of multicollinearity. Additionally, heteroscedasticity was examined using the Spearman Rank test to evaluate whether the variance of the residuals in the regression model remains constant across different levels of the independent variables (Chaniago et al., 2023).

Once the data satisfy the classical assumptions, multiple linear regression analysis is performed to evaluate the direct effects of emotional intelligence and trust on knowledge sharing. To examine trust's role as a moderating variable, moderated regression analysis is applied to determine whether trust amplifies or diminishes the influence of other moderator variables. The t-test is employed to assess the individual significance of both independent and moderator variables, while the F-test evaluates the collective impact of all independent variables on the dependent variable. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is analyzed to quantify the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. Through these analytical procedures, this study aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of causal relationships within social dynamics in the workplace, particularly within the distro business sector.

4. Result and Discussions

In this section, it will discuss the research results and analysis of the research with the title "The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Knowledge Sharing with Trust as a Moderator Variable: The case of Distro employees in Citarum Village Bandung." Variable X in this study is emotional intelligence, while variable Y is knowledge sharing. The M variable (moderator) in this study is trust.

4.1. Results

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

| Characteristics | Category | Number of Respondents | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Age | 18–24 years | 81 | 45,3% |
| | 25–34 years | 73 | 40,8% |
| | ≥ 35 years | 25 | 13,9% |
| Gender | Male | 103 | 57,5% |
| | Female | 76 | 42,5% |
| Last Education | SMA/SMK Equivalent | 71 | 39,7% |
| | Diploma (D1/D2/D3) | 52 | 29,1% |
| | Bachelor (S1/D4) | 55 | 30,7% |
| Position or Title | Manager | 15 | 8,4% |
| | Staff | 164 | 91,6% |
| Length of Service | < 1 years | 53 | 29,6% |
| | 1–3 years | 75 | 41,9% |
| | > 3 years | 51 | 28,5% |

This study engaged 179 respondents whose demographic profiles predominantly represent a young, productive workforce. Based on table 1, the largest age cohort falls within the 25–29 years range (39%), followed by those aged 30–34 years (21%), reflecting the prominence of early adulthood—a stage typically characterized by active career

engagement and professional development. Regarding educational attainment, the majority of participants hold a high school or vocational diploma (52%), with the remainder comprising diploma (D3) holders at 13% and bachelor’s degree (S1) graduates at 35%. This educational diversity enriches the breadth of perspectives regarding the phenomena under investigation. In terms of gender distribution, males constitute 67% of the sample, while females account for 33%. Occupationally, most respondents serve in staff roles (70%), with 51% having tenure between one and three years. This suggests that respondents possess sufficient experience to provide informed evaluations of the study variables, albeit while still in the early phases of their professional careers.

Prior to conducting the primary analyses, preliminary assessments of the research instrument’s validity and reliability were performed. The validity analysis revealed that all questionnaire items demonstrated item-total correlations exceeding 0.30, with significance levels below 0.05, thereby affirming their validity. Reliability testing, measured via Cronbach’s Alpha, yielded coefficients of 0.897 for emotional intelligence, 0.860 for knowledge sharing, and 0.889 for trust—each surpassing the 0.70 threshold recommended by Hair et al. (2014) and Indonesian government standards. Consequently, the instrument exhibits excellent internal consistency and is deemed reliable for data collection.

To confirm the suitability of the multiple linear regression model, classical assumption tests were conducted. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test produced a significance value of 0.200 ($p > 0.05$), indicating normal data distribution. Multicollinearity diagnostics revealed tolerance values above 0.10 and Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) below 10 for all independent variables, confirming the absence of multicollinearity concerns. Furthermore, heteroscedasticity testing via the Glejser method demonstrated that all variables had significance values exceeding 0.05, suggesting no heteroscedasticity issues within the model. Collectively, these results affirm that the regression model adheres to all classical assumptions and is appropriate for subsequent analysis stages.

Hypothesis testing was executed through multiple regression analyses for Hypotheses 1 and 2, and moderated regression analysis (MRA) for Hypothesis 3, utilizing SPSS version 27.

4.1.1. *Multiple Regression Test*

Table 2. Multiple Regression Test

| Model | F Count | Sig. | Adjusted R ² | Variables | Koefisien (β) | t Count | Sig. |
|-------|---------|-------|-------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|-------|
| 1 | 85,213 | 0,000 | 0,492 | X (KE) | 0,165 | 4,395 | 0,000 |
| | | | | M (KARK) | 1,216 | 7,229 | 0,000 |

Based on table 2. the results of multiple regression analysis, it can be concluded that the Emotional Intelligence (X) and Trust (M) variables have a significant influence on Knowledge Sharing (Y) behavior. The partial test (t-test) results show that Emotional Intelligence has a positive effect on Knowledge Sharing, with a coefficient of 0.165, a t value of 4.395, and a significance of 0.000. This shows that the greater the level of emotional intelligence of individuals in the organization, the greater their tendency to share knowledge. In addition, the Trust variable also has a significant effect, with a coefficient of 1.216, a t-value of 7.229, and a significance of 0.000, which shows that trust plays an important role in building a knowledge sharing culture in the work environment.

The simultaneous test (F-test) results show that the regression model involving Emotional Intelligence and Trust together has a significant effect on Knowledge Sharing. The F value of 85.213 with a significance level of 0.000 (smaller than 0.05) indicates that this model is valid and statistically significant. Thus, the two independent variables collectively make a real contribution to knowledge sharing behavior in organizations.

In addition, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.492 indicates that 49.2% of the variation in Knowledge Sharing behavior can be explained by Emotional Intelligence and Trust. While the remaining 50.8% is influenced by other factors not included in this model. This result indicates that although the model has a fairly strong explanatory power, there are still other variables that influence knowledge sharing behavior in the organization.

4.1.2. *Moderated Regression Analysis*

The results of the moderated regression analysis on Table 3 indicate that both Emotional Intelligence (X) and Trust (M) exert a positive and significant impact on Knowledge Sharing behavior (Y). The t-test reveals that Emotional Intelligence has a coefficient of 0.161, with a t-value of 4.315 and a significance level of 0.000, confirming its significant effect. Likewise, Trust demonstrates a significant influence, with a coefficient of 1.215, a t-value of 7.283, and a significance of 0.000. Notably, the interaction term between Emotional Intelligence and Trust (X*M) also shows a

statistically significant effect on Knowledge Sharing, despite its very small coefficient of 1.670E-10, with a t-value of 2.000 and significance at 0.047. This finding suggests that Trust functions as a moderating variable that enhances the effect of Emotional Intelligence on Knowledge Sharing behavior within the organization.

Table 3. Moderator Regression Test

| Model | F Count | Sig. | Adjusted R ² | Variables | Coefficient (β) | t Count | Sig. |
|-------|---------|-------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------------|---------|-------|
| 2 | 59,110 | 0,000 | 0,503 | X (KE) | 0,161 | 4,315 | 0,000 |
| | | | | M (KARK) | 1,215 | 7,283 | 0,000 |
| | | | | X*M | 1,670E-10 | 2,000 | 0,047 |

Collectively, the moderated regression model incorporating Emotional Intelligence (X), Trust (M), and their interaction (X*M) significantly predicts Knowledge Sharing behavior. The model’s overall F statistic of 59.110 with a significance level of 0.000 indicates that it is robust and suitable for testing the relationships among these variables. The inclusion of the moderator variable strengthens the combined effect, underscoring the critical role of Trust in amplifying the association between Emotional Intelligence and Knowledge Sharing.

Furthermore, the Adjusted R² value of 0.503 reveals that this moderated model accounts for 50.3% of the variance in Knowledge Sharing behavior. This represents a substantial improvement compared to the prior model without the interaction term, highlighting the significant contribution of the interaction (X*M) to the model’s explanatory power. These results confirm the pivotal role of Trust in moderating the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Knowledge Sharing.

4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that both emotional intelligence and trust exert a significant impact on knowledge-sharing behaviors, both as standalone predictors and through their interactive moderating effects. These findings substantiate and extend existing theoretical frameworks and prior research emphasizing the crucial role of psychological and relational factors in fostering a collaborative and learning-oriented organizational culture.

Specifically, the multiple regression analysis indicates that emotional intelligence positively and significantly influences knowledge sharing, evidenced by a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) and a beta coefficient of 0.165. This suggests that employees with higher emotional intelligence are more inclined to participate actively in knowledge-sharing activities. This outcome corroborates the findings of Sathitsemakul dan Calabrese (2017) who studied bank employees in Thailand and found that emotional intelligence significantly drives positive attitudes towards knowledge sharing, especially in work environments that emphasize interpersonal interactions.

In addition, trust also shows a positive and significant influence on knowledge sharing, with a significance value of 0.000 and a beta coefficient of 1.216. This reflects that a work climate based on mutual trust can encourage openness and information exchange. This finding supports the results of the study Mura et al. (2021) which found that trust and emotional intelligence are a combination that strengthens the culture of knowledge sharing among MSME players in Central Europe. An emotionally safe work environment is likely to facilitate productive and voluntary two-way communication.

Third, the results of the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) test show that trust moderates the relationship between emotional intelligence and knowledge sharing significantly, with a calculated t value of 2.000 > t table 1.973 and a p-value of 0.047. Although the interaction coefficient value of 1.670E-10 is numerically small, its significance confirms that in the context of an informal and community-based distro business, trust still plays a role in strengthening the influence of emotional intelligence on knowledge sharing behavior.

Furthermore, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.503 indicates that about 50.3% of the variation in knowledge sharing behavior can be explained by a model that includes emotional intelligence, trust, and their interaction. This indicates that although there are other influencing external factors, the contribution of psychosocial factors in this model is relatively large and relevant to be applied in the context of organizations based on creativity and high social interaction. This finding is in contrast to the results of Ansari dan Malik, (2017) which states that trust does not moderate the relationship between the two variables in the service sector in India. However, differences in the more informal and community-based context of distro businesses may explain why the moderating role of trust was more pronounced in this study.

The results of this study are also in line with the findings of Li dan Li (2024) which emphasizes the role of emotional intelligence in improving knowledge sharing behavior through professional commitment, with organizational support as an amplifying factor. Although this study did not involve commitment variables, the results are still relevant because they show the importance of internal organizational social conditions, in this case trust, to optimize the influence of emotional intelligence. Similarly, Zhang dan Xu (2024) stated that emotional intelligence and psychological safety contribute greatly to facilitating knowledge sharing in e-commerce workers, where psychological safety has a similar function to trust in this study.

This is reinforced by research Ummah et al. (2023), who examined the influence of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership on knowledge sharing behavior. Although their main focus was on leadership, emotional intelligence was still shown to have a significant influence on employee engagement in information sharing. They emphasized that emotional intelligence is the basis of employees' interpersonal ability to build open and cooperative relationships, where trust becomes a supporting element that strengthens the tendency to share knowledge. In less formal work environments such as distro businesses, informal social relationships and mutual trust play an increasingly important role.

The implications of these findings suggest that a holistic approach to human resource management is crucial, particularly in terms of strengthening emotional intelligence and building trust. Both not only have a positive impact on the individual level, but also strengthen a collaborative, innovative and learning-based collective work culture. Organizations in creative industries, such as distros, need to facilitate emotional intelligence training, strengthen interpersonal communication, and create psychologically safe workspaces to encourage active engagement in knowledge sharing.

Thus, it can be concluded that in a creative industry environment such as a distro, high emotional intelligence and strong trust are the main foundations for the formation of an active and sustainable knowledge sharing culture. Although the moderator effect is not dominant, trust still plays an important role in contextually strengthening the influence of emotional intelligence. Therefore, human resource management strategies need to focus on developing soft skills and interpersonal relationships, in order to create a work culture that is supportive, innovative and adaptive to market dynamics.

5. Conclusions

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence has a positive influence on knowledge sharing behavior in the workplace, and this influence is stronger when supported by a high level of trust. In the context of a distro business that tends to be informal and collective, this relationship becomes even more relevant because an open and collaboration-based work atmosphere is very supportive of the information exchange process. With an adjusted R^2 of 0.503, this model shows good strength in explaining knowledge sharing behavior through emotional intelligence, trust, and their interaction.

The practical implications of these findings suggest that companies need to organize emotional intelligence training on an ongoing basis and encourage the establishment of a work culture based on trust and collaboration. Building trust among employees is also important, which can be done through openness, participative leadership, and team building activities. Meanwhile, for academic development, future research is suggested to involve a wider area coverage, apply mixed-method methods, and add other variables such as organizational culture to enrich the understanding of knowledge sharing behavior. This research is expected to contribute to shaping a more collaborative work environment in creative sectors such as distro businesses.

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