
KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leonardus W.W Mihadjo^{1*}, Sasmoko², Firdaus Alamsjah³, Elidjen⁴

¹Bina Nusantara University, Jalan Hang Lekir I no. 6, Senayan, Jakarta 10270, Indonesia

^{2,3,4}School of Business, Bina Nusantara University, Jl. Kebon Jeruk Raya No. 27,
Kebon Jeruk Jakarta Barat 11530, Indonesia

E-mails: ^{1*}mihadjo@gmail.com (corresponding author)

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Abstract. The principal objective of the current study is to explore the link between knowledge sharing transformational leadership style, team performance, and mutual trust. In addition to that moderating role of mutual trust is also examined. The study has broached the argument that knowledge sharing and transformational leadership style improves team performance. Findings of the current study suggest creativity is a process that starts in the team through the sharing of knowledge. The current study is also of the view that the process of creativity starts in the situation when the team members share knowledge through coordination and it is also argued that the much of the knowledge is shared when team members meet to share knowledge in a given area, much of which is tacit. Sharing such tacit knowledge creates a flow of novel ideas that contribute to successful outcomes, such as new products, processes and patents. The findings of the study have shown agreement with the proposed or hypothesized results. The study has used PLS-SEM to analyse the data. The study will be helpful for policy makers in the researcher in understanding the issues related to supply chain, its integration, flexibility, and internal performance.

Keywords: knowledge sharing, transformational, leadership

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1. Background

In the current era of globalization, there exists immense competition due to local and international competitors. For this reason, organizations are forced to adopt activities that are performance oriented and plays a central role in organizational development. A number of support mechanisms are adopted by organizations to improve the human resource available to them. These mechanisms were developed at organizational and employee level in which teams and employees of the organization were given learning opportunities, leadership support and empowerment as well (Yoon, Song, Lim, & Joo, 2010; Mughal et al., 2019).

There is an increase in the demand for highly skilled labors among the organizations due to increased globalization and competition. There is an increase in problem solving at the level of the team since the last few years. Organizations are trying to find different methods by which they can encourage the employees to work in a team and cooperate with other team members. For the performance, every employee is the basic asset for an organization. To improve organizational performance, team-based activities should be given importance by the organization. The team plays a critical role in bridging the relationship between organizational performance and individual performance (Edmondson, 2002; Setiyawati et al, 2018; Stübinger et al, 2017; Tyagi & Siddiqui, 2017; Giedraitis et al., 2017; Černevičiūtė, Strazdas, 2018; Slávik et al., 2019).

So, the performance of the team is an important indicator of the success of the organization in considering factors related to the organizational environment and individual environment. The core of a team lies with its members who play a critical role in organizational performance as these players collaborate with each other and are also competitors as well. There exist different criteria related to the team formation and working, so effectivity of the team may vary in different organization. Therefore, general criteria's and construct related to the team development and performance are discussed by a number of researchers (Sheikh, Soomro, Magsi, & Siddiqi).

Teams can be formed based on a large or small number of people. The number of people within the group depends upon the task to be achieved. When a group is formed, there is a mutual performance objective of the group, who all are committed to achieve a set goal and work together with mutual responsibility. Therefore, the size of the team should be manageable, and there should be a commitment among all the employees of the group to achieve the mutual objective of the team. On the other hand, all of the team members should be equally accountable for their actions. It is because the overall performance of the team will be impacted by their individual acts (Tabassi, Ramli, Roufchaei, & Tabasi, 2014).

This is the era of knowledge intensive services provided by professionals. The resource provided by the knowledge provides a competitive advantage to the firm. The mechanism of knowledge sharing within the firm plays a significant role in the performance of the team because of one-to-one interaction among team players. Knowledge provides intellectual direction to the individuals regarding knowing how and knowing what. The factor of knowledge sharing has played a critical role in attracting a lot of interest because the organization as recognized knowledge as an important source to improve the performance of teams. Working in the teams is the core issue being faced by the organization now a days. Moreover, teams are the core structure of the organizations. So it is very important that team players share their experiences and information (Endres & Rhoad, 2016).

Organizations have to put a lot of effort to develop and form the team within the organization that is high functioning. They have to go through a lot of pains and struggles to form such a team. There are different stages of team formation which need proper guidance to the leaders to form a team. The stages of formation of team development are faced by all organization. The difference occurs is in the time of transition of team stages, which vary in different organizations and teams within the same organization as well. Leadership is the major factor of the success or failure of the team. The collective success of the team is achieved by the contribution of every team member. So, there can be a number of reasons for the failure of team, including the inability of team members to perform, coordination resulting in collective failure and synchronization among team members (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001; Unaam et al, 2018; Widhiastuti et al, 2018; Wonyra, 2018). This shows that a lack of proper guidance and leadership can be a major cause of team failure.

When the teams are being formed, there exists a link among the team members in terms of motivation, proficiencies and personalities. It is expected that the team will perform several complex goals in a short period of time. It is expected that there will be proper leadership within the team who will communicate and define the established goals. Moreover, the leader will also outline the goals to be achieved by the team. There are a number of styles of leadership adopted by organizations to achieve a common goal. Transformational leadership is one of the most common and discussed styles of leadership. The transformational leaders are the role model of all the followers and team members who share knowledge and creative ideas so the team can work efficiently and cooperatively (Choi, Kim, Ullah, & Kang, 2016; Dappa et al., 2019).

The purpose of this paper is to have an empirical examination to evaluate the impact of Knowledge Sharing and Transformational Leadership on team performance in order to determine that if these most vital human resource variables have significant influence for development and performance of teams. Also, the study has investigated that mutual trust among the team members moderates the relationships of knowledge sharing and team performance; as well as the association of transformational leadership and team performance.

2. Literature Review

Team Performance

The scholars have found that association among the performance of the team and the factors influencing team performance are multifaceted. Therefore, they need a rigorous evidence-based investigation to strengthen team performance. The most important factor discussed in past literature regarding team performance is the information sharing among the team members. Researchers pointed out that the base of the group is in the members of the group and the way they interact with each other. This is basically social interaction among two or more people (Shin, Kim, Choi, & Lee, 2016).

Team performance is defined the extent to which the predictable goals are achieved by the team and completion of task in terms of quality. There are a number of factors revealed in the past studies regarding the team performance including (1) unity among the members of team to achieve a goal (2) the goal of the team to be homogeneous (3) information sharing and mechanism of communication (2) cohesiveness of the team and (2) commitment and role identity. Therefore, there is always a chance to improve performance. Generally, the performance of the team is based on the effectivity of the team work which supports the notion that information sharing among the member of the team increase the productivity and performance through interaction (Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009).

Emotional intelligence of the team members is another factor that influences the team performance, and also it is discussed on a number of occasions by the researchers on the past. It has been reported by a number of researchers that employee who has pleasant and consistent emotional intelligence will be very crucial for the performance and cohesion of team (Rapisarda, 2002; Yazici, 2018; Zhang et al, 2017; Obiunu & Rachael, 2018).

There are several characteristics of effective team performance. First of all, the actions of the team members should be integrated to achieve a goal. Secondly, members of the team are required to perform in dynamic and complex environments. The third characteristic is the leadership of the team. These leaders are the critical members of the team who define the goals and objectives of the team. They also assign tasks to the team members to achieve these goals (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002).

Knowledge Sharing

There is a major difference between knowledge sharing and other terms, like knowledge exchange and knowledge transfer. There is an acquisition of knowledge source with sharing of knowledge source in the knowledge transfer. Whereas, knowledge sharing is related to communication but it is not the communication. In the strict sense, it is not possible to share the information, like the good, information or knowledge cannot be shared freely. Sharing of knowledge is a cognitive subject. Rebuilding the behavior of employees is indispensable to get knowledge from others. The knowledge used by it is to be acquired, thus sharing the knowledge. The relation among at least two parties is the sharing knowledge because one of the two parties have the knowledge and other side acquire the knowledge (Zheng, 2017).

Researchers have defined knowledge sharing as the exchange of knowledge or behavior of the employee, which helps the other through knowledge (Ipe, 2003). Researchers observed that sharing of knowledge between individuals is the process that individual with private knowledge understand, absorb and use by other, knowledge sharing at the individual level has the significant positive outcome on the performance of the organization including improved capability of the organization, creativity in the work environment, cohesion in the performance of team, integration of knowledge and decision satisfaction. This shows that knowledge sharing is the behavior of the individual in which source of the knowledge does not want to give the ownership of knowledge (Güver & Motschnig, 2017).

Additionally, researchers asserted that sharing of knowledge is a social system that supports integration and collaboration that is supported by technology in normal circumstances. Researchers also supported the point of view that technology should be part of knowledge sharing by individuals. Exchanging and creating knowledge are the activities that are integrated, which cannot be imposed or supervised. Knowledge sharing can only happen when employees of the organization's voluntarily collaborate with each other. New knowledge is created due to the exchange of knowledge. this creation of knowledge is important to develop a competitive advantage (Tasmin & Woods, 2007).

Researchers also stated that often, knowledge sharing is unnatural. People, most of the times, think that knowledge is important and valuable, so they do not share the knowledge. most of the researchers agree that knowledge sharing is at the individual level of the organization. Even in those organization where there are no norms regarding knowledge sharing, people tend to share information on the basis of their individual benefits. In the end, activities related to knowledge sharing are important for maximization of revenue and profitability of the organization (Bock & Kim, 2002). Research study conducted by (Mittal & Dhar, 2015) have examined the moderating impact of knowledge sharing on the relationship between transformational leadership and creativity of employees. It is observed that knowledge management significantly moderates the relationship between the both. Masa'deh, Obeidat, and Tarhini (2016) have examined the factor of knowledge sharing and its adoption in business organization. Findings through empirical analysis indicates that both the factors of transformational leadership and transactional leadership have their significant relationship with the job performance of the employees.

Transformational Leadership

Leaders and leadership fascinate all. Individuals, corporation and nations all are inspired by the leaders. Since a number of years, academicians, researchers and scholars tried to understand and define the process of leadership. First time Stogdill (1974) pointed out that, there exists as many definitions of leadership as the number of scholars who have tried to define this concept. Among these definitions and explanations, the concept of transformational leadership attracted scholars. Most of the studies conducted in the last 20 years regarding leadership are based on transformational leadership (Judge & Bono, 2000; Nxumalo & Naidoo, 2018).

The descriptive research was involved through which the transformational leadership concept was formulated. Researchers defined and explained transformational leadership as the process in which followers and leaders raise each other to a higher level of motivation and morality. The political leaders try to increase the follower's consciousness by ideal appealing and moral values like humanitarianism, peace, equality, justice and liberty not based on emotions like hatred, jealousy, greed and fear. There occurs elevation in the followers to their better selves from everyday selves (Yaghoubi, Mahallati, Moghadam, & Fallah, 2014). Some other studies have also focused on the similar idea (Dong, Bartol, Zhang, & Li, 2017; Han, Seo, Yoon, & Yoon, 2016).

Researchers have defined transformational leadership in terms of its impact on followers: they feel respect, loyalty, admiration and trust towards their leader. Moreover, followers are tending to act beyond the expectations from the. Researchers mentioned that leaders motivate and transform followers by (1) activation of their higher level of needs (2) induce their own self interest for the betterment of team and organization (3) making followers more aware of the importance of their individual goals. In transformational leadership, the followers are motivated by the leaders to improve their performance (Krishnan, 2007).

Components of transformational leadership are identified by the factor studies as laissez faire, management by exception, contingent reward, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealized influence (Erkutlu, 2008). Researchers further categorized these factors into sub scales (a) individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, idealized influence as transformational leaders (Avolio & Bass, 1995)(b) management by exceptions and contingent reward as transactional leadership components and (c) Laissez-Faire is considered as component of non-leadership (Krishnan, 2007).

Researchers confirmed that the leadership potential of transformational leaders is more than those who are categorized as transactional leaders by the subordinates of the leaders. The performance appraisal of subordinates of transformational leaders is much better than those of other categories of leadership. The teams who are led by the transformational leaders have much better outcomes as well (Geyery & Steyrer, 1998).

Knowledge Sharing and Team Performance

The performance of the team is improved within the team as a result of knowledge sharing. It is because of three reasons: enhanced creativity, better problem solving and improvement in the decision-making process. The team members can consider more options due to knowledge sharing. Followers can learn from the experience of other employees and team members. By this way, knowledge is used within the team in a better way, which leads to an improvement in the decision-making process (Mahmood, Hussan, Sarfraz, Abdullah, & Basheer, 2016; Hussain, Sallehuddin, Shamsudin, & Jabarullah, 2018). The problem faced by the organization can easily be solved by the knowledge sharing because the problem can be better understood, more alternatives to solve the problem can be explored, and the issues causing the problem can be found out earlier. A number of studies have supported the argument that team performance is improved by knowledge sharing (Jamshed & Majeed, 2018).

Its been evident from the past empirical studies that knowledge sharing has several benefits for the employees and employers. Past studies have proven empirically that employee's performance at the individual level is significantly impacted by knowledge sharing (Mahmood et al., 2016; Pangil & Moi Chan, 2014). Sharing of knowledge within the team occurs when employees or team members assist other team members in terms of judgements, expertise, facts and ideas so new skills can be developed. So, the factor of knowledge sharing is key for the members of the team to improve their performance. Knowledge sharing within the team shows team members sharing information, opinion and expertise reading specific problem or task (Cummings, 2004; Le & Lei, 2018; Yang & Farn, 2009).

Transformational Leadership and Team Performance

Leadership at the level of the team is very important for the firm to be successful because more and more firms are adopting the culture of team-based work. Transformational leaders are confident and optimistic about the future. Moreover, they express the goals and objectives to the followers. By this way, followers are encouraged as they view the vision of the organization to be meaningful. Employees also consider their work as an important contributor to achieve organizational goals (Elrehail, Emeagwali, Alsaad, & Alzghoul, 2018; Le & Lei, 2018; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006).

Transformational leaders encourage intellectual stimulation, recognize the work which is a good one, communicate high expectation and provide development opportunities, thus take a keen interest in the followers (Mahmood et al., 2016). The role of the leaders is very active in providing guidance and direction, supporting and coordinating the activities to organizations or team members due to which they are able to synergize their work to achieve the organizational goals (Mahmood et al., 2016; Wang & Howell, 2010).

Transformational leadership has a significant impact on the performance of the team. On the other hand, there are a number of studies that have found a positive relationship between team performance and leadership initiations. A system is developed, initiated and maintained by the transformational leaders who value performance and rewards through policies related to people and develop the relationship of high quality with the followers so the team performance can be enhanced (Wu, Tsui, & Kinicki, 2010).

Mutual Trust

As there exists no definition of trust which is universally accepted, the term trust is referred to as the willingness of one party which rely on the interpersonal relationship of another. Which is, mutual trust is defined as a psycho-logical state consist of the intention of accepting the vulnerability on the basis of positive expectations of behavior or intentions of another (Kim, Wang, & Chen, 2018).

Researchers have identified two elements of trust: cognitive and effective. Emotional bonds and interpersonal care are the bases of affective trust between trustee and trustor. On the other hand, belief regarding integrity, reliability and ability about the trustee is reflected in cognitive trust. Employee performance is significantly impacted by the cognitive and effective trust (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, & Salas, 2007).

Trust is a very complex relationship among persons. But at the level of teams, this relationship is even more complex. Loyalty, commitment and communication among the team members is increased due to trust. Trust is basically the foundation among the team member, which enables them to work together. The team performance is improved by the trust among the team members, which would lead to an increase in revenue and profitability of the organizations. Trust is considered as factor that plays crucial among the team members for networks, startups and teams that are being created. In the current era of modernization, trust among the team members is considered key because, in the presence of rigid rules, policies of the organization cannot be formed (Hakanen & Soudunsaari, 2012).

One of the basic units of any organization is its team; it keeps together the insight, experience and skills of a number of people. Most of the time, the team which is performing very good do not consist of brightest people. Basically, such teams consist of people who possess diverse knowledge and skills required to be successful. If the team is built on trust, it will be built on the high level of trust among the employees (Fapohunda, 2013)

Association of Mutual trust with Knowledge Sharing and Leadership

In the past, the relationship between mutual trust and transformational leadership within a team setting has been widely discussed in studies (Chou, Lin, Chang, & Chuang, 2013; Ryan, 2012). As well the association of mutual trust and knowledge sharing has also been discussed in the literature (Casimir, Lee, & Loon, 2012; Cheng, Hailin, & Hongming, 2008; Jain, Sandhu, & Goh, 2015; Sankowska, 2013).

In the current study, trust is considered faith in the goodwill and behavior of other's that can be vanished or grow due to experience or interaction. Lack of trust among the team members may impact the productivity, empowerment, delegation and communication. Trust is very sensitive, that can be lost quickly because of negative experiences. Researchers have reported four elements of trust building, namely, respect, consistency, openness and honesty. Without any one of these dimensions, trust can even break or fray (Hakanen & Soudunsaari, 2012).

Research Framework

Based on the previous literature, the following framework of research has been developed (Figure 1):

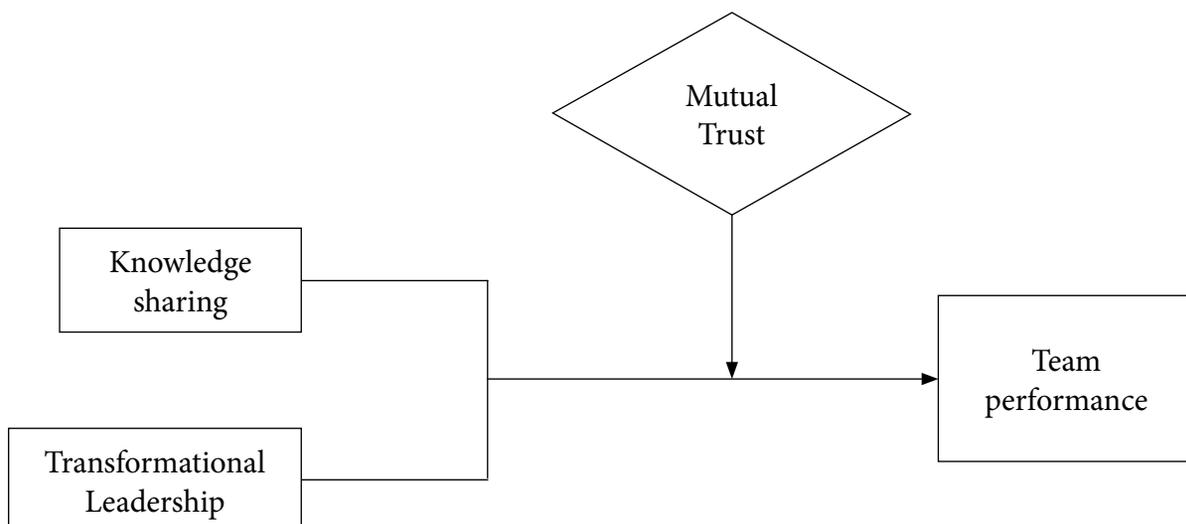


Figure 1. Research framework

The research framework presents the following hypotheses

H1: Knowledge sharing has a significant direct impact on team performance.

H2: Transformational leadership has a significant direct impact on team performance.

H3 Mutual trust has a significant direct impact on team performance.

H4: Mutual trust moderates the relationship between knowledge sharing and team performance.

H5: Mutual trust moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and team performance.

3. Methodology

In order to address the objectives and research questions of the current study, a survey method is used. A primary research technique is employed taking the questionnaire as a tool for data collection. The structural equation modeling for analyzing the structural relation is selected. SEM is a combination of multiple regression and factor analysis and observes the structural relation between the latent and measured constructs as well as the direct and indirect connection between the constructs. Selection of sample size is an important aspect of Structural Equation Modelling. In the process of choosing the appropriate sample size, a sample of 310 is selected for this research. However, in order to avoid response-bias, the sample size has increased to 600. The overall response rate came out to be 62.5 percent having 435 well addressed questionnaires. Therefore, keeping in view the research capabilities and objectives, SEM-PLS is employed for analyzing the structural equation modelling.

In addition, the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) is also employed for assembling of data and for advanced statistical analysis. Initially, the responses obtained through questionnaires are coded into the software, and statistical analysis is performed through PLS. SEM is an advanced multivariate analysis and has been broadly used in business research. It involves data analysis of multiple variables observing the direct and indirect causal relation with simultaneous estimation of separate, multiple, and interdependent regression equations. The SEM technique is preferable as compared to multiple regression because SEM simultaneously observes the nature of the association between the multiple variables, whereas multiple regression observes the relation between these variables separately and independently.

4. Results

Structural Equation Modeling operates for identifying the extent to which the determination of the structural model is in line with the sample data and how appropriately fits the data. It particularly observes the structure of relation among the existing observed variables (F. Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & G. Kuppelwieser, 2014; Ha-feeze, Basheer, Rafique, & Siddiqui, 2018). On the other hand, observed variables explain the latent variables as well as make inferences about them. Where latent variables are the unobserved variables that require more and more constructs for defining them (Basheer, Siam, Awn, & Hassan, 2019). Furthermore, a maximum likelihood approach is used for the advanced evaluation of the model. The analysis Measurement model, together with the confirmatory factor analysis, examine the estimates from the CFA (Basheer et al., 2019).

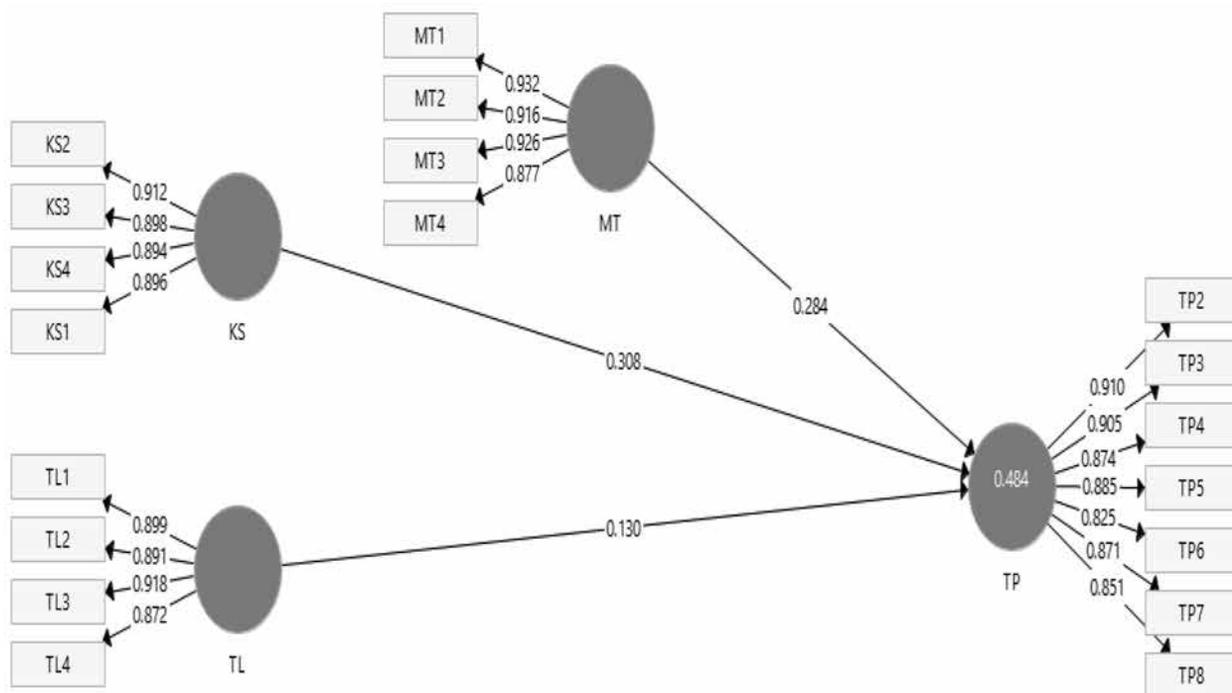


Figure 2. Measurement Model

Confirmatory Factor Analysis is also used to assess whether the constructs of both proposed and measured model show consistent results (see Figure 2, Table 1).

Table 1. Outer Loadings

	KS	MT	TL	TP
KS1	0.896			
KS2	0.912			
KS3	0.898			
KS4	0.894			
MT1		0.932		
MT2		0.916		
MT3		0.926		
MT4		0.877		
TL1			0.899	
TL2			0.891	
TL3			0.918	
TL4			0.872	
TP2				0.910
TP3				0.905
TP4				0.874
TP5				0.885
TP6				0.825
TP7				0.871
TP8				0.851

The coefficient value of 0.80, 0.70, and 0.60 are considered to be good, acceptable, and poor reliability. According to a rule of thumb, a value above 0.50 depicts adequate reliability, and less than 0.50 depicts inadequate reliability of the constructs (Basheer et al., 2019; Hafeez et al., 2018). However, 0.50-0.60 is a suitable and acceptable range for the measures of reliability. All the constructs for the present study turned out to be reliable (Table 2). Based on previous researches, 0.60 is taken as the threshold value for the Cronbach alpha estimate.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
KS	0.866	0.967	0.969	0.68
TS	0.93	0.95	0.96	0.799
MT	0.968	0.949	0.96	0.829
TP	0.867	0.968	0.97	0.667

The goodness of fit indices turned out as TLI= 0.938, PNFT= 0.933, RMSEA= 0.05, and CFI=0.94. The values of all estimates are within the acceptable levels, explaining the goodness of fit (Hafeez et al., 2018). However, the SEM-PLS is used for the estimation of the inner model, i.e. determining the composite reliability, discriminant validity, and factor loadings of the constructs.

Discriminant validity is also obtained for the current study by comparing the item and cross loadings (Table 3). Discriminant validity determines the extent of distinctiveness and visibility of the measures of constructs. Afterwards, the structural equation model is estimated using a path diagram, which is an effective technique of measuring the indirect and direct association between the observed constructs (Hafeez et al., 2018). Therefore, SEM is preferred for this research and for the hypotheses testing.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	KS	TS	MT	TP
KS	0.825			
TS	0.827	0.894		
MT	0.815	0.892	0.911	
TP	0.885	0.723	0.730	0.817

Furthermore, the hypothesized structural model is developed for assessing the relation between the latent constructs. However, path coefficients are also obtained to observe the association between the variables and to conclude the proposed hypotheses. After assessing the structural model, the fitness of the model is checked through the Goodness of Fit test. It determines if the proposed model is appropriate for hypothesis testing (Hameed, Basheer, Iqbal, Anwar, & Ahmad, 2018). Finally, the measurement model is then converted into the structural form for identifying the association between exogenous and endogenous constructs. The table 4 shows the findings of direct hypotheses, depicting the significant acceptance of all direct hypotheses.

Table 4. Direct Relations

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
H1	0.414	0.416	0.048	3.672	0.001
H2	0.563	0.353	0.068	3.516	0.001
H3	0.652	0.654	0.059	4.912	0.000

The moderation of mutual Trust in the relationship between knowledge sharing, transformational leadership style, and team performance is shown in table 5.

Table 5. Indirect Relations

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
H4	0.524	0.635	0.078	4.372	0.001
H5	0.474	0.764	0.070	3.239	0.000

Nonetheless, Table 6 shows R2. According to Chin (1998), R² value above 0.67 considered as substantial, more than 0.33 considered as moderate, however, value below 0.33 but above 0.19 describe weak determination.

Table 6. R2

Latent Variable	Variance Explained (R ²)
TP	48.4%

In the current study R² value is 0.484 which is substantial.

5. Conclusion

The principal objective of the current study is to explore the link between knowledge sharing transformational leadership style, team performance, and mutual trust. In addition to that moderating role of mutual trust is also examined. The study has broached the argument that knowledge sharing and transformational leadership style improves team performance. Findings of the current study suggest creativity is a process that starts in the team through the sharing of knowledge. The current study is also of the view that the process of creativity starts in the situation when the team members share knowledge through coordination and it is also argued that the much of the knowledge is shared when team members meet to share knowledge in a given area, much of which is tacit. Sharing such tacit knowledge creates a flow of novel ideas that contribute to successful outcomes, such as new products, processes and patents. The findings of the study have shown agreement with the proposed or hypothesized results. The study has used PLS-SEM to analyse the data. The study will be helpful for policy makers in the researcher in understanding the issues related to supply chain, its integration, flexibility, and internal performance. The findings of the study revealed the fact that, though trust is complicated yet is a key to team level performance. It is argued that the trust considered as a foundation of working together as it helps in enhancing social interactions. Trust plays a crucial role when global business teams, startups, and networks are being created.

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Leonardus W Wasono MIHARDJO is a Doctor candidate in Management at Bina Nusantara University, West Jakarta, Indonesia. His research has attracted funding award from Indonesia Ministry of research and higher education in 2019, as well as awarded as best paper in Malaysian conference 2018. Currently, he is a director of Financial and Business Partner at PT Telekomunikasi Indonesia International (Telin) focus on financial and development of Human capital. He is also chairman of PT Telin Australia and Board member of Telin Singapore. He has more than 20 years in Telecommunication Industry. His research interest includes digital transformation, business model innovation, financial system, digital leadership and strategic management
ORCID ID: .org/0000-0002-3820-4960

SASMOKO is a Professor of Research Methods of Faculty of Humanities at Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta. He is currently working at the RIG-Education Technology, Binus University. Their most recent publication is 'Applying Indonesian teacher engagement index (ITEL) apps: Self-diagnostic apps for teachers in Indonesia', including the use of Artificial Intelligent for education and social Science. His researches have attracted funding award from Indonesia Ministry of research and higher education and also from Bina Nusantara university. His research interest includes teaching methods, teacher education and educational assessment, including the use of Technology for Education
ORCID ID: org/0000-0001-9219-9237

Firdaus ALAMSJAH is currently the Executive Dean and Provost of the Bina Nusantara Business School, where he also serves as a faculty member. He is a managing partner at Binus Consulting and Training. He has more than 20 years of extensive experience is in consulting, training, and teaching, which complements his research interests in strategy execution, supply-chain management and business process management He earned his PhD in Industrial Engineering and his MSIE from the University of Houston, USA. His Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering was completed at ITB.

ELIDJEN is an Associate Professor of Computer Science at Bina Nusantara University. He obtained his Doctoral in Management from Bina Nusantara University. He has research background in computer science and more than 20 years extensive experience in Teaching and research. He has appointed as head of Binus corporation management focus on development knowledge management and innovation, including the use of artificial intelligent for social science. His research interest includes knowledge management, organization learning innovation, computer engineering and software engineering. He was graduated PhD in Strategic growth from Bina Nusantara University, and M. InfoCommTech from University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia.