

Ethical Leadership and Employee Knowledge Sharing With a Mediation Role Employee Moral Identity

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ABSTRACT. This study investigates the direct and indirect correlation between ethical leadership and lecturers' knowledge-sharing experiences through the mechanism of moral identity. A quantitative approach was used in this research, involving 95 respondents who were permanent lecturers at Lancang Kuning University. Research findings show that ethical leadership is positively related to the act of sharing knowledge, both directly and through moral identity. In addition, the results also show that ethical leadership is positively related to moral identity, while moral identity itself is positively correlated with knowledge sharing. This study also found that moral identity acts as a mediator in the influence of ethical leadership on knowledge-sharing behavior. This research highlights that ethical leadership, which reflects personality, honesty, reliability, and high morality and understands its impact on others, can model behavior and shape employees' moral construction through moral identity. In essence, this research contributes to the expanding body of literature on organizational behavior by shedding light on the intricate dynamics between ethical leadership, moral identity, and knowledge-sharing behaviors among lecturers. Furthermore, it underscores the practical implications for educational institutions seeking to foster a culture of knowledge-sharing and ethical leadership within their academic community.

Keywords: *Ethical leadership, moral identity, sharing knowledge*

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INTRODUCTION

An organization's competitive ability is highly dependent on the effectiveness of its knowledge management (Riege, 2005), while the effectiveness of knowledge management itself is highly dependent on employee motivation and participation in the knowledge-sharing process (Gagné, 2009). Knowledge sharing, defined as the act of making knowledge available to others in the organization (Ipe, 2003), has proven crucial in achieving higher effectiveness and innovation at various levels, starting from the individual (Huang et al., 2014), teams (Gong et al., 2013), to the organizational level (Andreeva & Kianto, 2012). Sharing knowledge is not only important for improving individual and corporate performance but is also recognized as a moral challenge in organizational contexts (De Wang & Sung, 2016). Emphasized that employees' refusal to share knowledge with colleagues can threaten the sustainability of the organization and its success in the market; it is considered a violation of moral norms in the organizational context. By considering the practical importance of knowledge sharing, researchers need to examine the factors that influence employees' willingness and motivation to engage in knowledge sharing with others (Yadi et al., 2022).

Knowledge in organizations is a valuable asset, as seen from its benefits for individuals and organizations (Hidayat, 2021). Information plays a vital part in the advancement of the organization. The more prevalent the information and HR the organization has, the higher the organization's seriousness (Firmaiansyah, 2014). The seriousness of an association is profoundly subject to the adequacy of its insight by the board (Riege, 2005). According to Firmaiansyah (2014), information sharing is a strategy or one of the means of information on the board that is utilized to open doors to individuals from a gathering, association, office, or organization to share their insight, procedures, encounters, and thoughts with different individuals. The accomplishment of its insight the executives, to a great extent, relies upon the inspiration and ability of representatives to take part in information sharing (Gagné, 2009). Information sharing is not just significant for people and organizations seeking better execution, but it is also an ethical test in associations (Van Den Hooff & Ridder, 2004).

Lin (2007) contends that representatives' refusal to impart information to collaborators compromises the association's key advantages, like its endurance and seriousness in the commercial center, and can hence be viewed as an infringement of moral standards in the association. Knowledge sharing can grow and develop if the right conditions are met. These conditions are determined by three key factors: people, organization, and technology (Firmaiansyah, 2014). Great power within the individual will be greater when it is owned by a community. However, knowledge-sharing behavior is still not fully practiced in some organizations due to a lack of understanding, a lack of forums for sharing, and age gaps between members of the organization. In order for a person's leadership to be effective and efficient in achieving predetermined goals, a number of main characteristics must be possessed by a leader, such as leadership values (Suhifatullah et al., 2020). In addition to the values that a leader must possess, good ethics must also be possessed in order to carry out leadership effectively and efficiently. Ethics is behavior with normative standards in the form of moral values, norms, and good things (Suhifatullah et al., 2020).

Administration morals are moral norms that clearly define "great" and "awful" and guide pioneers in making decisions. Morals likewise expect pioneers to think and act as indicated by suitable standards in friendly connections. Moral pioneers affect the individuals they lead. By empowering perspectives and activities in light of similar virtues, pioneers will be good examples of establishing a moral workplace and building a solid hierarchical standing. Brown et al. (2005) defines ethical leadership as "the demonstration of normatively appropriate behavior through personal action and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of that behavior to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making." There are two fundamental support points for moral administration: a pioneer should be an ethical individual (showing moral person and attributes in his conduct as a good example) and an ethical supervisor (effectively advances moral standards through two-way and open correspondence, prizes, and disciplines). Existing examination reliably shows that moral initiative encourages positive and ethically helpful conduct among representatives (Tang, 2016).

Moral authority is the most common way of affecting workers through qualities, standards, and convictions that are extensively lined by acknowledged standards of authoritative conduct. The study of ethical leadership builds on social learning, which proposes that leaders influence the ethical behavior of others through modeling (Brown et al., 2005; Abdillah et al., 2020; Abdillah, 2021). Knowledge sharing among individuals in an organization is an important activity for creating, disseminating, and managing knowledge at all levels of the organization (Ipe, 2003). The ability of organizations to utilize knowledge depends on individuals who actually carry out the activities of creating, sharing, and applying knowledge. Knowledge will be useful when organizational members are willing to share the knowledge they have and create new knowledge from the knowledge obtained from other individuals. So, knowledge sharing is a basic action to realize the existence of knowledge that can be shared with members of the organization. This activity is important because it provides a relationship between knowledge stored in individuals

and organizational knowledge. This knowledge will be converted into economic and competitive value for the organization (Hendriks, 1999).

Research on information sharing, by and large, follows a social capital way to deal with exploring likely forerunners of information sharing (Bavik et al., 2018). Albeit this examination has furnished us with a comprehension of the significant job of relevant variables and hierarchical prompts in making compelling information sharing, it is as yet restricted in a few regards, for example, the shortfall of exploration researching the impact of authority on representative information sharing, despite the fact that pioneers assume a significant part in deciding the conduct of subordinates at work environment (Bavik et al., 2018). Abhishek Srivastava et al. (2006), they explicitly indicated the significance of enabling initiative in sharing adherent information. Albeit the systems connecting initiative style and information sharing are as yet neglected, scarcely any examinations have taken a gander at the ethical side to research how moral pioneers shape worker information sharing conduct, despite the fact that information sharing has moral significance (Bavik et al., 2018).

From a theoretical perspective, our research makes a significant contribution to the literature on ethical leadership and knowledge sharing. First, we investigate whether ethical leadership can be a key predictor of employees' knowledge-sharing behavior. Although knowledge sharing is increasingly recognized as a moral behavior in organizational contexts (M. Wang et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2020), surprisingly, no previous research in the Asian region has empirically explored knowledge sharing from a moral perspective. Therefore, our study is the first to consider the importance of ethical leadership as a key supporting factor in the knowledge-sharing process. Moreover, while most previous research on knowledge sharing has adopted Nahapiet and Ghoshal's (1998) social capital framework (covering cognitive, relational, and structural dimensions) to guide their research at the organizational and firm levels (Hu & Randel, 2014), our research takes a moral perspective to view knowledge sharing as an interpersonal and morally relevant phenomenon. It examines ethical leadership as a predictive variable in the context of knowledge sharing. With this approach, we open new vistas in the knowledge management literature to understand such behavior.

From a practical perspective, our research highlights the important role that leaders play in encouraging knowledge sharing in the workplace. The ethical behavior of leaders has the potential to have a positive impact on employees' knowledge-sharing actions in the work environment, which has major implications for companies interested in encouraging the use and utilization of intangible assets through knowledge-sharing and information exchange between employees.

METHOD

The research adopted a quantitative approach for data collection. The questionnaire was designed with closed-ended questions, where respondents were asked to select one answer from the provided options according to their views. The study aimed to gather data by distributing the questionnaire to Permanent Lecturers at Universitas Lancang Kuning. The primary method of data collection was through internally developed questionnaires. The questionnaire was distributed using the census sampling method, with 95 respondents selected as the research sample.

As the measuring instruments used to assess all variables in this study were derived from diary articles written in English, steps were taken to translate all questions into Indonesian using the "interpretation back system" method. This method involves translating the questions from the original language (English) into Indonesian and then interpreting them back into the original language to ensure the substance and meaning of the questions remain consistent. These steps were designed to ensure the accuracy and sustainability of the research instrument interpretation without compromising the quality of the data obtained (Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011).

The ethical leadership indicators utilized in this study were adapted from Brown et al. (2005) and Yadi et al. (2022). Employee knowledge sharing was measured using the scale proposed by Connelly and Zweig (2012), consisting of five questions. Employee moral identity was measured using a scale derived from Aquino and Americus (2002) and Rahmad et al. (2022), also comprising five questions.

Data analysis involved descriptive and verification methods. Descriptive analysis was used to outline the characteristics of respondents and research variables, while verification analysis was employed to test research hypotheses. The analytical design included descriptive statistics for analyzing descriptive data and the Structural Equation Model (SEM) for hypothesis testing facilitated by WarpPLS software. Before conducting descriptive and verification analysis, a data testing stage was applied to ensure the validity, reliability, and normal distribution of the questionnaire data. Validity testing assessed the extent to which the instrument measured the intended constructs, utilizing SEM-PLS for convergent and discriminant validity. Construct reliability was tested using composite reliability or Cronbach's alpha, with values considered adequate if reaching 0.70 or 0.60, respectively (Rahmat, 2022).

Verification analysis was conducted using the SEM statistical method, which allows for the analysis of indicator variables, latent variables, and measurement errors. SEM-PLS was chosen for its ability to overcome sample size limitations, ensuring adequate statistical power even with a limited sample, as explained by Solihin & Ratmono (in Arfi & Rahmat, 2020). Thus, this analysis aimed to produce reliable statistical results despite the sample limitations.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Data analysis in this study examines the effect of several independent variables on the dependent variable and the moderating variable. Hypothesis testing was carried out using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. Partial Least Square is a structural Equation Modeling (SEM) solution method:

Outer Model

Convergent Validity

The convergent validity of the measurement model can be seen from the correlation between the indicator scores and the construct score (loading factor). According to Chin in Latan and Ghozali (2012), in the early stages of development, a loading factor value greater ($>$) than 0.5 – 0.6 can be said to be valid. The loading factor value of each indicator is as follows:

Table 1 Research Variable Loading Factor Value

Variable	Item	Outer Loading	Description
Ethical Leadership (X)	X1.1	(0.874)	Valid
	X1.2	(0.793)	Valid
	X1.3	(0.805)	Valid
	X1.4	(0.845)	Valid
	X1.5	(0.857)	Valid
	X1.6	(0.869)	Valid
	X1.7	(0.858)	Valid
	X1.8	(0.767)	Valid
Knowledge Sharing (Y)	Y.1	(0.888)	Valid
	Y.2	(0.895)	Valid
	Y.3	(0.746)	Valid
	Y.4	(0.839)	Valid
	Y.5	(0.812)	Valid
Moral Identity (Z)	Z.1	(0.796)	Valid
	Z.2	(0.845)	Valid
	Z.3	(0.898)	Valid

Z.4	(0.919)	Valid
Z.5	(0.827)	Valid

Source: Processed Data, 2021

In view of the information introduced in Table 1 above, it is realized that every mark of the examination variable has a worth of external stacking > 0.7 . As per Chin, as cited by Imam Ghozali, the external stacking esteem between 0.5 and 0.6 is thought of as adequate to meet the concurrent legitimacy necessities. The information above shows that there is no marker variable whose external stacking esteem is below 0.5, so all pointers are pronounced possible or legitimate for research use and can be utilized for additional analysis.

Discriminant Validity

This section describes the results of the discriminant validity test. The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) method can be used to evaluate the validity of the discriminant for each construct or latent variable. The model has better discriminant validity if the square of AVE (Average Variance Extracted) for each construct is greater than the correlation between the two constructs in the model.

Table 2 AVE Squared Value of Research Variables

Variables	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Description
KE (X)	0.696	Valid
IM (Z)	0.702	Valid
BP (Y)	0.737	Valid

Source: Processed Data, 2021

Table 2 above shows that the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) value for all constructs is > 0.50 . Therefore, the model being tested has no discriminant validity problem.

Table 3 AVE Root Value and Correlation between Latent Variables

Variables	KE	IM	BP	Description
KE	0.834	0.519	0.829	Valid
IM	0.519	0.838	0.608	Valid
BP	0.829	0.608	0.858	Valid

Source: Processed Data, 2021

Based on the data presented in Table 3, each number in bold is the root value of the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) of each construct, and the number that is not in bold is the correlation value between constructs and other constructs in the model. So, it can be concluded from the results of output tables 2 and 3 that all constructs meet the discriminant validity criteria.

Composite Reliability

Composite Reliability is the part that is utilized to test the unwavering quality worth of pointers on a variable. A variable can be proclaimed to meet composite dependability in the event that it has a composite unwavering quality worth > 0.7 . Coming up next is the composite unwavering quality worth of every factor utilized in this review:

Table 4 Composite Reliability Variabel

Variables	Composite Reliability	Description
KE	0.948	Reliable
IM	0.921	Reliable
BP	0.933	Reliable

Source: Processed Data, 2021

In view of the information introduced in Table 4 above, it may be seen that the composite unwavering quality worth of all exploration factors is > 0.7 . These outcomes demonstrate that

every factor has met composite dependability, so it may be inferred that all factors have an undeniable degree of unwavering quality.

Cronbach Alpha

The dependability test with the composite unwavering quality above can be reinforced by utilizing the Cronbach alpha worth. A variable can be announced as solid or satisfies Cronbach alpha, assuming that it has a Cronbach alpha worth > 0.7 . Coming up next is the Cronbach alpha worth of every factor:

Table 5 Cronbach Alpha Variabel

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
KE	0.937	Reliable
IM	0.892	Reliable
BP	0.910	Reliable

Source: Processed Data, 2021

Based on the data presented above in Table 5, the Cronbach alpha value of each research variable is > 0.7 . Thus, these results indicate that each research variable has met the requirements of the Cronbach alpha value, so it can be concluded that all variables have a high level of reliability.

Inner Model

The inner model is an investigation completed to test research speculations and answer the issues presented. Theory testing is done by the examination system, which dissects and tests exogenous and endogenous factors straightforwardly and by implication with a control model. The importance level of testing this theory is finished by assessing the worth of the p-esteem. Data management in this study uses PLS (partial least square), where the dependent variable is affective commitment (Y), the independent variable is procedural justice (X), and the mediating variable is organizational trust (Z). The fit model is used to test the overall suitability of the research model. Testing the significance of the independent variable on the test dependent variable can be declared significant by fulfilling the requirements if the P value is less than 0.05.

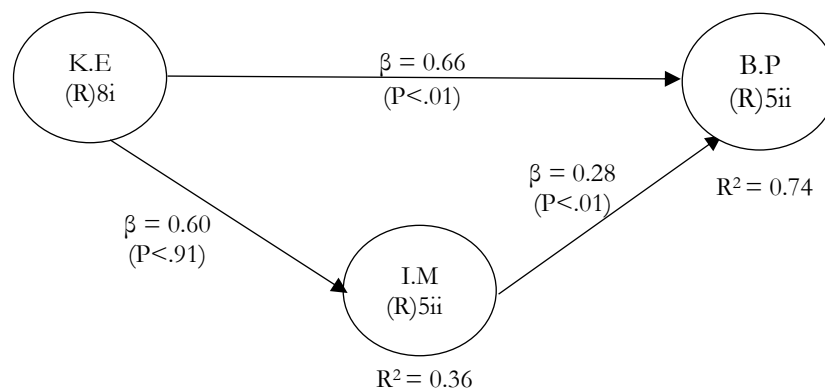


Figure 1 Structural Equation

Figure 1 shows the path coefficient results with a significance level in accordance with the calculations that have been carried out using Warp PLS; it can be concluded as in Table 6 below:

Table 6. Analisis Path coefficient and p values

Relationship between Variables		Path Coefficient		Significance Leve	
Exogenous	Endogenous	Coeff.	P-value	Value	Description
KE(X)	IM (Y)	0,600	<0,001	P<0,001	Significant Positive
KE (X)	BP (Z)	0,633	<0,001	P<0,001	Significant Positive
IM (Z)	BP (Y)	0,279	0,002	P<0,001	Significant Positive
KE (X) → IM (Z)	BP (Y)	0,165	0,009	P<0,001	Mediate

Source: Processed Data, 2021

Table 6 shows that the results show that ethical leadership has a positive effect on moral identity with a value of 0.600, and the positive effect is significant because the p-value is smaller than <0.05 , which is at <0.001 . In other words, the ethical leadership style applied by the leadership of Universitas Lancang Kuning increases the knowledge-sharing behavior of their subordinates/employees. The test results show that ethical leadership has a positive and significant relationship to knowledge sharing. It can be seen from the path coefficient value of 0.663, and the positive effect is significant because the p-value is smaller than <0.05 , which is at <0.001 . Thus, the ethical leadership applied by the leadership at Universitas Lancang Kuning will increase the knowledge-sharing behavior of education personnel at Universitas Lancang Kuning.

Moral identity has a positive effect on knowledge sharing with a value of 0.279, and the positive effect is significant because the p-value is smaller than <0.05 , which is at 0.002; the test results show that moral identity has a positive and significant relationship to knowledge sharing. This is seen with a path value of 0.279 with a p-value of 0.002 which is smaller than <0.05 . It means that the willingness of Universitas Lancang Kuning education staff to share knowledge is based on a good moral identity. The test results show that the indirect effect of ethical leadership on knowledge sharing through moral identity is significantly positive with a path coefficient value of 0.165, and the p-value is smaller than <0.05 , which is at <0.009 .

Discussion

The ethical leadership style applied by the leadership of Universitas Lancang Kuning will increase the knowledge-sharing behavior of their subordinates/employees. Therefore, an increase in ethical leadership style must be carried out because it will have an impact on the progress of the organization. According to Firmaiansyah (2014), information plays a vital part in the advancement of the organization. The more predominant the Information and HR the organization has, the higher the organization's intensity will be. Information sharing is a strategy or one of the means of Information the board utilizes to give valuable open doors to individuals from a gathering, association, office, or organization to share their insight, procedures, encounters, and thoughts with different individuals. The achievement of its insight, the board, to a great extent, relies upon the inspiration and eagerness of workers to take part in information sharing.

Our research is the first to examine the influence of ethical leadership on lecturers' knowledge-sharing behavior in the workplace. Based on self-determination and social learning theories, our research shows whether and how ethical leadership influences lecturers' knowledge sharing. Specifically, our findings suggest that ethical leadership is important in relation to lecturers' knowledge-sharing behavior. Additionally, employees' controlled motivation to share knowledge and employees' moral identity were found to function as mediating mechanisms explaining the influence of ethical leadership on lecturers' knowledge sharing. Our findings have important theoretical and managerial implications.

First of all, our research applies a moral perspective to evaluate the role of ethical leadership in shaping knowledge-sharing behavior among employees. Although previous research has demonstrated a significant link between ethical leadership and prosocial behavior, such as employee participation, creativity, and contributions to the organization (Hughes et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020; Newman et al., 2017), research on its impact knowledge sharing is still relatively rare. Sharing knowledge, in essence, is a prosocial and risk-taking behavior that has a moral dimension because it involves sacrificing ownership of knowledge for the common good (Spender & Grant, 1996). Our research results confirm that ethical leadership plays an important role in encouraging knowledge exchange among team members. These findings strengthen the argument that knowledge sharing has significant moral aspects. Future studies could consider further moral approaches to explore other potentials of knowledge sharing in the work environment.

Second, although much previous research on ethical leadership has relied on theoretical frameworks such as social exchange theory (Hughes et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020; Newman et al., 2017) and social identity theory (DeConinck, 2015; Zhu et al., 2015) to explain the impact of ethical leadership on employee behavior, we adopt a different approach by integrating self-determination and social learning theories. It was done to test two theoretically plausible explanations regarding the influence of ethical leadership on knowledge sharing among employees. Specifically, our research highlights the dual regulatory mechanisms in ethical leadership by showing that employees' prosocial and moral behaviors, such as knowledge sharing, are not only influenced by the drive for rewards or fear of punishment (i.e., restrained motivation) but also because they reconstruct the concept of themselves (i.e., moral identity) and affirmatively reflect on their moral self-construction through moral actions. These findings reinforce the original conceptualization of ethical leadership, which depicted ethical leaders as moral managers who actively reinforce external norms and moral individuals who change employees' self-concept through behavior that inspires their moral beliefs. In summary, our research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how the dimensions of moral people and moral managers together contribute to lecturer behavior. By doing this, we provide empirical evidence that supports the theoretical conceptualization of ethical leadership, emphasizing the importance of moral leaders and managers in motivating employees to act pro-socially.

Our third finding confirms that employees' control over motivation and moral identity both have an equally important role in stimulating knowledge-sharing behavior among coworkers. These results strengthen the old concept of ethical leadership as a form of leadership that is based on values (Den Hartog, 2015). By being a truly ethical example, the values espoused by an ethical leader are recognized and internalized by their followers. Additionally, our findings suggest that controlled motivation has a comparable influence on moral identity in relation to knowledge sharing among employees in the context of ethical leadership–employee relationships. It is in accordance with the argument of Ryan and Deci (2000), who state that extrinsic goals do not always have a less significant impact than intrinsic goals in driving individual behaviour.

In summary, our findings broadly support the effectiveness of multiple mechanisms implicit in the concept of ethical leadership in shaping follower attitudes and behavior. The theoretical model we developed integrates the diverse literature on leadership, knowledge management, identity, and motivation in a substantial way, highlighting the urgency of continued research to understand the implications of ethical leadership in the context of internal and external influences on individual motivation and identity.

CONCLUSION

Ethical leadership has a positive and significant effect on the moral identity and knowledge sharing of education personnel at Universitas Lancang Kuning. Additionally, moral identity positively influences knowledge sharing among these personnel. Furthermore, the indirect effect of ethical leadership on knowledge sharing through moral identity is also positive and significant. It highlights the importance of ethical leadership in promoting a culture of knowledge sharing within organizations, as it encourages employees to share knowledge by fostering a sense of moral responsibility and trust among colleagues. Organizations often face challenges when members withhold knowledge, hindering organizational progress. Therefore, leaders should not only possess ethical traits but also demonstrate a commitment to addressing ethical violations, fostering an environment where subordinates feel motivated to share knowledge for the benefit of the organization's progress.

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