Jurnal Manajemen dan Pemasaran Jasa

Vol. 14 No.1 Maret 2021: 35-48

Doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.25105/jmpj.v14i1.8541

ISSN 2442 - 9732 (Online) ISSN 0216 - 3780 (Print)

# How to encourage lecturer performance in research through servant leadership, organizational commitment, and tacit knowledge sharing

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### Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the role of servant leadership, organizational commitment, and tacit knowledge sharing in enhancing research performance. To this end, a survey of 400 randomly recruiting private university lecturers was conducted. The data were analyzed by using SEM covariant. The analysis result showed that leadership that tends to exhibit service and sacrifice towards its subordinate improved organizational commitment, particularly in the continuance and normative dimensions. Tacit knowledge sharing was found to promote the affective dimension of lecturers' corporate responsibility to research performance. Tacit knowledge sharing plays a mediating role between servant leadership and commitment organization and research performance. It was found to determine the research performance. The present study calls for knowledge management for tacit knowledge sharing to improve performance from a theoretical perspective. This can be done by focusing on tacit knowledge sharing about research, especially concerning research methodology and practical method development. From a practical standpoint, the study calls for extending and developing a structured tacit knowledge sharing supported by sharing culture among the lecturers.

Keywords: Organizational commitment; lecturer performance in research; private universities; servant leadership; tacit knowledge sharing.

JEL Classification: M41, M42

Article history: Submission date: Dec 28, 2020 Revised date: Jan 15, 2021 Accepted date: Mar 11, 2021

### INTRODUCTION

Hindrance in conducting research comes from structural issues (e.g., funding support or limited time) and the limited ability to access information technology. The small number of studies was caused by internal factors, i.e., ability to solve specific problems, namely understanding research method and practice, especially among junior lecturers. Winarno & Hermana (2019) suggests factors such as competence, reward systems, commitment, and motivation as important aspects that support lecturer performance in research.

Another factor that can affect performance is knowledge sharing that is in line with the opinion of Wang & Wang (2012), which explains the relationship between knowledge sharing and understanding and innovation. Knowledge outbound sharing. individual creativity, and absorptive capacity can improve innovation performance (Zhao et al., 2020). At the personal level, Al-Zoubi et al. (2019) explain that tacit knowledge sharing (TKS) has a positive effect on employees' ability to solve work problems, adapt to the work environment and create new innovative ideas. Kucharska & Erickson (2019) showed that the function of knowledge sharing is a mediating variable between IT competence and job satisfaction. The optimization of knowledge functions can be seen from the knowledge management (KM) system. Although KM is increasingly essential to support organizational performance effectiveness (including in universities), KM, as a process of knowledge acquisition, knowledge organization, knowledge leverage, knowledge sharing, and corporate memory (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), has not been optimized to support research. The success in managing KM is shown, among others, by tacit knowledge sharing that supports solving specific and strategic problems. Efforts to optimize the function of KM require structural and non-structural support to become the foundation for the development of tacit knowledge-sharing activities.

The availability of knowledge infrastructure, tradition, and intellectual capital have not yet spread into shared knowledge. TKS has not been utilized as a dynamic foundation to optimize the performance of higher education institutions. Supanitchaisiri et al. (2020) stated that the challenges of KM are associated with tacit knowledge. Also, Al-Zoubi et al. (2019) argue that a study on the effect of tacit knowledge sharing on individual ability, as a prerequisite to optimizing organizational performance, is still scarce.

Leadership is the critical variable in the micro foundation perspective regarding performance. The micro foundation perspective views leaders as value agents (Blaschke et al., 2014). One of the characteristics of leadership is servant leadership. Awan et al. (2012), Varela et al. (2020) explain servant leadership's position for employee performance. Ye et al. (2019) added that serving leadership increases enthusiasm for work and is customer-oriented. More specifically, Luu (2020) argues that servant leadership is related to organizational performance. Lee et al. (2020) suggest that leaders, as serving leaders who focus on their followers' needs, may positively affect the corporate function. Another aspect related to performance is organizational commitment. Sharma & Dhar (2016), (Orgambídez & Almeida, 2020), Saleem et al. (2019) have proven the effect of affective commitment on job performance. Ribeiro et al. (2018) stated that affective commitment is related to an account. Another important factor that supports implementation is leadership. Bryman (2007), Blaschke et al. (2014) asserted that leadership and governance reflect micro patterns that complement each other. Storbacka et al. (2016) explain actors' position in a micro foundation perspective for value creation. The micro foundation describes organizational systems and facilitates the combinative integration and renovation of corporate knowledge assets (Argote & Ren, 2012).

Leadership, organizational commitment, and TKS have played essential roles in affecting performance. Therefore, it is necessary to study administration, the corporate responsibility to share knowledge-related performance within a micro foundation perspective, to understand each variable's function in affecting one's performance. A notable gap exists where most studies view the employee's performance from a macro perspective. There is short of the understanding of micro-perspective on individual performance without ignoring the context. In the higher education context, this assumption has not been developed as a basis for research. The micro foundation perspective explains the microlevel (individual) without neglecting the contextual/macro level.

It should be noted that the micro foundation is not a theory but as a heuristic about theory building and implications for theory-based empiricism (Foss & Pedersen, 2019). As a productive micro foundation that promotes empirical advancement in research, the basic premise of TKS is that TKS holds a generative function. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2020) added a micro foundation in strategic management to understand philosophical integration. Kano & Verbeke (2015) emphasize that the assumed realistic behavior or micro basis plays an essential role in any theory claiming managerial relevance. This study's results serve as a concept that will direct the knowledge management system to promote TKS with various approaches to improve higher education research performance. The purpose of the present study was to analyze the role of servant leadership, organizational commitment, and tacit knowledge sharing in enhancing research performance.

Altruistic calling, Emotional healing, Wisdom, Persuasive mapping, Organizational stewardship (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, building community (Spears, 2010). Leadership with humility, authenticity, and interpersonal acceptance, an autonomous leader in decision making (Sun & Shang, 2019). Leaders as servants (Coetzer et al., 2017). Leadership can increase followers' satisfaction, including their need for welfare (Latif et al., 2020). When interacting with subordinates, a servant leader prioritizes values and treats them based on interpersonal relationships.

Organizational commitment means a reasonable response to staying in the organization and being involved in efforts to achieve the corporate mission, values, and goals. Meyer & Allen (1993), Saleem et al. (2019), Razzaq et al. (2019) suggest indicators of organizational commitment, namely attitudinal commitment, and behavioral commitment. The former focuses on an individual's thinking processes about their relationship with the organization. Meyer & Allen (1993), Kreitner & Kinicki (2014), and Robbins & Judge (2017) view organizational commitment as a psychological condition that affects employees to accept the organizational goals and values and stay in the organization. Reade & Lee (2012) suggest an employee's evaluation of the organization, which leads to a particular association with the organization. Employee emotional relationship with work and willingness to continue to participate (Saleem et al., 2019).

Knowledge sharing has been established as a critical objective of KM (Alshehri & Cumming, 2020). Borges et al. (2019) argue that tacit knowledge (TC) can be shared primarily through unstructured, experience-based interpersonal interactions or socialization. Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) argue that socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization of knowledge view tacit knowledge sharing as an attempt to optimize the function of knowledge for practical and ethical purposes. Tacit knowledge is conceptualized as knowledge of shared values and traditions (Polanyi & Sen, 1966). The opposite of explicit and challenging to explain knowledge (Yu & Zhou (2015) to solve problems that are specific to organizational rules, processes, and routines (Steven et al., 2010), social reality (Adloff et al., 2015), natural, non-formal knowledge and the results of reflection (Asher & Poper, 2019). The sharing process is necessary to optimize TC functions and expands access. As Mohamed (2020) argues, tacit knowledge is unreadable knowledge that is very difficult to articulate, teach, learn or manage, especially when it does not come from the reality of personal experience.

The development of work practices has encouraged the development of public views about lecturers' performance. Judeh (2012) suggests three essential components in performance: the suitability of work with the expectations/roles that are his responsibility. Second, citizenship, and third, how an employee tries to avoid or minimize things that can damage the organization's norms. Research is one of the lecturers' duties about the functions of higher education. Research is innovative thinking that results in

articles published in leading journals or patent registration (Hedjazi & Behravan, 2011). Armstrong (2009) explains that performance is related to institutional values.

Regarding the function of educational institutions and lecturers' positions, lecturer performance is related to its values. Fitzmaurice (2013) suggests that being an academic is morally required to carry out academic activities. Rahardja et al. (2017) added that performance results from inter-business, ability, and task perception. Kusuma et al. (2018) explained that by works from the inter-business, the main task o,f the lecturer is to transform, develop, and disseminate knowledge, technology, and arts through education, research, and community. Sukirno (2020) added that researching is one of the lecturers' performances indicators.

Leaders can raise subordinate's awareness through their social interactions. Employees who perceive meaningful leadership roles tend to return kindness or attention by working by their leader's demands and expectations. Bolden & Gosling (2008) state that a competent leader can translate the organization's norm values into a basis for the growth of individual normative commitment. Performance is dynamic, depending on the factors that support it. TKS and organizational commitment as a model that predicts unique absorption at work (Rafique et al., 2019). Knowledge sharing activity is an essential element of organizational success (Bavik et al., 2017, Dmitrii et al., 2020). Fitzmauric (2013) states that the basis for a lecturer active in research is value, virtue, individual trust, joy, and satisfaction in doing research.

Values sharing activity can affect behavior and direct research based on lecturers' awareness of research results' practical and theoretical implications. Ganguly et al. (2019) state that TKS is related to innovative abilities. Lecturers are demanded to present innovations in their research and fill either practical, theoretical, or conceptual gaps, methodology, and understanding related to the research paradigm's philosophy. The relevance of science as a source of business model innovation makes TKS an essential and strategic aspect of an organization (Foss & Pedersen, 2019).

Higher education institutions possess the infrastructure and traditions to support a more effective and optimal TKS process to improve research performance. Several factors, such as commitment, become the norm, value, and practical orientation to keep TKS. Servant leadership leads to more structured TKS, but its values that spread through social interaction can also encourage awareness of the importance of TKS and the need for knowledge resources to promote originality and quantity in research.

## **METHOD**

Table 2 shows the demografic data of a survey of 400 private university lecturers as survey respondents. The participants were randomly recruited from private universities accredited B in West Java and Banten, Indonesia. The data were collected for six months. In measuring servant leadership, Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) scale; consists of: (1) altruistic calling, (2) emotional healing, (3) wisdom, (4) persuasive mapping, and (5) Organizational stewardship. Concerning organizational commitment developed by Meyer & Allen (1993), Sallem (2019), Razzaq et al., (2019). Including the affective dimension, namely: (1) feel proud to be part of the institution, (2) happy to discuss work with people from different offices where I work, (3) willing to spend the rest of my career at the institution. On a continuance dimension, one of the items reads, "working as a lecturer is my life, and this institution is a place to depend on." In the normative dimension, the items were related to office governance principles that prioritize moral principles, working earlier, preparing everything based on the main virtues' awareness as organizational ethics. To measure tacit knowledge sharing, Cummings (2004) Rahman et al. (2018) scale was adopted, which comprised of sharing information with colleagues, involving myself in online discussions on various research

topics, spending time doing knowledge sharing activities online in my team to share personal experiences, share information with other lecturers even though he is not in the same department, involve himself in discussions on various technical topics with colleagues from different work teams using multiple online technologies for research Measurement of research performance was developed based on Winarno & Hermana (2019), Sukirno (2020), namely quality, quantity and adding delivery time which shows the response and proactive behavior of lecturers in conducting research. The number of research results includes the number of international, Scopus- and non-Scopus indexed the last five years, number of national journals, participation in conferences, and number of research proposals funded by the institution / Ministry / foreign donor in the previous five years. The quality was seen from the number of citations in journals published in the last five years both nationally and internationally and citation indexes. The respondents were provided with a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree/never to 5 = Strongly agree/always). Structural Equation Modeling was applied to analyze the data.

# Validity and reliability test

They were testing the research instrument using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient formula. The validity test aims to describe whether the research instrument can measure what should be measured. To obtain the validity value, researchers correlated the item scores with the total items. Table 3 showed the validity test.

Testing the reliability of the research instrument using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ), with the following criteria:

- a. The research instrument is reliable if the coefficient alpha  $(\alpha) \ge 0.6$ .
- b. The research instrument is unreliable if the coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) <0.6.

Table 1
Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's Alpa	N of Items
Servant leadership	0.930	5
Commitment organizational	0.753	3
Tacit knowledge sharing	0.896	6
Performance in research	0.684	3

Source: Data processed (2020)

Based on Table 1, the reliability coefficient for each variable is more significant than 0.60. These results indicate that all of the items statement reliable research instruments so that the research instrument can measure the variables studied.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

# Results

46% of respondents are women, 33% have an undergraduate degree with additional certificates of expertise and practical experience. There is a 59% degree of Master and as much as 9% of qualified doctors. There are as many as 75% of respondents who have experience working as lecturers for over 11 years. Table 2 showed the respondents demographics:

Table 2
Respondent Demographics Data

Demographic Variables	Classifications	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	Below 30 years	12	3%
	31 - 45 years	60	15%
	46 - 55 years	307	77%
	56 years and above	21	5%
Gender	Male	217	54%
	Female	183	46%
Highest Qualification	Diploma 4	42	11%
	Bachelor degree	87	22%
	Master's degree	236	59%
	Doctoral degree	35	9%
Experience as Lecturer	Less than 5 years	13	3%
	6- 10 years	87	22%
	11 - 20 years	292	73%
	More than 21 years	8	2%
Position	Lecturer	47	12%
	Senior Lecturer	284	71%
	Assoc. professor	55	14%
	Professor	14	4%

Source: Data processed (2020)

A path diagram depicting the relationships among the variables was obtained based on the total model estimation results.

The measurement model's value indicated that each estimated indicator measures the dimension and the concept being tested. Each of them has a CR of > 1.97. The hands showed loading factors that higher than 0.50, as shown in the following Table 3

Table 3
Result of Convergent Validity Test

Indicator	Standardized	CR	Conclusion	AVE
	loading factor			
Servant leadership				0.848
Altruistic calling (SL1)	0.928	0.031	Accepted	
Emotional healing (SL2)	0.960	0.026	Accepted	
Wisdom (SL3)	0.962	0.026	Accepted	
Persuasive mapping (SL4)	0.897	0.033	Accepted	

Indicator	Standardized	CR	Conclusion	AVE
	loading factor			
Organizational stewardship	0.854	0.034	Accepted	
(SL5)				
Organizational commitment				0.702
Commitment due to mutually	0.926	0.024	Accepted	
beneficial relationship (KO1)	0.720	0.024	Accepted	
Interested in staying in the	0.652	0.051	Accepted	
organization (KO2)	0.032	0.031	Accepted	
Morally responsible for				
staying in the organization	0.908	0.043	Accepted	
(KO3)				
Tacit Knowledge sharing				0.697
Sharing Information (TKS1)	0.939	0.030	Accepted	
Involving in an online	0.840	0.040	Accepted	
discussion (TKS2)	0.010	0.010	riccepted	
Sharing knowledge	0.802	0.040	Accepted	
Sharing experiences (TKS4)	0.715	0.046	Accepted	
Sharing Information (TKS5)	0.926	0.028	Accepted	
Discussion using online	0.764	0.041	Accepted	
technologies (TKS6)	0.701	0.011	necepted	
Research Performance				0.701
Research quality (RP1)	0.952	0.030	Accepted	
Research quantity (RP2)	0.879	0.038	Accepted	
Delivery time (RP3)	0.651	0.048	Accepted	

Source: Data processed (2020)

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of the servant leadership indicators was 0.848, meaning that on average, 84.8% of the information contained in each variable may reflect the latent variable of servant leadership. AVE value of the organizational commitment indicators was 0.702, indicating that 70.2% of the information contained in each variable can reflect the latent variable of organizational commitment. The Tacit knowledge sharing indicators' AVE value was 0.697, meaning that 69.7% of each variable can reflect latent variables—tacit knowledge sharing. The AVE value for performance was 0.701, meaning that 70.1% of the information contained in each variable can reflect the latent variable of performance.

The discriminant validity test indicates a correlation between variables, meaning that each construct stood as an independent construct. The constraint of the parameter of correlation between the two estimated constructs was 1.0. Table 4 showed the result of the fit model:

Table 4
The goodness of Fit Model

Goodness	Cut off	Result	Conclusion	Improved results and	
	Value	Testing		conclusions	
Significance of	≥0.05	0,000	Suggested to	0.00	
Probability			see other fit		
			indices		
RMSEA	≤0.08	0,114	Poor	0,047	Fit
GFI	≥0.90	0,807	Moderate	0,953	Fit
AGFI	≥0.90	0,738	Poor	0,920	Fit
CMIN/DF	$\leq 2 \text{ or } \leq 3$	6,228	Poor	1,892	Fit
TLI	≥ 0.95	0,897	Moderate	0,982	Fit
CFI	≥0.95	0,915	Moderate	0,988	Fit
PNFI	>0.6	0,679	Fit	0,646	Fit

Source: Data processed (2020)

Based on the test results, the RMSEA value was 0.114 with the CMIN / DF value of 6.228, indicating that the model had not been fit. PNFI value of 0.679 means fit. Cut-off values such as GFI (0.807), AGFI (0.738), TLI (0.897), CFI (0.915), and the IFI value of 0.915 were below the specified criteria. It is necessary to improve the model by increasing the relationships between the observed variables. The result of the improvement indicated a change in the goodness of fit. Accepted model. The next step is testing the hypothesis by comparing the p-value with a significance level of 0.05. The result is shown in the following Table 5.

Table 5
Hypotheses conclusion

	Hypothesis	Coefficient	Decision
		Beta	
H1	Servant leadership affects organizational commitment.	0.557	Accepted
H2	Servant leadership affects tacit knowledge sharing.	0.402	Accepted
Н3	Organizational commitment affects tacit knowledge sharing.	0.310	Accepted
H4	a. Tacit Knowledge sharing mediates the effect of servant leadership on performance in research.	0.365	Accepted
	<ul> <li>Tacit knowledge sharing mediates the effect of organizational commitment on performance in research.</li> </ul>	0.323	Accepted

Source: Data processed (2020)

# Discussion

The result showed that the beta coefficient is more significant than 0.0, meaning that there is an effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables, including testing the mediation hypothesis.

Leadership, as both formal and informal value systems, may promote normative and affective dimensions. Leaders should optimize their structural functions to promote continuance dimension through value exchanges between individuals and the organization. The contribution of individual values should be appreciated as a form of the organization's awareness of its lecturers as an investment to realize and promote science development. Interactions between leaders and lecturers may serve as a process of servant leadership learning process, which functions as a micro foundation for organizational commitment and to improve tacit knowledge sharing.

Being aware of improving performance constitutes the leader's orientation toward the relationship between servant leadership and performance-promoting leadership practice. It also includes a leader's understanding of ethical goals. Leadership values serve as the lecturers' orientation to realize their role and functions in research.

Servant leadership functions to ensure the increase in organizational commitment and knowledge-sharing tradition, which eventually improves research performance. Micro aspects stemming from an awareness of the meaning of research are obtained through tacit knowledge sharing. In contrast, the normative part of organizational commitment and its interaction with leaders promote the values.

Commitment is required to minimize hindrances during the research and publication process. Knowledge sharing activity is a mediation that can strengthen the commitment to normative aspects of research and strengthen lecturers' sense of ethical responsibility as an employee (i.e., contributing to their institution) and academics (i.e., contributing to the development of the body of knowledge). Knowledge sharing activity is multidimensional; it can minimize barriers during research.

There are several views on tacit knowledge sharing; some scholars view it as values and tradition (Polanyi & Sen, 1966), rules, process, and routines Steven et al. (2010), social reality Adloff et al. (2015), natural and non-formal knowledge as a result of reflection (Asher & Poper (2019). Belief, skills, and practical understanding (Liu, 2019) may ensure the balance between the quality, quantity, and delivery time of research results that are practically difficult to realize. Governance in a micro perspective serves as an alternative to obtaining a more specific explanation regarding the lecturers' behavior in conducting their functions. Contextualization and individuation could be the framework for understanding the dynamic changes of lecturers' performance. Knowledge sharing activity should be viewed as a need to support the version supported by servant leadership and organizational commitment.

Tacit knowledge sharing fully mediates servant leadership's effect on research performance, with Z value > Z Table (1.97). This condition may be accounted for because leaders' position in private universities is in a bureaucratic state. Mediation is required within the interaction between leaders and lecturers.

Tacit Knowledge sharing was found to mediate the effect of organizational commitment partially. Lecturers' performance is affected, either directly or indirectly, by organizational commitment. This is in line with Blaschke et al. (2014), who stated the position of leadership and management aspects in the micro foundation perspective to promote change. The study results indicated that in a private university context, the individual performance elements stem from leadership structure. Formal organizational structure is inadequate to promote organizational commitment and tacit knowledge

sharing to support research performance. Collaboration among lecturers in conducting research based on critical reflection on experiences between each department or with lecturers in other institutions is still low.

## **CONCLUSION**

Tacit knowledge sharing mediates the effect of servant leadership and organizational commitment on research performance. The leadership's ability to empathize and listen may provide subordinates with a solid reason to exhibit an expected performance and promote organizational commitment and tacit knowledge sharing. It is necessary to conduct a similar study with a larger sample that involves more university status. The study's theoretical implication lies in developing the TKS concept as a concept with a practical purpose (i.e., research) for lecturers. Tacit knowledge sharing is inseparable from research activities. The practical implication of the study is that policymakers need to focus on developing TKS by, for example, conducting regular webinars to share experiences with sufficient funding support. Besides, they should optimize the gathering culture to promote TKS at various functional lecturer positions to improve research performance. Eventually, support the university's effort to realize Tridarma (three pillars) of the university. Policymakers in tertiary institutions play an essential role in uncovering the various relationships between TKS as a theory with praxis and realizing the university's tri dharma. Besides, they also play a pivotal role in expanding opportunities and knowledge-sharing platforms, which support novice lecturers to obtain competence related to research practice. The present study involved only lecturers in a private university accredited B in West Java and Banten. Measurement of the observed variables is only on the research variable dimensions and uses the one shoot study time coverage. The data collection, including perception about leaders, was done through a self-assessing questionnaire, which may contain bias due to prejudice and experience related to servant leadership.

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