The Impact of Workplace Spirituality on Educational Staff's Knowledge Sharing Intentions at Private Universities: A Mediation-Moderation Model

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the impact of spirituality in the workplace on knowledge-sharing intention, with trust as the mediating variable and gender as the moderating variable. The sample consisted of 249 education personnel from private universities in Central Java selected through convenience sampling. Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the PLS-SEM analysis tool. The results showed that spirituality in the workplace significantly affects knowledge-sharing intention. Furthermore, the findings show that trust mediates the effect of workplace spirituality on knowledge-sharing intention, and gender moderates the effect of workplace spirituality on knowledge-sharing intention.

Keywords: Workplace Spirituality, Trust, Knowledge Sharing Intentions, Private Universities
JEL Classifications: J28, M54

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge has consistently been regarded as a dominant source of competitive advantage, recognized as the most critical strategic asset for any organization (Afshar Jalili and Ghaleh, 2020; Ahmad and Karim, 2019; Donnelly, 2019; Naeem et al., 2019). Given the crucial role of knowledge, organizations have no choice but to implement knowledge management practices (Afshar Jalili and Ghaleh, 2020). Knowledge management aligns organizational goals with knowledge, driving further growth and competitive advantage (Al-Kurdi et al., 2018). The core process of knowledge management is knowledge-sharing (Nguyen et al., 2020). Knowledge-sharing has been defined as a social interaction culture involving the exchange of knowledge, experiences, and skills among members of an organization (Akosile and Olatokun, 2020). It is essential for innovation, as the evolution of ideas depends on effective knowledge-sharing behaviors, which facilitate the

development of new processes, services, and products (Hameed et al., 2019). However, despite its importance, it is not easy to encourage individuals to share their knowledge, as many views it as too valuable. In other words, if a person is unwilling to share what they know, no one can force them to do so (Afshar Jalili and Ghaleh, 2020).

Previous empirical studies have examined factors influencing knowledge-sharing intentions, including trust, self-efficacy, in-role behavior, altruism, pro-social behavior, and organizational climate (Bock et al., 2005; Lin, 2006; Teh and Yong, 2011). However, few studies have explored the link between workplace spirituality and knowledge-sharing (Khari and Sinha, 2018). (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000) define workplace spirituality as the recognition that employees have an inner life that needs nurturing at work and experience a sense of connectedness with others and the community where they work. Spirituality fosters an environment

that nurtures the moral and emotional evolution of organizational members, promoting integrity, truth, and mutual understanding (Rowley, 2006). It also generates trust (Mitroff and Denton, 1999; Walker, 2013) and a sense of belonging to the organization (Delbecq, 1999). These characteristics support the argument that spirituality positively influences knowledge-sharing (Robledo, 2014). Therefore, organizations should incorporate employees' spiritual lives into the workplace to create a culture of knowledge-sharing (Rego and Cunha, 2008).

Previous studies linking workplace spirituality with knowledge-sharing have shown inconsistent results. Some studies demonstrate that spirituality affects knowledge-sharing (Rahman et al., 2015; 2016; 2021), while others suggest it does not (Khari and Sinha, 2018; Wahid et al., 2019). One explanation for these inconsistent findings is the introduction of additional moderating variables (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). This study will examine gender as a moderating variable, based on recommendations from earlier empirical studies (Khari and Sinha, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020). (Connelly and Kevin Kelloway, 2003) argue that women often feel disadvantaged in the workplace, making them sensitive in social interactions and hesitant to share knowledge for fear of losing their knowledge power. Lin (2006) highlighted that gender behavior in the knowledge-sharing process differs. This is supported by Taylor (2004), who found that men are more inclined to use all components of knowledge management systems, while women tend to adopt interpersonal and socialization strategies to acquire or share knowledge.

Previous studies have also revealed that an individual's willingness to share knowledge may depend on the level of trust among them (Casimir et al., 2012; Eze et al., 2013; Swift and Hwang, 2013; Wickramasinghe and Widyaratne, 2012). Trust, therefore, is a psychological condition where one expects others to act in a certain way (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). The impact of trust on knowledge-sharing has received considerable attention from researchers, but the results have been inconsistent. Some studies report a positive influence of trust on knowledge-sharing (Bibi and Ali, 2017; Chang and Chuang, 2011; Fathi et al., 2011; Goh and Sandhu, 2013; Hau et al., 2013; Wickramasinghe and Widyaratne, 2012), while others show that trust does not affect knowledge-sharing (Chow and Chan, 2008; Jolaee et al., 2014; Seonghee and Boryung, 2008; Tsai and Cheng, 2012). On the other hand, (Khari and Sinha, 2018) found that trust mediates the influence of spirituality on knowledge-sharing. Therefore, further studies are needed to explore the role of trust in knowledge-sharing.

This study utilizes Social Exchange Theory (SET) as a fundamental framework to explain the relationship between workplace spirituality, trust, and knowledge sharing intentions. SET emphasizes social and personal relationships among employees to foster knowledge-sharing behavior through trust, which develops via repeated interactions, enabling employees to gather desired knowledge and information. Furthermore, SET discusses the concept of social behavior where exchanges are not limited to material goods but also include symbolic values (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). In the context of this research, the inner life for spiritual well-being is considered through workplace spirituality.

This study focuses on the educational staff at universities. So far, universities cannot function solely with lecturers; educational staff also play an important role in running the institution. The routine work of educational staff in supporting and assisting the processes to achieve the success of implementing the university's three main functions of education, research, and community service. In addition, educational staff also have an increasingly wider scope of work requiring professional expertise supported by codes of ethics, such as duties in the procurement of goods and services, internal oversight, management of information systems and data centers, accounting and asset management, and other fields that have emerged in response to improving higher quality services (WHS et al., 2014). Thus, the knowledge of individual educational staff needs to be shared because the information is very important for the overall operations of the university. Previous empirical studies only focused on knowledge-sharing within the scope of university lecturers (Jolaee et al., 2014; Rahman et al., 2021). Therefore, to enrich the literature on knowledge-sharing, this study focuses on the intent to share knowledge among the educational staff at universities.

The explanations that have been put forward show that this study makes several contributions. First, studies on the relationship between spirituality and knowledge-sharing are still rare (Khari and Sinha, 2018). They offer a comprehensive conceptual model that describes the relationship between workplace spirituality and knowledge-sharing in organizations. This provides a basis for testing spirituality with knowledge-sharing so as to increase its generalizability. Secondly, this study conceptualizes gender as a moderating variable of the effect of spirituality in the workplace on knowledge-sharing intention, which has not been done in previous studies. Gender was chosen as a moderating variable because it is based on suggestions from previous studies that state that gender behavior in the knowledge-sharing process is different (Khari and Sinha, 2018; Nguyen, 2020). Third, this study focuses on education personnel in higher education. Previous studies state that knowledge-sharing studies in higher education focused on education personnel are still very limited (Rahman et al., 2015, 2016; WHS et al., 2014). Based on this explanation, the existence of this research is expected to contribute to the theme of research related to knowledge-sharing in the context of education personnel, which is still rarely researched.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

2.1. Workplace Spirituality and Knowledge Sharing Intention

Workplace spirituality in an organizational environment can influence employees' ability to create a knowledge-sharing culture as well as understanding the value of knowledge (Dhiman and Marques, 2011; Shaw and Thomson, 2013). Employees spend a lot of time with their peers every day; therefore, they seek meaning, purpose, and expertise in their work by exchanging information with each other (Osman-Gani et al., 2013). (Bindlish et al., 2012) showed that the effect of spirituality in the workplace creates a culture that increases the sense of connectedness among employees, which influences them to share valuable knowledge with each other. Thus, the hypothesis formulated are:

H_1: Workplace spirituality has an effect on knowledge sharing intention.

2.2. Workplace Spirituality and Trust

Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) research has highlighted the link between workplace spirituality and increased honesty and trust within the organization. Spiritual behavior should include deep trust among members by sharing equal opportunities and being equally responsible for developing their lives in the future (Rahman et al., 2016). The results of (Khari and Sinha, 2018) show that organizational spirituality has a positive effect on organizational trust. Thus, the hypothesis formulated are:

H_2: Workplace spirituality has an effect on trust.

2.3. Trust and Knowledge Sharing Intention

The general definition of trust that is agreed upon by most researchers is the willingness to be vulnerable based on positive expectations about another person's actions (Riegelsberger et al., 2003). In university life, a lack of trust in sharing knowledge may stem from doubts about how reliable fellow students are and uncertainty about their intentions. This can breed an unwillingness among classmates to share what they know with each other (Jolaee et al., 2014). Research by (Wang et al., 2015) indicates that trust has an even greater impact on the desire to share knowledge. Building trust ultimately makes students more eager to share knowledge with their peers. When students believe they can rely on other members of their university community, they are motivated to share knowledge and information freely. Thus, the hypothesis are:

H_3: Trust has a positive effect on knowledge sharing intentions.

2.4. Workplace Spirituality, Trust, and Knowledge Sharing Intention

The definition of trust in the management field provided by (Mayer et al., 1995) defines trust as an individual's willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another party with the belief that the other party will act in their best interest. Research by (Khari and Sinha, 2018) showed that organizational trust mediates the influence of organizational spirituality on attitudes toward knowledge-sharing. Employees who highly value their university, when they feel their institution fulfills its promises, help build trust within the organization (Colquitt et al., 2007) and will encourage staff to freely share knowledge and information with their colleagues. A sense of community and shared purpose among employees fosters goodwill and cooperation. When workers believe their university has their well-being in mind and demonstrates it through its actions and values, they are more inclined to contribute what they know for the benefit of their fellow employees and students. Thus, the hypothesis are:

H_4: Trust mediates the effect of workplace spirituality on knowledge sharing intentions.

2.5. Workplace Spirituality, Gender, and Knowledge Sharing Intention

Gender differences point to the social roles, attitudes, and behaviors deemed appropriate by society (Eagly and Wood, 2016). Men and women exhibit distinct behavioral structures and ethical frameworks in how they make decisions (Loo, 2003). The moderating role of gender in knowledge-sharing has been demonstrated in several studies. (Connelly and Kevin Kelloway, 2003) argue that women often feel disadvantaged at work, making them sensitive in social interactions and reluctant to share knowledge for fear of losing power. (Lin, 2006) showed gender plays a part in how knowledge-sharing processes unfold. This was also supported by (Taylor, 2004) research finding that male employees seemed more inclined to utilize all components of a knowledge management system compared to females, who tended to rely more on interpersonal strategies and socializing to gain or share knowledge. By understanding differences, university staff can create an inclusive culture where all feel empowered to contribute regardless of gender. Thus, the hypothesis are:

H_5: Gender moderates the influence of workplace spirituality on knowledge sharing intentions.

Figure 1 below presents the research model representing the underlying relationship among variables

3. METHOD

3.1. Population and Sample

This study focused on gaining insightful perspective from the valued educational staff serving the esteemed universities throughout Central Java. It employed a convenience sampling methodology, as described in reference (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016), which allowed the researchers to engage willing participants efficaciously as they undertook their important daily duties. While this approach cannot claim to perfectly represent the full diversity of experiences across the population, it established a thoughtful starting point for discussion.

The individuals indicated in Table 1 generously volunteered their time amidst work commitments, sharing experiences that offer nuanced understanding. Their meaningful contributions, representing various professional positions, advance respectful dialogue on this important

Table 1: Demographics characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Freq.	(%)
Gender		
Male	129	51.8
Female	120	48.2
Ages		
18-25 years	30	12.0
26-33 years	71	28.5
34-41 years	49	19.7
42-60 years	85	34.1
Not filling	14	5.6
Tenure		
0-9 years	120	48.2
10-19 years	52	20.9
20-29 years	47	18.9
30-38 years	11	4.4
Not filling	19	7.6
Education		
Higher education	23	9.2
Diploma	49	19.7
S1 (bachelor degree)	122	49.0
S2 (master degree)	43	17.3
S3 (doctoral degree)	2	0.8
Not Filling	10	4

topic. While non-random techniques constrain generalizability, these collaborative discussions can still help illuminate the variety of challenges and opportunities faced across different viewpoints. Progress often begins with thoughtful consideration of diverse voices, especially those belonging to personnel who are most dedicated to their roles yet perhaps least heard. One hopes this work helps strengthen comprehensive support for each member's valuable work supporting the university missions.

3.2. Operational Definition and Measurement

To facilitate clearer comprehension, operational definitions of the key variables examined in this research are provided below. Each construct was assessed utilizing a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." It is hoped that articulating precisely how these concepts were evaluated will lend valuable context to interpreting the results. The dedicated staff who generously gave their time offer important perspectives, and presenting the methodological depths hopes to do full justice to their meaningful contributions.

3.2.1. Workplace spirituality

Workplace spirituality in an academic campus setting pertains to the personal inner experiences of educational staff that are nurtured through meaningful engagement in work. The assessment of workplace spirituality involves 25 statement items taken from (Ashmos and Duchon, 2000) research.

3.2.2. Trust

Trust is described as the optimistic belief that educational staff hold towards their colleagues. The assessment of trust involves 4 statement items derived from (Jolaee et al., 2014) research.

3.2.3. Knowledge-sharing intentions

Knowledge-sharing intentions are characterized as the eagerness of educational staff to exchange information with their colleagues. The evaluation of knowledge-sharing intentions involves 4 statement items taken from (Jolaee et al., 2014) study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Result

The measurement model underwent testing to evaluate validity and reliability, encompassing assessments for convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was gauged using the average variance extracted (AVE), with a threshold of >0.50 recommended for both confirmatory and exploratory research (Hair et al., 2017). The findings indicate that the AVE >0.5 (Table 2), indicating that all constructs meet the required criteria. Discriminant validity was assessed through the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, adhering to the principle that variables should exhibit stronger correlations with themselves than with other variables (Table 3). Composite reliability values and Cronbach's alpha were utilized to evaluate the instrument's reliability. Table 2 demonstrates the reliability of all measurement instruments, with composite reliability values and Cronbach's alpha for each construct meeting the necessary standards.

The model structure was assessed using the coefficient of

Table 2: Measurement model

Construct	AVE	Composite reliability (CR)	Cronbach's alpha (CA)
Workplace spirituality	0.728	0.915	0.877
Trust	0.692	0.900	0.852
Knowledge-sharing intention	0.516	0.941	0.932

Table 3: Fornell-Larcker criterion

Variable	WS	T	KSI
Workplace spirituality (WS)	0.719		
Trust (T)	0.625	0.832	
Knowledge-sharing intention (KSI)	0.539	0.528	0.853

Figure 1: Research model
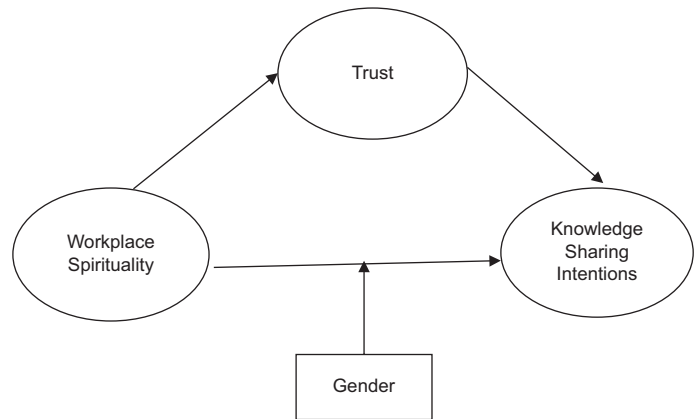
determination (R^2 value) indicating the variance in the endogenous construct explained by the exogenous construct related to it (Hair et al., 2017). As displayed in Table 4, the R^2 value for all dependent variables exceeds 0.1. The outcomes reveal that knowledge-sharing intention is predominantly influenced by the highest predictive variance (35.1%).

The presentation statistics test in proposes hypothesis in Table 4 reveals that workplace spirituality has a significant impact on knowledge-sharing intention, with a $P = 0.000$, indicating statistical significance ($P < 0.05$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1, suggesting that workplace spirituality influences knowledge-sharing intention, is confirmed. Similarly, workplace spirituality has a significant effect on trust, with a $P = 0.000$ (<0.05), supporting Hypothesis 2, which proposes that workplace spirituality influences trust. Trust also significantly influences knowledge-sharing intention, with a $P = 0.000$ (<0.05), endorsing Hypothesis 3 on the impact of trust on knowledge-sharing intention. Furthermore, Hypothesis 4, stating that trust mediates the relationship between workplace spirituality and knowledge-sharing intention, is supported by a $P = 0.000$ (<0.05).

To assess if gender moderates the proposed relationships (H5), we performed bootstrapping multi-group analysis (MGA) using SmartPLS 4. This analysis compares the regression weights of the parameter (gender in this case). To conduct this analysis, the sample was divided into two groups: Male (129) and female (120). The findings indicate that the moderating effect of gender on the association between workplace spirituality and knowledge-sharing

Table 4: Summary of structural model test statistics hypotheses

H	Path		Direct effect coefficient	Indirect effect coefficient	Conclusion
	From	To			
H₁	Workplace Spirituality	Knowledge-sharing Intention	4.874 (0.000)	-	Supported
H₂	Workplace Spirituality	Trust	14.530 (0.000)	-	Supported
H₃	Trust	Knowledge-sharing Intention	4.461 (0.000)	-	Supported
H₄	Workplace Spirituality	Knowledge-sharing Intention	-	(via Trust) 4.325 (0.000)	Supported
	R² Trust		0.391		
	R² Knowledge-sharing Intention		0.351		

Table 5: Path comparison results across gender

Path	Male (β)	Female (β)	Difference (β)	P-Value for Difference	Interpretation
H₅: Workplace spirituality knowledge-sharing Intention	0.220*	0.511**	0.291	0.032	The relationship is stronger for females than males.

*Significance Indicators: P<0.05; **Significance Indicators: P<0.01

intention was more pronounced for females (β female = 0.511 (0.000)) compared to males (β male = 0.220 (0.034)). Detailed results of the moderation analysis can be found in Table 5.

4.2. Discussion
The research results highlight that workplace spirituality has a significant positive impact on the knowledge-sharing intentions of educational staff. This suggests that the stronger the perception of workplace spirituality among staff, the greater their motivation to share knowledge. As educational staff interact extensively with colleagues on a daily basis, they are inclined to seek purpose, guidance, and competence in their roles, which they fulfill through knowledge-sharing (Osman-Gani et al., 2013). (Bindlish et al., 2012) research findings suggest that workplace spirituality plays a pivotal role in cultivating a culture that enhances interpersonal connections among staff, thereby inspiring them to engage in valuable knowledge exchange. Workplace spirituality can be likened to nurturing soil that provides the ideal conditions for the seeds of knowledge-sharing to thrive. When educational staff are immersed in an environment that prioritizes their spiritual well-being, they are not only more inclined to share knowledge but also do so with a profound sense of fulfillment and purpose. This shared purpose creates a ripple effect, reinforcing bonds between colleagues through every interaction and knowledge exchange, thereby fostering a strong and interconnected community of learners and educators. In such a community, knowledge is not merely transferred; it is enriched and expanded, contributing to the collective wisdom and advancement of the institution.

The analysis reveals a significant impact of workplace spirituality on trust levels among educational staff. This suggests that as staff members perceive workplace spirituality more deeply within their institution, their trust in colleagues strengthens. Furthermore, trust is enhanced when employees view their organization as prioritizing the well-being of all involved, cultivating a sense of collective welfare and contentment (Mirvis, 1997). These positive emotions form the basis for a positive perception of others and strengthen an individual's tendency to trust (Jones and George, 1998). This assertion is supported by research indicating that

individuals frequently use the influence of others as a signal to build trust (Dunn and Schweitzer, 2005). It is evident that workplace spirituality goes beyond mere sentimentality; it serves as a foundational building block that shapes the social dynamics within an organization. When employees experience spiritual fulfillment in their work environment, they are inclined to view their colleagues with positivity and benevolence. This mindset is crucial as it fosters a culture of collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and mutual support. Consequently, trust naturally emerges as a result of a workplace enriched with spirituality, creating a harmonious and productive organizational atmosphere where individuals are not just willing but enthusiastic to contribute to collective success.

The research findings underscore the significant role of trust in enhancing knowledge-sharing intentions among educational staff. In essence, the higher the level of trust among staff members, the greater their propensity to engage in knowledge-sharing. The ability to exchange knowledge is intricately connected to the level of trust maintained between individuals (Casimir et al., 2012; Eze et al., 2013; Swift and Hwang, 2013; Wickramasinghe and Widyaratne, 2012). A trusting environment among colleagues serves as a key motivator for educational staff to share knowledge and information. Trust is not only a facilitator but a crucial element in enabling effective knowledge exchange. It acts as the bridge that connects individual areas of expertise, facilitating the seamless flow of ideas and insights. When educational staff trust one another, they unlock their reservoirs of knowledge, creating a shared pool that benefits the entire organization. This collective knowledge resource evolves and expands, enriching the organization's intellectual capital and fostering a culture that prioritizes continuous learning and innovation. Trust acts as the catalyst that transforms individual knowledge into organizational wisdom.

The research findings reveal that trust serves as a mediator in the relationship between workplace spirituality and knowledge-sharing intentions. When employees perceive their organization as fulfilling its commitments, they develop a positive regard for the organization, leading to the establishment of trust within the

organization (Colquitt et al., 2007). This, in turn, encourages employees to be more willing to share knowledge and information. Trust serves as a bridge connecting employees' personal values and beliefs with the goals and practices of the organization. Workplace spirituality, characterized by a sense of purpose and connectedness in the work environment, has a profound impact on how employees perceive their organization. When employees witness their spiritual values mirrored in the organization's actions, particularly in the fulfillment of promises, they develop a heightened sense of trust. This trust goes beyond mere belief in others' actions; it signifies a sense of belonging to a larger, purpose-driven entity. As trust deepens, it nurtures an environment conducive to knowledge-sharing, where employees are not only willing but enthusiastic to contribute their insights for the collective benefit. This fosters a culture of collaboration, innovation, and effectiveness within the organization.

The test results indicate that gender moderates the influence of workplace spirituality on knowledge-sharing intentions. The findings suggest that the impact of workplace spirituality on knowledge-sharing intentions is higher among female respondents. This could be attributed to the fact that when female respondents feel that they have an internal life on campus nurtured by meaningful work, they are more inclined to engage in knowledge-sharing. This assertion is supported by (Taylor, 2004), who suggests that women are more likely to employ interpersonal and socialization strategies to acquire or share knowledge.

5. CONCLUSION

This study enhances our understanding of how workplace spirituality and trust influence knowledge-sharing intentions among higher education staff. The research highlights the importance of workplace spirituality in creating an environment that supports knowledge-sharing, directly and indirectly, through the mediating role of trust. When employees feel a sense of purpose, meaning, and interconnectedness in their work, they are more inclined to share their knowledge and expertise with their peers. Additionally, trust plays a vital role in facilitating the positive impact of workplace spirituality on knowledge-sharing intentions. The gender factor is proven to moderate the influence of workplace spirituality on knowledge-sharing intentions.

Based on the research findings, it is advisable for higher education institutions to prioritize efforts in enhancing workplace spirituality and cultivating a culture of trust. Initiatives that foster personal development, ethical principles, and a sense of community within the organization can accomplish this. Moreover, fostering transparent communication channels, encouraging open discussions, and demonstrating organizational integrity are key factors in fostering trust among employees.

Future studies could delve into specific elements that impact workplace spirituality and trust in academic institutions, such as leadership approaches, organizational policies, or cultural dynamics. Additionally, conducting comparative analyses across different cultures or industries could offer valuable insights into the generalizability of these findings and potential variations in the

relationships among workplace spirituality, trust, and knowledge-sharing intentions.

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