



The effect of transparency on learning organizations mediated by knowledge sharing

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Abstract

Developing a learning organization in an elementary school setting in Indonesia necessitates a comprehensive approach that includes cultivating a culture of continuous learning, collaboration, and creativity among teachers, students, and administrators. One critical facet of this is improving elementary school teachers' instructional skills. This study sought to evaluate the impact of transparency and information sharing on learning organizations. The research participants were 242 elementary school teachers in West Java, Indonesia, who were surveyed online. Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) was involved to test the data collected and the proposed model. The results show that transparency and knowledge sharing have a direct effect on the learning organization. This study also notes the indirect effect of transparency on the learning organization through knowledge sharing. The main point of this study is that the learning organization can be predicted by transparency and knowledge sharing. The study also notes that the teaching competence of elementary school teachers in Indonesia can be improved through a learning organization.

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Introduction

Teachers are always required to work professionally and have a learning culture to improve the quality of education. To improve teachers' professional quality, the learning organizations (LO) of teachers should be

strengthened (Marthuis, 2020). Studies related to the positive impact of learning organization in educational institutions have attracted the interest of scholars in various parts of the world (Habtoor et al., 2020; Nazarova et al., 2021). Additionally, schools are required to develop an organizational culture (Shamir-Balderman, 2021)

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that incorporates cultural values for a continuous learning process based on adequate information transparency (Argyris & Schön, 1996) and develop knowledge-sharing (KS) behavior between teachers (Cheng et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023).

Transparency refers to the openness, clarity, and accessibility of information within an organization (Rong et al., 2021). Transparency builds trust among employees, reduces uncertainty, and aligns individual and organizational goals (Liu et al., 2022). Research by Liu et al. (2022) examined how transparency in information and open communication contribute to the development of a learning organization. Their findings suggest that when organizations are transparent, employees are more likely to share information freely, which is critical for organizational learning. Furthermore, knowledge sharing is a process where employees exchange information, skills and expertise (Zeinabadi, 2022). Implementing systems and structures that facilitate knowledge sharing, such as collaboration tools, knowledge management systems, and cross-functional teams, can help bridge the gap between transparency and organizational learning (Azeem et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021). Knowledge sharing plays a vital role in the development and sustainability of learning organizations (Akram et al., 2020; Al-Kurdi et al., 2020; Nguyen et al., 2019). The effectiveness of an LO largely depends on how well knowledge is disseminated and utilized within the organization (Arsawan et al., 2022; Lee & Choi, 2003; Singh et al., 2021). In the relationship between transparency and learning organizations, knowledge sharing acts as a mediator. This means transparency leads to increased knowledge sharing, which in turn fosters a learning organization (Gagné et al., 2019).

Studies related to transparency, learning organization, and knowledge sharing in education have indeed been conducted in various parts of the world (Kim et al., 2017; Lee & Li, 2021), including Indonesia (Anggraini, 2001; Khoyrudin et al., 2020). However, there are still few studies that reveal the effect of transparency on learning organization mediated by knowledge sharing, especially in elementary schools (Zahedipour et al., 2022). Most studies are taking a stance to involve learning organizations to enhance employee performance in a company instead of educational institutions (Rumijati, 2020; Tesavrita & Suryadi, 2016). In addition, the focus of the study in the Indonesian context tends to be unique because, as a developed country, it still has problems with the institutional capacity of schools, especially in elementary schools.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap in knowledge of the relationship between transparency, knowledge sharing, and learning organization in the context of

elementary school teachers in Indonesia. Thus, whether transparency promotes knowledge sharing and learning organization arises. Does knowledge sharing mediate the relationship between transparency and learning organization? This research offers new insights in three ways. First, it adds to the theory of the effect of transparency and KS on learning organization, which scholars still seldom examine. Second, this research offers practical solutions for stakeholders to improve the professional competence of teachers. Third, it offers new insights for the Indonesian government to improve institutional organization in elementary schools.

Methodology

Research Design

The study used a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey method. The research describes exogenous and endogenous variables. The exogenous variables in this study are transparency and knowledge sharing. The endogenous variable is the learning organization. In this study, LO refers to Senge et al. (2012), which covers a continuous process within an organization that provides smooth learning, maintains continuous transformation, and empowers teachers' performance. The rationale for the proposed model is grounded in a robust theoretical and empirical framework. Transparency, as an organizational trait, directly fosters the creation of learning organizations by promoting trust, open communication, and collaboration. Additionally, its role in facilitating knowledge sharing further enhances its impact of transparency on learning organizations. By understanding these relationships, this study aims to provide valuable insights into how educational institutions can develop into learning organizations that continually adapt and evolve, thus improving teacher competence and student outcomes. The research framework in this study is provided in Figure 1.

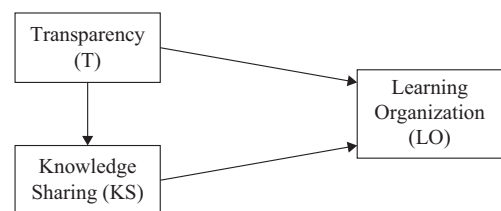


Figure 1 The conceptual framework

Source: own elaboration based on Schnackenberg et al. (2021); Senge et al. (2012); Yi (2009)

Sample and Data Collection

The participants of this study were elementary school teachers throughout West Java, Indonesia, who are members of the Learning Teacher Community (LTC). LTC refers to an organizational forum for elementary school teachers that has coaching and development activities and exchanging information to improve the quality of learning. The reason for selecting respondents was that the LTC organization was formed in the COVID-19 era as a breakthrough in finding learning solutions that were carried out through online meeting forums. Data collection techniques were carried out through Google Forms surveys and distributed via WhatsApp to respondents. The teachers were asked to assess the situation they felt or experienced. We used the non-probability purposive sampling technique developed by Hair et al. (2020) to select participants. Participants filled out a total of 312 questionnaires, and after being validated, 242 questionnaires were filled out entirely so that they could be analyzed further. This research was conducted from June to August 2021. Participation was voluntary, and we protected confidentiality and anonymity. The Faculty of Economics Universitas Negeri Jakarta Indonesia obtained the ethical code.

Instrument Development and Data Analysis

Questionnaire items, in the form of a scale, are compiled based on relevant theories and studies of each variable. We adapted three items from Senge et al. (2012) to test the variable learning organization. The three items were adapted from Schnackenberg et al. (2021) to test the transparency variable. Finally, we adapted three items from Yi (2009) to test the Knowledge-Sharing variable. We developed the indicator in nine questions. Thus, a total of 27 questions. We measured participants' reactions using a five-point scale developed by Likert (1932) where (1) was "strongly disagree" and "strongly agree" (5).

Structural Equation Modelling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with Smart PLS software tool (version 3.0) was involved to understand the relationship between variables. The suitability of the variable model of transparency, knowledge sharing, and learner organization model was evaluated by following the procedure developed by Hair et al. (2020), namely: (1) checking composite reliability, which must be higher than 0.7; (2) comparing the outer loading value and cross-loading; (3) checking convergent validity at the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value limit which

is not less than 0.5; (4) evaluating discriminant validity with the Fornell-Larcker criterion by comparing the square root value of AVE and the value of the relationship between the other constructs; and (5) assessing the structural model by considering Variable Importance in the Projection (VIP). This study's recommended values for collinearity issues are between 0.20 and 5. After all of them meet the assessment criteria, structural equation modeling is carried out to estimate the hypothesis with a significant level of 5 percent.

Results

Demographic Analysis

The participants of this study are provided in Table 1. In general, the respondents in this research are teachers between the ages of 31 and 40 years. Most of them have working experience in the range of 11–20 years, and a small percentage have working experience of more than 31 years. Lastly, elementary teachers in this study are university graduates.

Table 1 Respondent demographic information

S/No.	Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Age	< 30 years	79	31.10
	31–40 years	130	51.18
	> 41 years	45	17.71
Sex	Man	117	46.06
	Woman	137	53.93
Working experience	< 10 years	68	26.77
	11–20 years	122	48.03
	21–30 years	43	16.92
	> 31 years	21	8.26
Education	Bachelor degree	231	90.94
	Master	23	9.05

Sources: Authors (2024)

This study aims to examine the effect of transparency (T) and knowledge sharing (KS) on learning organization (LO). Table 2 is the result of descriptive statistics for each variable, which includes the mean and standard deviation. Table 2 informs that the Learning Team is the average measurement indicator with the highest value (4.278 out of 5). The lowest score is Personal Skills (3.501 out of 5).

Table 2 Descriptive statistics

Variable	The mean (Standard Deviation) of the indicators		
	1	2	3
Learning Organization (LO)	3.48 (0.65)	3.78 (.516)	3.88 (0.52)
Personal skills	3.47 (0.66)	3.50 (0.82)	-
Learning Team	3.53 (0.64)	4.27 (0.53)	-
Systems Thinking	3.96 (0.61)	3.77 (0.68)	-
Transparency (T)	3.70 (0.73)	3.51 (0.88)	3.63 (0.86)
Disclosure	3.77 (0.73)	3.73 (0.94)	3.51 (0.92)
Clarity	3.51 (0.92)	3.50 (1.05)	-
Accuracy	3.60 (0.98)	3.63 (0.98)	3.65 (1.03)
Knowledge Sharing (KS)	3.96 (0.63)	3.56 (0.85)	3.89 (0.76)
Knowledge Reception	4.05 (0.77)	3.84 (0.80)	-
Knowledge Store	3.543 (0.84)	3.60 (1.01)	-
Knowledge transfer	3.99 (0.88)	3.80 (0.85)	-

Note: The number for the mean (*M*) of an indicator is not in parentheses, the number for the standard deviation (*SD*) of an indicator is in parentheses

Table 3 summarizes the results of the measurement (Outer) Model. Based on **Table 2**, it is known that all LO, T, and KS indicators have loading factors in the range of 0.681 to 0.927. However, a knowledge-sharing variable with the KS1 indicator (0.61) must be lowered. Since the loading factor is between 0.40 and 0.70, as revealed by Hair et al. (2020), deletion does not increase measure above the reflective threshold. The indicator is maintained. Furthermore, in this study, it is known that the AVE value of the variable ranges from 0.55 to 0.78 (> 0.50), which has implications for achieving discriminant validity. The CR and Cronbach's Alpha (α) values for the variable T are 0.91 and 0.86, KS are 0.78 and 0.59, and LO is 0.85 and 0.74, respectively. Referring to the opinion of Hair et al. (2020), the true reliability usually lies between Cronbach's alpha (representing the lower bound) and the composite reliability (representing the upper bound). This result implies that the variable achieves composite reliability. This study followed the model of Chin (1998) and Hair et al. (2020) for discriminant validity. The discriminant validity test applies the Fornell-Larcker criteria, where all the square

roots of the AVE value for the variables are T (0.78), KS (0.55), and LO (0.66). The complete results of the measurement (outer) model can be seen in **Table 3**.

Structural Model

The next step is to evaluate the structural model. Hair et al. (2020) recommend that research conducted must follow a procedure that includes five stages, namely: (1) collinearity testing, (2) path coefficient test, (3) R-square level test (R^2), (4) testing effect size (f^2), and (5) test the relevant predictions (Q^2).

Collinearity Test

To find out whether collinearity occurs, such is known from the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) coefficient, which has a VIF value lower than 5.00 (Hair et al., 2020). From the calculation of the value of the VIF coefficient, it is known that the value ranges from 1.083–3.004, and all of them are less than 5.00, which means there is collinearity, and all indicators of the tested constructs are valid.

Table 3 Results of measurement (outer) model

Variable	Indicator	Loading	C.R.	α	AVE
Transparency (T)	Disclosure	0.88	0.91	0.86	0.78
	Clarity	0.92			
	Accuracy	0.85			
Knowledge Sharing (KS)	Knowledge Reception	0.61	0.78	0.59	0.55
	Knowledge Store	0.81			
	Knowledge transfer	0.78			
Learning Organization (LO)	Personal skills	0.84	0.85	0.74	0.66
	Learning team	0.87			
	Systems thinking	0.72			

Sources: Authors (2024)

R-Square (R^2)

R-square (R^2) aims to test whether or not each endogenous variable has predictive power in the model. It follows three categories: 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 for substantial, moderate, and weak. From the results of the R^2 test, the KS variable has an R^2 value of 0.091, which means that the transparency variable can explain 9.1 percent of the knowledge-sharing variance with a weak predictive rate. In addition, the R^2 LO value is 0.213, which means that 21.3 percent of the learning organization variance can be explained by transparency and knowledge sharing with a weak predictive rate.

F-Square (F^2)

The effect size test (f^2) aims to determine how much influence the size of the predictor variable has on the structural model (Hair et al., 2020). For test effect size (f^2), the rule of thumb used refers to Hair et al. (2020), where the values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate the effect of small, medium, and large sizes. Our test results show that the f^2 value of the variable T on KS is 0.100, which indicates a small effect size. Furthermore, the effect of T and KS on LO is 0.147, which means it has a negligible effect size.

Table 4 informs the decomposition effect where: (1) the direct effect of the T variable is significant on LO ($\beta_{\text{direct}} = 0.35, p < .00$), (2) the direct effect of KS also on LO ($\beta_{\text{direct}} = 0.20, p < .00$), (3) the direct effect of T is significant on KS ($\beta_{\text{direct}} = 0.302, p < .001$), and (4) the indirect effect of T on LO through KS is also significant ($\beta_{\text{indirect}} = 0.062, p < .01$), so the total effect is also significant ($\beta_{\text{total}} = 0.419, p < .00$).

Discussion

This study aims to examine the effect of transparency and knowledge sharing on learning organization. The results of our study answered all the proposed hypotheses.

First, transparency affects the learning organization. Our study's results strengthen Kurland et al.'s (2010) findings, which state that the visionary leadership factor determines the learning organization (LO). This visionary leadership supports the growth of LO by developing learning infrastructure, learning culture, and conditions for the growth of information transparency to build collaboration, creativity, innovation, and organizational productivity (Habtoor et al., 2020; Nazarova et al., 2021). In line with Garvin (1993), Jamali et al. (2019) and Nazarova et al. (2021), a strategy was found for how to build LO, which focuses on aspects of knowledge transparency in organizations. The results of Garvin (1993) also found that transparency is significant and fundamental to building a trust culture between organizations and individuals, which has implications for the realization of stability and unity in all areas of the organization. Transparency prioritizes the value of "openness and honesty", which impacts the development of an open, trusted, creative leadership system that has an impact on productivity, creativity, performance, and organizational success (Meraku, 2017). The results of this study are very logical because a learning organization is built on a foundation of transparency. In the Indonesian context, transparency is a significant predictor of the growth and development of LO.

Second, the results of our study found that knowledge sharing (KS) affects LO. The results of our study strengthen several previous studies (Asrar-ul-Haq & Anwar, 2016; Liao & Wu, 2010; Rahmatullah & Mahmood, 2013; Wang et al., 2014), which found a significant effect of KS on LO. As an organization that develops and encourages its members to learn (Prasetya, 2017), KS contributes positively to the level of activeness and commitment of organizational members (Allen & Meyer, 1990) and is also related to organizational support for learning and knowledge sharing behavior (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Yang et al., 2020). The results of this study also strengthen the findings of Phang et al. (2017), where with a higher KS culture, the competence, skills, and experience of its members increase significantly and affect the performance of organizational members.

Table 4 Decomposition effect

Independent variable	Dependent variable					
	Knowledge Sharing			Learning Organization		
	β_{direct}	CI	p-value	β_{direct}	CI	p-value
T	0.30	[0.19-0.41]	0.00	0.35	[0.25-0.45]	0.00
KS	-	-	-	0.20	[0.09-0.31]	0.00
R^2	0.09	-	-	0.21	-	-

Note: CI= confidence interval, β_{direct} = direct effect. Effects were calculated via bootstrapping procedure (with bias-corrected standard errors) using 5000 random draws

The results of this study are logical, considering that KS is needed by the organization so that information is distributed evenly so that all members have information that can be used to advance the organization. In the context of educational organizations, KS is essential to minimize gaps in teacher knowledge and competence. Recognizing the weaknesses or shortcomings experienced before and during the Pandemic, it is necessary to strengthen elementary schools as an organization (learning organization). The development of elementary schools as learning organizations is expected to be able to move individuals in the organization to continuously learn and improve their abilities, and to be ready to face all forms of change and manage them well. Consequently, elementary schools must be able to develop a learning culture within the organization (Shamir-Balderman, 2021), which can develop cultural values that support the learning process.

As an effective and functional LO, Elementary Schools are required to have (1) relevant information, (2) supporting infrastructure, (3) technology, (4) relevant policies, and (5) be able to mobilize community participation in education (Sæbø et al., 2008). Furthermore, elementary schools are required to be able to improve (1) public trust and public participation in school administration, (3) enriching the public's insight and knowledge about elementary schools, and (4) minimizing violations of applicable regulations. Therefore, school information's transparency level can be measured by several indicators, namely: (1) availability of document information, (2) clarity and completeness of the information, (3) process openness, and (4) a regulatory framework ensuring transparency (Kristiansen & Pratikno, 2006).

Third, our study found that transparency (T) affects knowledge KS directly and significantly. Our study reinforces previous findings (Iqbal et al., 2015; Mura et al., 2016), which stated the effect of T on KS. The study by Lee and Li (2021) on 449 employees about how the effect of information transparency in the organization shows that information transparency has a positive effect on job satisfaction and the level of employee trust in the organization, more so in an era of crisis, information or communication transparency robustly affects organizational effectiveness. Moreover, transparency is a must in the era of the pandemic crisis (Fairbanks et al., 2007), especially regarding information on health crises (Yang et al., 2015).

Finally, our study found the effect of transparency (T) on learning organization (LO) mediated by KS. The results of our study strengthen the findings (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2018; Iqbal et al., 2015). The rationale is that systemically, KS behavior as

an asset of individual behavior involving sharing one's work-related knowledge and expertise with other members (Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2018) has a significant effect on the effectiveness of the learning organization. The availability of knowledge flow strengthens systems organizational culture and conditions the achievement of organizational goals, increasing human resources (Hameed et al., 2019). Several studies have found three types of knowledge that need to be shared to strengthen the learning system (Alexander et al., 1994; Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2018; Hameed et al., 2019). First, explicit knowledge is an external source of knowledge that is easily articulated, written, stored, accessed, and shared or communicated (Alexander et al., 1994; Appel-Meulenbroek et al., 2018). Data that are processed and readily communicated is an example of explicit knowledge. Second, implicit knowledge is the practical application of explicit knowledge, such as best practices and skills transferred from job to job. Implicit knowledge is also tacit knowledge hidden in the human mind that is difficult to access. Third, tacit knowledge is in the form of accumulated personal experience. Unlike explicit and implicit knowledge, tacit knowledge tends to be challenging to write, articulate, and present in a tangible form (Lee & Li, 2021; Nonaka, 1994).

Conclusion

This study aims to examine the effect of transparency and knowledge-sharing behavior on learning organizations. The results showed that transparency and knowledge sharing had a significant effect on organizational learning. Furthermore, knowledge sharing mediates the effect of transparency on knowledge sharing. This research offers elementary schools and the government the opportunity to carry out transparency and cultivate knowledge sharing in building learning organizations as an effort to increase the teaching competence of robust teachers in various conditions. This study contributes to the model developed by Schnackenberg et al. (2021); Senge et al. (2012) and Yi (2009) by adding new insights into the effect of transparency and KS on learning organizations, especially in elementary schools.

Our study also offers strategies for the Indonesian government primarily in solving problems in the institutional capacity of primary schools. In more detail, to strengthen a learning organization, awareness is needed that LO is a professional necessity. The higher teachers' level of awareness as members, the more motivated they are to be actively involved in organizational activities.

Furthermore, to create a strong learning organization that can respond to every situation, the government needs to facilitate the strengthening of learning organizations in elementary schools by creating an information transparency system and knowledge-sharing behavior. Lastly, increasing information transparency can be done by strengthening clear, complete, accurate, relevant, and accessible information. This program is expected to strengthen awareness and active participation in the realization of the learning organization program that is being rolled out. Equally important, strengthening knowledge-sharing behavior can be done by; (1) encouraging and developing a conducive learning culture; (2) providing space, time, and facilities for knowledge-sharing; and (3) strengthening visionary leadership that positions knowledge and processes as strategic aspects.

The practical implications of these findings for elementary schools and educational policymakers are that the study highlights the importance of transparency in fostering learning organizations in elementary schools. It suggests that transparency fosters a culture of openness, allowing teachers, parents, and students to access information about policies, decisions, and performance. Policymakers should create guidelines for transparency in school management, such as sharing school performance data and budget allocation. Knowledge sharing among teachers is crucial for developing learning organizations, and educational authorities should promote professional learning communities. Schools should also integrate learning organization characteristics like systems thinking, personal mastery, and team learning into their operations. Policymakers should offer frameworks and tools to help schools implement these practices.

Limitations

This research has several limitations. It was conducted quantitatively using a questionnaire as a research instrument and only attempts to collect broad and not in-depth information. The research was also conducted only on 242 elementary school teachers in West Java province, Indonesia. Therefore, this research cannot be generalized to all elementary school teachers throughout Indonesia. However, the results of this research can be used to provide an overview of the impact of transparency and knowledge sharing on the learning organization of elementary school teachers in the West Java province of Indonesia. This research is entirely based on elementary school teachers as research respondents.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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