

Examining the Impact of Transformational Leadership on Knowledge Sharing: The Mediating Effect of Organizational Commitment

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the relationship pattern between transformational leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior, focusing on the role of organizational commitment as a mediating variable. This study was conducted on 269 Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) employees in Sukun District, Malang City. The path analysis method was used to test the proposed hypothesis. The results of the analysis showed that organizational commitment has a significant positive impact on knowledge-sharing behavior among employees. This finding suggests that when employees feel emotionally and rationally attached to the organization, they are more likely to share knowledge. On the other hand, although transformational leadership does not directly affect knowledge-sharing behavior, its influence becomes more pronounced through organizational commitment, which acts as a mediator in the relationship. The results of this study provide valuable insights for MSME actors about the importance of building organizational commitment to encourage a culture of knowledge sharing, as well as the pressure of the need for leaders who can inspire and motivate employees.

Keywords: knowledge sharing; transformational leadership; organizational commitment; SMEs; sem-pls

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INTRODUCTION

The culinary MSME sector is experiencing rapid development, marked by the increasing number of new businesses emerging in various regions. Based on BPS data in 2023, the number of MSMEs in the culinary sector experienced a considerable increase, namely to 16,417 units from 2,845 units in 2022. This reflects the high public interest in MSME business opportunities in the culinary industry and the increasing demand for innovation and a variety of food and beverage products.

Table 1. Number of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in the culinary sector in Malang City 2021-2023

Sub-districts in Malang City	Number of Culinary Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) by District in Malang City (Unit)		
	2023	2022	2021
Kedungkandang	2352	904	768
Sukun	3098	1330	1320
Klojen	2193	778	772
Blimbing	3235	1346	1332
Lowokwaru	5539	2845	2186
KOTA MALANG	16417	7203	6378

Source: Dinas Koperasi, Perindustrian, dan Perdagangan Kota Malang

The development and growth of the culinary MSME sector cannot be separated from the strategic efforts made by the government to provide space and facilities that support the expansion of this sector. The government strives to facilitate access to capital through related agencies such as the Trade and Industry Service and provide ongoing assistance for culinary MSME actors. The main factors driving the rapid development of this sector in Malang City, Indonesia, are government support and facilitative policy interventions. Several studies have shown that the policies implemented—especially those related to access to financing, assistance with halal product certification, and the provision of development platforms—play a crucial role in accelerating the expansion of the number of culinary MSMEs (Anggraeni & Selamat, 2021; Kusananto et al., 2024; Ramadhona et al., 2023; Sitompul et al., 2023). In addition, policies such as providing access to capital, halal certification assistance and a development platform for culinary MSMEs have also significantly increased the number of these businesses, as recorded in previous research (Fitri et al., 2023; Pratikto et al., 2023). The role of universities and knowledge-sharing practices among employees have also been identified as significant contributors to the growth of culinary MSMEs (Alyani et al., 2023; Fitri et al., 2023). Assistance programs for halal product certification and entrepreneurship competitions at the student level demonstrate the recognition and support for this sector (Fitri et al., 2023). No less interesting is the knowledge-sharing behavior that occurs among employees. It should be understood that sharing knowledge is not just about sharing information, expertise, or knowledge with colleagues but has a broader impact, for example,

encouraging employee creativity and innovation (Vandavasi et al., 2020). This process allows organizations to optimize the three main components of intellectual capital, namely human capital, structural capital, and relational capital, which synergistically contribute to the creation of innovation (Allameh, 2018). By utilizing collective knowledge spread through knowledge-sharing practices, organizations can generate solutions to their problems and improve their ability to adapt and maintain competitiveness in today's ever-evolving business environment. Furthermore, effective knowledge-sharing practices within organizations can foster innovation and improve the ability of culinary MSMEs to adapt to the evolving business environment (Reni et al., 2023). However, the literature also highlights some challenges faced by culinary MSMEs, such as the lack of formal knowledge management systems and the need for more decisive leadership to promote knowledge-sharing behavior (Ramadhan & Gunanto, 2021; Soltanian et al., 2016; Utama et al., 2024).

The lack of a system that formally documents and distributes knowledge results in important information being distributed unevenly or only obtained by a few employees. The role of leaders in this case is very much needed, especially in the ability to inspire and motivate employees so that they can encourage knowledge-sharing behavior (Prasetyaningtyas et al., 2020; Sylvyani & Ramli, 2023). This is based on the ability of a leader to create a supportive work environment, effectively reducing knowledge-hiding behavior among employees. Creating a conducive environment makes employees feel more comfortable sharing their knowledge and experiences without fear of negative consequences. A transformational leader must create an environment that supports individuals to share their ideas, experiences, and information. This will encourage open communication and trust, essential for effective knowledge-sharing (Hoang & Le, 2024). This approach enables better knowledge flow within the organization and significantly improves employee performance (Gulshan et al., 2024).

Another problem is that employees who feel less committed to the organization tend to be reluctant to share their knowledge and information. This also triggers high employee turnover rates. This can happen because of limited career advancement, so there is a desire to change jobs and look for better prospects elsewhere (Nguyen et al., 2022). In addition, the level of employee welfare is still low, both in terms of salary and work facilities, which are still considered inadequate, so it indirectly gives rise to feelings of wanting to

look for work elsewhere that is more suitable. High employee turnover rates are often associated with low organizational commitment among employees. When employees feel less emotionally, normatively, or sustainably attached to the organization, the desire to stay in the company decreases.

Organizational commitment among employees is another concern, as low commitment can lead to high turnover rates and hinder the growth and sustainability of culinary MSMEs (Deyganto, 2022; Sari et al., 2023; Widyarti et al., 2021). Organizational commitment can be described as a psychological condition reflecting an individual's relationship with an organization and its implications for the decision to continue membership. Where there are three dimensions of organizational commitment: affective, continuance, and normative (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The low level of employee organizational commitment is often associated with the leadership patterns implemented in the organization. In the context of culinary MSMEs in Sukun District, Malang City, the majority of employees stated that the involvement of leaders was still very lacking. Leaders only run their businesses without providing a deeper understanding of the tasks and responsibilities that employees must carry out. On the one hand, leaders are a little confused about the pattern of approach to employees. Differences in the workforce, for example, the millennial generation and Generation Z, cause different treatment of employees. This relationship becomes less favorable with employees, thus reducing the sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the organization. Furthermore, the commitment dimension relates to the relationship between individuals and organizations and the individual's desire to remain in or leave the organization. However, each dimension is influenced by different factors (Wołowska, 2014). Studies also show that transformational leadership is needed to foster organizational commitment. When organizational culture is built by implementing a transformational leadership model, it can potentially strengthen employee loyalty to the company (Supit et al., 2024). The four dimensions of transformational leadership have also been empirically proven to encourage the creation of organizational commitment (Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration). By promoting shared goals and values, these leaders create an environment where employees feel valued and connected to the organization (Jaya et al., 2024).

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the rapid and unprecedented growth of the culinary MSME sector, particularly in Malang City, which local entrepreneurial initiatives and proactive governmental support have largely driven (Anggraeni & Selamat, 2021; Kusnanto et al., 2024; Ramadhona et al., 2023; Sitompul et al., 2023). While previous research has explored MSME development in general, few have delved into the specific dynamics and factors contributing to the extraordinary expansion of the culinary sector in the post-pandemic era (Nurfitriana, 2023; Santosa et al., 2022). The significant year-on-year increase in the number of culinary MSMEs, as evidenced by the 2023 data from BPS and local government sources, underscores a pivotal moment for understanding the interplay between market demand, innovation in food products, and policy interventions. This study also highlights how targeted government policies, such as facilitating access to finance and providing development platforms, have contributed to the sector's rapid expansion. Through a case study of Malang City, this research offers novel insights into the scalability and sustainability of culinary MSMEs in a growing urban economy.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach, with a type of causal research, because it identifies the causal relationship between the variables studied. This study focuses on MSME employees in the culinary sector in Sukun District, Malang City. Due to the large number of employees and the fact that it is difficult to know, a generalization is made on the number of employees. Based on the number of culinary MSME units in Sukun District, Malang City, 2023, there are 3,098 MSME units. Based on BPS (2013), the classification of MSMEs in terms of the number of employees, small businesses have 5-19 employees. Therefore, the number of employees used as the population is 3,098 MSME units multiplied by five employees, which is 15,490 people. To get the number of samples to be studied, the researcher used the Raosoft sample size calculator tool; the result was 266 respondents.

Sample size calculator

What margin of error can you accept? %
5% is a common choice

What confidence level do you need? %
Typical choices are 90%, 95%, or 99%

What is the population size?
If you don't know, use 20000

What is the response distribution? %
Leave this as 50%

Your recommended sample size is **375**

Online surveys with Vovici have completion rates of 66%!

With a sample size of	100	200	300	With a confidence level of	90	95	99
Your margin of error would be	9.77%	6.88%	5.60%	Your sample size would need to be	266	375	637

Save effort, save time. Conduct your survey online with Vovici.

Figure 1. Raosoft application to determine the number of research samples

This study used a non-probability sampling technique with a purposive sampling approach. The criteria for purposive sampling include MSMEs with a business license, MSMEs with a minimum of 5 employees, and employees who have worked for at least 1 year.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study focused on 269 culinary MSME employees in the Sukun sub-district.

Table 2. Sample Characteristics and Percentage

Characteristics	N	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	151	56,13%
Female	118	43,87%
age		
17 - 25 years old	45	16,73%
26 - 30 years old	68	25,28%
31 - 35 years old	89	33,08%
36 - 40 years old	52	19,33%
>40 years old	15	5,58%
Education		
Junior High School	0	0%
Senior High School	237	88,10%
Bachelor Degree	32	11,9%

(source: primary data)

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) consists of two types of models, namely measurement models (outer models) and structural models (inner models). The measurement model functions to describe how latent variables are formed by their

indicators. Furthermore, analysis can be carried out to evaluate the influence of exogenous latent variables on endogenous latent variables. In this study, one exogenous variable, namely transformational leadership, consists of four indicators; one endogenous variable, namely knowledge sharing with two indicators; and one mediating variable, namely organizational commitment, measured using three indicators.

Outer model analysis

The measurement model (outer model) analyzes the relationship between latent variables and manifest variables or indicators. This test includes convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability. The measurement model in this study is as follows.

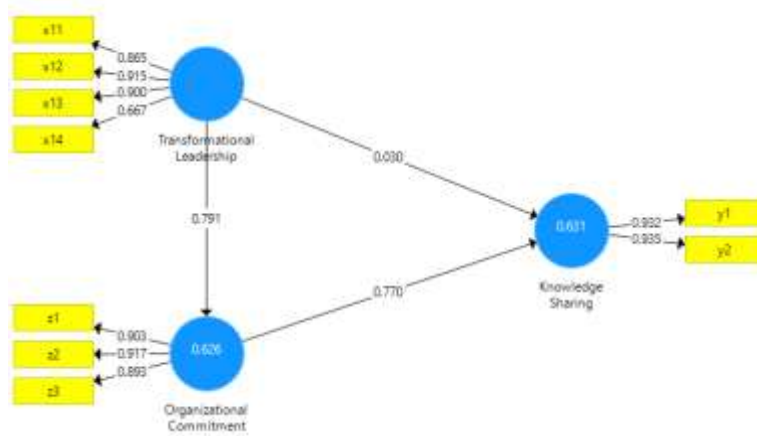


Figure 2. Model 1 SEM PLS Knowledge sharing

Based on this model, an indicator whose value is less than 0.7, X14, cannot be used, so it must be discarded.

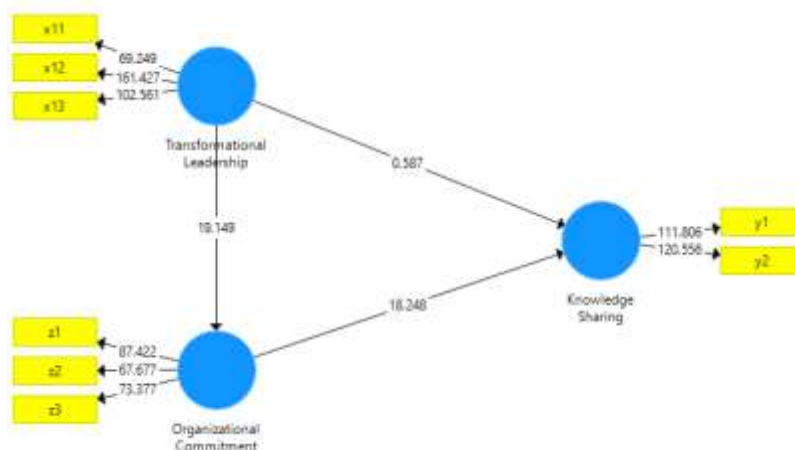


Figure 3. Model 1 SEM PLS Knowledge sharing

Based on the results of the second test, it can be seen that all indicators show values > 0.7, so these indicators can be used as a measurement model.

Reflective Measurement Model Evaluation

Table 3. Reflective Measurement Model Evaluation

	Indicator	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Transformational Leadership	X11	0,911	0,928	0,935	0,954	0,874
	X12	0,959				
	X13	0,933				
	X14	0,911				
Organizational Commitment	Z1	0,904	0,889	0,889	0,931	0,818
	Z2	0,916				
	Z3	0,894				
Knowledge Sharing	Y1	0,932	0,853	0,853	0,932	0,872
	Y2	0,935				

Source: processed data, (2024)

1. Validity testing is carried out through convergent validity and discriminant validity. The loading value of all indicators is > 0.708 , and the discriminant validity figure for all latent variables is also > 0.708 . Thus, it can be concluded that all indicators and latent variables are valid.
2. Reliability testing looks at Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values, where all latent variables show values > 0.708 . Therefore, it can be concluded that all latent variables are reliable.
3. Convergent validity testing is also carried out by paying attention to the average variance extracted (AVE) value, where all latent variables show values > 0.50 . Thus, it can be concluded that all latent variables are valid.

Formative Measurement Models

Evaluation of the structure of the inner model is carried out in two stages, namely, the coefficient (R^2) determination and the Goodness of Fit (GoF) assessment.

Coefficient of Determination

Based on the results of the tests carried out, the *R square value was obtained* as follows:

Table 4. Coefficient of determination

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Organizational Commitment	0,469	0,467
Knowledge Sharing	0,631	0,628

Source: processed data, (2024)

Based on the R Square value obtained from the regression analysis, it can be concluded that the transformational leadership variable influences 46.9%. In other words, 46.9% of the variation in the level of organizational commitment is the transformational leadership variable, while other factors outside the research model influence the rest. Furthermore, the R Square value for the knowledge-sharing variable is 63.1%. This shows that combining transformational leadership and organizational commitment contributes 63.1% to knowledge sharing. Thus, the variation in knowledge sharing that the two variables can explain is 63.1%, while the rest is explained by other variables not analyzed in this study.

Assessment of Goodness of Fit (Gof)

The Goodness of Fit (Gof) assessment can be seen from the NFI score. The NFI value > 0.662 is declared fit and suitable for testing the research hypothesis. Based on the results of the assessment obtained:

Table 5. Goodness of fit (GoF)

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,052	0,052
d_ ULS	0,099	0,099
d_ G	0,147	0,147
Chi-Square	252,016	252,016
NFI	0,862	0,862

Source: processed data, (2024)

Based on the table, the NFI value is 0.862. This shows that the model in this study has a high goodness of fit and is feasible to use to test the model hypothesis.

Hypothesis test

Hypothesis testing in this study was carried out by reviewing the *T-statistic values* and *P-values*. The hypothesis can be accepted if it fulfills *the T-Statistic* > 1.96 and *P-Values* < 0.05 . Based on the test results, the following results were obtained:

Table 6. Path Coefficient (direct effect)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ((O/STDEV))	P Values
Organizational Commitment -> Knowledge Sharing	0,774	0,773	0,042	18,248	0,000

Transformational Leadership_ -> Knowledge Sharing	0,029	0,030	0,049	0,587	0,557
Transformational Leadership_ -> Organizational Commitment	0,685	0,685	0,036	19,149	0,000

Source: processed data, (2024)

The table explains three hypotheses that have a direct influence on the model. Based on the table, there are two accepted hypotheses, namely H2, with a T-statistic value of 18.248 and a P-value of 0.000. H3 with a T-statistic value of 19.149 and a P-value of 0.000. While one hypothesis is not accepted, namely H1 with a T-statistic value <1.96 and P-Value > 0.05. It can be concluded that there is an influence between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing, as well as between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. At the same time, transformational leadership does not affect knowledge sharing.

Table 7. Path Coefficient (indirect effect)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Organizational Commitment -> Knowledge Sharing					
Transformational Leadership_ -> Knowledge Sharing	0,531	0,529	0,038	13,844	0,000
Transformational Leadership_ -> Organizational Commitment					

Source: processed data, (2024)

The table shows that H4 is accepted with a T-statistic value of 13.844 and a P-value of 0.000. It can be concluded that organizational commitment can mediate the relationship between transformational leadership and knowledge sharing.

Discussion

Based on the test results, it can be concluded that the role of transformational leadership has a significant impact on organizational commitment, especially in the culinary MSME sector. Transformational leadership, which is characterized by the leader's ability to motivate, inspire, and influence employees to achieve common goals,

is a very important factor in strengthening commitment to the organization (Gulluce et al., 2016; Ibrahim et al., 2023; Jiatong et al., 2022). One of the main aspects of transformational leadership is the leader's ability to be a good role model for his subordinates. Leaders who demonstrate integrity, honesty, and loyalty to organizational values can create a strong sense of respect and loyalty among employees (Bass, 1985b). In the context of culinary MSMEs, leaders who have integrity will find it easier to build trust with employees, which in turn can increase their motivation and commitment to the organization (Purwanggono, 2024). In the culinary MSME sector, transformational leadership is crucial in building an innovative and adaptive work environment. Leaders who can give employees the freedom to be creative in creating new products or developing unique culinary business concepts can encourage sustainable innovation. In addition, by providing space for employees to take the initiative and offer fresh ideas, transformational leaders can create a more dynamic and productive atmosphere, which is very important for the competitiveness of culinary MSMEs in an increasingly competitive market.

In the culinary industry, where consumer trends and preferences often change rapidly, the ability of leaders to motivate and inspire teams to continue to innovate is key to maintaining business relevance and sustainability. Good leadership in this sector can also help employees face operational challenges, such as managing product quality and customer service, which are crucial in maintaining consumer loyalty. Furthermore, transformational leadership also plays a role in building harmonious relationships with customers and other stakeholders, which are very important in developing culinary MSMEs. Leaders who are committed to organizational values, provide good examples in terms of business ethics, and support employee development will be better able to create positive customer experiences and increase consumer loyalty. Thus, it can be said that in the culinary MSME sector, transformational leadership is the primary driver that not only strengthens internal commitment but also expands networks and increases competitiveness in the market.

In addition, transformational leaders also encourage employees to develop more creative and innovative behavior (Susanti & Ardi, 2022; Tan et al., 2023). Leaders who provide employees the freedom to carry out their duties and responsibilities while offering space for creativity and generating new ideas foster a more dynamic and productive work

environment. This approach becomes particularly critical in culinary MSMEs, as the sector thrives on innovation in product offerings, service delivery, and customer experience. By embracing creative leadership, culinary business owners can inspire employees to experiment with new recipes, improve service models, and introduce unique dining experiences that set their business apart in a highly competitive market.

Digital technology plays a pivotal role in supporting innovation in the workplace. Integrating digital tools in culinary MSMEs can significantly enhance operational efficiency, streamline inventory management, facilitate communication, and enable real-time team collaboration. In particular, millennial and Gen Z employees, who are more adept at utilizing digital platforms, benefit from these technologies. Digital platforms for ordering, social media for marketing, and data analytics for customer preferences are essential tools for increasing the efficiency and appeal of culinary businesses. These tools improve workflow and provide insights that help culinary entrepreneurs innovate their offerings, create personalized customer experiences, and engage with a broader audience. This shift toward digitalization is increasingly relevant, given the growing interconnectivity of the workplace and its reliance on digital solutions.

This trend becomes even more pronounced in the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) era. As recent research suggests, organizations in the culinary MSME sector must leverage digital tools to innovate services, enhance work processes, and improve service quality to meet customer demands in an ever-evolving market (Asri & Rahmat, 2022). By fostering a culture of innovation supported by digital technology, culinary MSMEs can navigate challenges, adapt to changes in consumer behavior, and ultimately enhance their competitiveness in the industry.

This study further highlights the significant role of organizational commitment in encouraging knowledge-sharing behavior within the organization. When employees feel a strong sense of belonging and commitment to the organization, they are likelier to share their experiences, insights, and information with their colleagues, which is especially crucial in culinary MSMEs (Hoa et al., 2020). In culinary MSMEs, where creativity, innovation, and team collaboration are essential for success, fostering an open communication and knowledge-sharing environment is key to maintaining a competitive edge. Employees who are emotionally and professionally invested in their workplace are more inclined to contribute their ideas and expertise, whether improving kitchen

processes, introducing new recipes, or enhancing customer service strategies. This behavior is also closely tied to creating a conducive organizational culture that encourages employees to feel comfortable and valued. A positive work environment, where employees are treated with respect and feel supported by leadership, can significantly enhance their willingness to share knowledge (Grubić-Nešić et al., 2015). In the culinary MSME sector, this could mean a strong focus on teamwork, where chefs, kitchen staff, and service personnel collaborate closely, exchanging tips, learning from each other, and sharing innovative ideas to improve operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

When examined through the lens of organizational commitment, affective organizational commitment stands out, as it reflects a strong desire to be part of the organization. Employees who are emotionally attached to their culinary MSMEs are more likely to stay with the company and engage in collaborative behaviors such as knowledge-sharing (Masrurroh et al., 2021). In the culinary sector, this could include sharing culinary techniques, customer feedback, or new trends that could help the business grow. The stronger the emotional bond between employees and the organization, the greater their willingness to contribute to the collective success of the business, whether by helping others learn or by collaborating on the development of new dishes or services. Moreover, employees' emotional ties to the organization further strengthen this tendency. In the culinary MSME sector, where team dynamics and continuous innovation are vital, employees who feel emotionally connected to the business are more likely to collaborate with colleagues, offer advice, and share insights. This cooperative behavior not only enhances the workplace culture but also contributes to the business's overall success by improving knowledge-sharing practices that lead to better decision-making, innovation, and customer satisfaction (Ardiansyah et al., 2019).

The results also revealed that although the direct influence between transformational leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior was not proven, the role of transformational leadership, coupled with organizational commitment, remains critically important. This finding emphasizes that strong organizational commitment, which encompasses professional dedication and emotional attachment between leaders and employees, is crucial in promoting a collaborative and knowledge-sharing culture. In Indonesian culinary MSMEs, organizational commitment is particularly significant because of the relational dynamics that characterize small businesses in this sector.

Leaders who can demonstrate empathy, provide emotional support, and foster a sense of unity within their teams are likely to cultivate stronger bonds between employees and the organization (Farahani et al., 2011). For instance, in culinary MSMEs, where employees may often take on multiple roles, emotional connections with the leadership can foster a sense of loyalty and shared purpose, driving them to contribute more effectively to the organization's success.

Moreover, transformational leadership in the culinary MSME sector is not limited to encouraging the technical and operational aspects of the business. Still, it extends to building a culture of collaboration and mutual respect. Leaders who show emotional intelligence and invest in developing meaningful relationships with their staff can motivate employees to go beyond their routine tasks and contribute knowledge that enhances creativity and innovation in menu development, service improvement, and customer experience. This is especially important in the Indonesian culinary sector, where local businesses are often embedded within tight-knit communities, and team dynamics directly influence the quality and success of the business. Supporting this view, previous studies confirm that employee perceptions of transformational leadership are instrumental in influencing their commitment to the organization and encouraging knowledge-sharing behavior (Li-bin & Yuan-Cheng, 2023; Sudibjo, 2021). In the context of culinary MSMEs, this means that when employees feel that their leaders genuinely care about their well-being and professional growth, they are more likely to share insights that improve business practices, such as sharing customer feedback, offering suggestions for menu diversification, or contributing to improvements in operational efficiency.

Furthermore, organizational commitment has been shown to act as a key mediator in driving knowledge-sharing behavior and fostering a collaborative culture among employees (Al-Jabri, 2020; Wahyudi et al., 2020). This is particularly critical in the culinary MSME sector, as collaboration and knowledge-sharing are vital for continuous innovation. Employees committed to the organization are more inclined to share their culinary expertise, ideas for improving service delivery, and solutions for operational challenges. This creates a work culture where innovation and creativity thrive—key elements in the highly competitive and rapidly changing culinary market. Thus, the presence of organizational commitment as a mediating variable in this study further emphasizes its significant role in enhancing knowledge-sharing behavior and fostering a

collaborative, innovative, and committed workforce in the Indonesian culinary MSME sector.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the mediating role of organizational commitment on the relationship between transformational leadership and knowledge-sharing behavior. In the culinary MSME sector in Sukun District, Malang City, MSME employees often face the problem of the lack of role of their business leaders. On the other hand, generational differences in employees usually become an obstacle to the role of transformational leadership felt by employees. Another problem is the lack of organizational commitment among employees, which leads to high employee turnover. Transformational leadership is expected to increase employee organizational commitment, which also encourages knowledge-sharing behavior among employees. This study was conducted on 269 culinary MSME employees in Sukun District, Malang City. By using path analysis, this study produced several findings, including transformational leadership does not have a significant effect on knowledge sharing; there is an influence between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing, transformational leadership has a positive and significant impact on organizational commitment, and organizational commitment is positive and significant able to mediate the influence of transformational leadership on knowledge sharing.

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