

THE ROLE OF FEELING TRUSTED ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING BEHAVIOR IN POST-ACQUISITION ENTERPRISES: A PILOT STUDY

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Abstract

The acquisition is one of several company strategies to grow and develop. However, it has consequences on changes in the structure of the company and employees. The cultural collision and downsizing issues as consequences between two or more organizations involved in the acquisition process tend to give negative responses within the work environment. Whereas, to succeed in the acquisition process needed a positive environment that has an impact on good employee engagement further increasing knowledge sharing behavior among employees. Furthermore, feeling trusted among employees plays an important role because it leads feeling of justice, encouragement, and determines to what extent the employee has behaved in sharing knowledge. Hence, the aim of the present pilot study determines the validity, suitability, and reliability of a research instrument in preparation for a large scales study to examine the role of feeling trusted on employee engagement and knowledge sharing behavior in post-acquisition enterprises.

Keywords: *feeling trusted; employee engagement; knowledge sharing behavior; post-acquisitions*

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Introduction

Acquisitions are one of the company strategies to grow and develop instantly without making fundamental changes within the organization (Abdullah, Poespowidjojo, & Himawan, 2018). Unfortunately, the acquisition process hurts employees whereas resulting in reduced company profits, because the acquisition process can lead to the cultural collision and downsizing policy in many organizations, (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006).

Cultural collision, as a manifestation of the management failure towards cultural synergy between two or more companies involved acquisition process, must be a concern from the company (Altendorf, 1987). The cultural collision between two or more company cultures causes changes in work patterns and downsizing policy associated with a negative impact on engagement (Sperduto, 2007), indeed to be a

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success in acquisition operations required a good commitment and a high level of involvement from the employee (Huang, Ma, & Meng, 2018). Engagement can increase the enthusiasm and dedication of individuals towards the organization so that each individual does not hesitate to develop ideas based on expertise (Kim & Park, 2017). The acquisition is considered as an event to develop ideas obtained from organizations involved (Björkman, Stahl, & Vaara, 2007).

Several studies found knowledge-sharing behavior as an important instrument in the acquisition process because knowledge-sharing behavior processes tacit knowledge produces creativity and develops new ideas for the company (Ahmmed & Glaister, 2011) furthermore knowledge-sharing behavior delivers mutual learning among employees (Huber, 1991). Hence, the competitive advantage from the acquisition process can be obtained from implementing the knowledge sharing behavior effectively (Teng & Song, 2011) therefore those can be the basis on the extent of success in acquisition synergy (Capron, Dussauge, & Mitchell, 1998). Moreover, knowledge-sharing behavior can also provide the solution towards employee problems, if the problems are delivered, thus creating a mutually supportive work environment (Haspeslagh & Jemison, 1991). Furthermore, feeling trusted can provide important information in the work environment (Ilies, Johnson, Judge, & Keeney, 2011) where it facilitates sharing behavior among employees so that it can become an instrument to solve problems (Zhu, Wang, Yu, Müller, & Sun, 2019).

Past research has shown that employee engagement has an exhaustive impact on several consequences such as job burnout, task performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, intention to quit, and also health and well-being (Akingbola & van den Berg, 2019). Although few studies have been established to investigate the consequences of employee engagement, however, the research has explored the mechanism through which employee engagement affects knowledge sharing behavior with the role of feeling trusted remains scarce. This paper investigates the relationship between employee engagement and knowledge sharing behavior and attempts to explain the role of feeling trusted in post-acquisition enterprises.

A. Literature Review

1. Feeling trusted

The sense of trust is the perception of an individual, or a trustee, that other parties, or trustees, are willingly confident to share risks with the trustee (Ilies et al., 2011). In this regard, Confucian beliefs in Chinese culture emphasize three cultural characteristics that arise from the sense of trust, namely the importance of harmony, loyalty, and reciprocity (Wei, Xu, & Wu, 2020). This is the organization is due to the feeling of being seen as leading to feelings of justice, the encouragement of superiors, and the behavior of sharing knowledge or sharing knowledge (Lau, Liu, & Fu, 2007).

However, the superior's trust will not affect subordinates unless the subordinates perceive the superior's sense of trust (Lau et al., 2007), furthermore,

those can be an event to build positive relationships with employees to foster mutual trust between the two. Therefore, employee interpretations of the implementation of human resource practices are the foundation for building trust in the workplace (Wei et al., 2020). The feeling of confidence is also an important instrument to maintain improved performance. Feelings of trust also have a positive impact on organizational behavior (Ilies et al., 2011) and feelings of responsibility for their respective jobs (Salamon & Robinson, 2008).

2. Knowledge sharing behavior

Knowledge or often called a knowledge-based view is the most important company resource among other resources owned by the company (Agarwal & Marouf, 2017). Because knowledge is considered important in the organization, the concept of knowledge management was born, which is the process of obtaining, sharing, developing, and using knowledge efficiently (Navimipour & Charband, 2016). One of the most vital knowledge management activities is knowledge sharing (Wang, Sharma, & Cao, 2016).

Knowledge sharing facilitates the exchange and application of information, practices, unusual understandings, insights, and experiences of individuals within the organization which are company assets so that it is useful for developing organizational productivity and innovation capabilities so that the added value of the organization or company can be maintained (Wang et al., 2016). Knowledge sharing behavior comes from the individual level but can play a role at the group, department, or organization level (Yi, 2009). Individual behavior within the company is influenced by different beliefs, attitudes, and values, and cultures within the organization. Therefore, influencing employee trust can lead to changes in values, attitudes, and knowledge-sharing behavior (Navimipour & Charband, 2016).

Knowledge management, with one of its elements, is knowledge sharing behavior, functions to facilitate learning for employees that are developed from the process of converting knowledge obtained through the process of externalization, internalization, and socialization. Therefore, learning in employees is more likely to be obtained when employees interact with each other and employees tend to accept forms of change (Navimipour & Charband, 2016).

3. Employee engagement

Employee engagement is defined as the voluntary attachment of organizational members to their respective job roles in the organization or company so that engagement means being present psychologically when playing a role in the organization (Aybas & Acar, 2017). Therefore, organizational members can express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during their job roles (Aklamanu, Degbey, & Tarba, 2016).

(Altendorf, 1987) has provided a comprehensive theoretical model of employee engagement, he has not yet compiled a detailed operational definition and dimensions of the construct. To accommodate these shortcomings (Schaufeli,

[Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002](#)) built three dimensions regarding employee engagement, including 1) Vigor, which is characterized by abundant energy and good mental resilience, 2) Dedication is more to having a strong sense of involvement in work, also having a sense of enthusiasm, pride, and challenge, lastly 3) Absorption is more about feeling full concentration on work and having fun doing the job.

Method

To have a more complete understanding of the business after an acquisition as well as a comprehensive knowledge of the variables of knowledge sharing behavior, employees, and feeling trusted, an in-depth study of the literature and a review of information on news channels were carried out. In addition to obtaining information from secondary data, a direct approach was carried out with several employees who had experienced the acquisition process in their respective companies. The information obtained relates more to the employee perception of knowledge sharing behavior between employees, in particular among employees of former companies who have acquired and acquired.

A. Research Instruments

The instrument used to obtain and collect data in this study was the online distribution of questionnaires using the Google Form support which contained a list of questions regarding individual perceptions related to the variables in this study. All surveys including items and instructions are displayed in Indonesian which must be back-translated first because the indicators used to come from English. The closed-ended questions in this study were formulated using the Likert scale, which is a scale deliberately designed to measure the extent to which the respondent agrees with the submitted statement ([Sekaran & Bougie, 2016](#)). Given that many recent studies, especially in the field of psychology, use the Likert scale as a measurement instrument, it is not surprising that more attention is being paid to the research scale. Most effective in use ([Preston & Colman, 2000](#)) and also found that from a respondent's perspective, the 7 (seven) measurement scale is one of the respondents' favorites in addition to their research results which indicate that the 7 (seven) and 10 (ten) scales are the most popular.

B. Measures

Feeling trusted. Feeling trusted is a belief that can be divided into two factors: the trust or confidence of the trustee in the decisions and actions to be taken by the trustee and the disclosure of information deemed sensitive ([Gillespie, 2003](#)). Furthermore, the scale with a ten-item scale developed by ([Gillespie, 2003](#)) was adopted in this study.

Knowledge sharing behavior. Knowledge sharing behavior is one of the crucial tools of knowledge management that works to facilitate learning among employees, developed from the process of converting acquired knowledge ([Navimipour & Charband, 2016](#)). Several studies on knowledge-sharing behavior are at the level of

application in organizations (Agarwal & Marouf, 2017) but only a few numbers are interested to conduct knowledge-sharing behavior studies from the perspective of employee perceptions. This study, therefore, uses a measure developed by (Hsu, Ju, Yen, & Chang, 2007) using a five-scale question related to employee perceptions of knowledge sharing behavior.

Employee engagement. Although Kahn W., (1990) provided a complete theoretical model of employee engagement, it has not yet compiled a detailed operational definition and dimensions of the concept (Schaufeli et al., 2002). To fill these gaps, (Schaufeli et al., 2002) constructed three dimensions regarding employee engagement, namely: 1) vigor, characterized by abundant energy and good resilience mental, 2) dedication, plus having a strong sense of involvement in the work, also having a sense of enthusiasm, pride and challenges, 3) Absorption, more feeling fully focused on the work and have fun doing the job. Therefore, this study uses three-question scales developed by (Schaufeli et al., 2002) whereas each scale represents every three dimensions of employee engagement.

C. Pilot Study

Research in the form of a pilot study is useful for testing the suitability, reliability, and accuracy of research instruments with a small sample before researching a larger scale (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2011). To test our hypotheses about employee engagement and knowledge sharing behavior, this study collected data from experienced employees at financial services companies that experienced acquisition operations during 2019 in Indonesia. The determination of the population from this study is based on Rahadian, (2019) where throughout 2019 many public companies in Indonesia experienced acquisition operations, while the companies that dominate with the biggest value are companies operating in the financial services.

Results and Discussion

1. Data Analysis and Results

Furthermore, the collected data operated in several analytical tests including descriptive statistics, frequency distribution, and reliability testing. After that, the normality test, linearity, and homoscedasticity tests are useful for fulfilling assumptions in multivariate analysis (Ariani, Firdaus, & Hairudinor, 2019). To accommodate thus various tests, this study uses SPSS version 21 for Windows.

2. Profiles of Respondent

The gender comparison in the present pilot study is quite balanced, among others, the percentage of a male is 46.2% compared to that of a female as much as 53.8%, while all respondents are Indonesian. Respondents who are between the age range of 26 to 35 years dominate with a percentage of 67.3%, while the next is in the age range of 36 - 45 years with a percentage of 25%.

Table 1
Demographic profile of respondents

Items	Frequency (N = 52)	Percentage (%)
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Items	Frequency (N = 52)	Percentage (%)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	24	46.2
Female	28	53.8
<i>Age</i>		
Less than 25 years	2	3.9
26 – 35 years	35	67.3
36 – 45 years	13	25
46 years above	2	3.8
<i>Position</i>		
Below Manager	42	80.8
Manager and upper level	10	19.2
<i>Employee Status</i>		
Permanent	44	84.6
Contract	8	15.4

Source: author's own

3. Descriptive Statistics

Some respondents have a fairly high tendency from all the indicators involved in this study which is indicated by the majority of the average values are above the midpoint (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The indicator with the lowest average value is “leading trust in telling personal problems” with a mean score of 3.00. Meanwhile, the majority of respondents are permanent employees (84.6%) have the highest tendency towards the indicator "trust leader in employee abilities" with a mean score of 6.05.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation
Vigor	5.57	1.21
Dedication	5.73	1.03
Absorption	5.71	1.03
Beliefs share values	5.34	1.46
Leader trust in employee ability	6.05	1.01
Leader trust to delegating important work	5.8	1.03
Leader trust to present the leader work	4.44	1.67
Leader trust in difficult situations	4.81	1.61
Leader trust in sharing feelings	3.58	1.58
Leader trust in telling personal problems	3	1.46
Leader trust in telling leader work	4.31	1.54
Leader trust in telling job problems	4.9	1.45
Leader trust to listening subordinate problems	5.48	1.07
Feeling trusted by a leader	5.83	1
The intensity of knowledge sharing activities	5.32	1.26
Spend time in knowledge sharing activities	4.82	1.26
Sharing knowledge behavior with colleagues	5.15	1.19
Continuously discussion on sophisticated issues	5.57	0.89
Discussion in various topics	5.36	1.05

Source: author's own

a. Reliability Test

The most popular test used to measure consistency reliability between items is Cronbach's Alpha coefficient alpha (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Therefore, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test is used to measure the internal consistency of the instruments used from the variables of this study which are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Cronbach's coefficient alpha of the variables

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Employee Engagement	3	0.936
Feeling Trusted	11	0.739
Knowledge Sharing Behavior	5	0.834

Source: author's own

As shown in table 3, Cronbach's Alpha test shows the lowest value on the feeling trusted variable with a value of 0.739, further the highest is the employee engagement variable with a value of 0.936. This finding is consistent with the argument of (Ariani et al., 2019) whereas the coefficient value of 0.60 is enough while the value of the coefficient of 0.70 and above shows that the instrument has a high-reliability value whilst a lower coefficient is also acceptable (Ibrahim, Ghani, & Embat, 2013).

b. Normality Test

In operating a multivariate analysis, it is necessary to fulfill certain assumptions to perform a parametric test. One of the tools for performing the parametric test is the normality test which is needed to check the normality of the data collected. Skewness and Kurtosis calculations are often used to assess the normality of data (Muzaffar, 2016). Normally distributed data have skewness and kurtosis values close to zero, whereas, for psychometric purposes, skewness and kurtosis values in the range -2 to 2 are accepted (George, 2011).

Table 4
Skewness and Kurtosis

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Employee Engagement	-1.68174	-0.33126
Feeling Trusted	-0.03065	-1.07874
Knowledge Sharing Behavior	1.07118	-0.94125

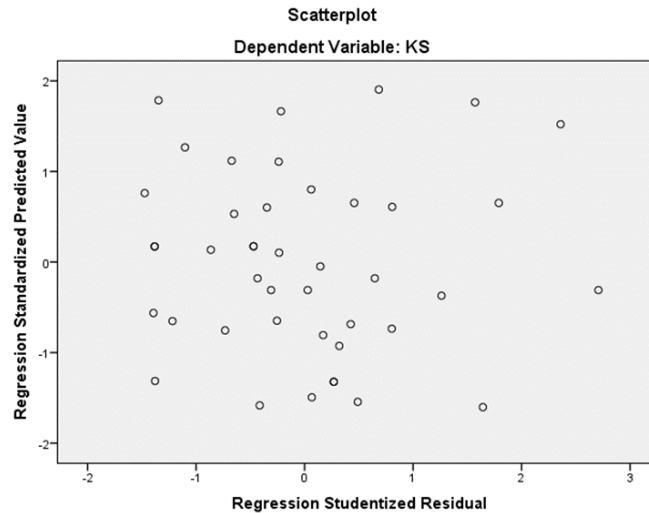
Source: author's own

c. Linearity and Homoscedasticity Tests

Figure 1 shows that there is no relationship between the residual value and the predicted value of the dependent variable. This shows that there is linearity between the residual value and the predicted value. Furthermore, the residual

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variance is almost the same or the same for all the predicted values of the dependent variable that support homoscedasticity. Thus, the homoscedasticity assumption in this study has been fulfilled.



Initially, the survey instrument tested in this pilot study was reliable and valid based on a small sample size of 52 respondents. The analysis of the data shows that the Cronbach alpha value shows a good measure of reliability with all variables exceeding the benchmark 0.6. The normality test using skewness and kurtosis calculations has shown that the data is in the range of values -2 to 2 or it can be called normally distributed. Furthermore, the homoscedasticity and linearity test showed a normal scatter plot pattern. Respondent profiles in the descriptive analysis have been analyzed. The use of this research tool is to prepare research on a larger scale in determining the role of feeling trust in the relationship between employee engagement and knowledge behavior in companies that have undergone acquisition operations.

Conclusion

This pilot study revealed that the survey instruments tested was reliable and valid using small sample size of 52 respondents. The results of analysis showed that Cronbach's alpha values for each variable indicated good measurement of reliability with all variables exceeded the benchmark that valued 0.6. Normality test using skewness and kurtosis analysis indicated that the data was normal. Last but not least, the scatterplot provided evidence that the linearity and homoscedasticity in multivariate analysis has approved.

The uses of this research tools explanation to determining the suitability, reliability, and accuracy of research instruments before conducting the full scale study using larger sample size throughout employees of financial services companies in Indonesia. This pilot study is expected to facilitate further full research easier regarding the variables that tested through this study.

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