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Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles in Knowledge Management: Insights from Knowledge-Intensive Organizations

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the comparative effectiveness of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership styles in fostering knowledge-sharing behaviors and optimizing knowledge management (KM) in knowledge-intensive organizations (KIOs). Given the critical role of knowledge as an organizational asset, leadership is a key determinant in shaping KM effectiveness. Through a qualitative comparative approach, this research synthesizes existing literature to assess how different leadership styles influence KM practices, knowledge-sharing culture, and organizational competitiveness. Findings indicate that transformational leadership is the most effective in fostering an innovation-driven and collaborative knowledge-sharing environment. By emphasizing vision-setting, motivation, and trust-building, transformational leaders encourage knowledge exchange and drive organizational adaptability. Transactional leadership, while ensuring structured and compliance-driven KM practices, is less adaptable to dynamic knowledge environments. Servant leadership, which prioritizes psychological safety and trust-based knowledge-sharing, is effective in enhancing voluntary knowledge-sharing behaviors but may lack strategic direction in formalized KM settings. The study concludes that no single leadership style is universally superior for KM. Instead, a hybrid leadership approach, integrating transformational, transactional, and servant leadership elements, offers the most balanced strategy for fostering knowledge-sharing cultures. Practical recommendations include context-specific leadership training, overcoming KM barriers, and aligning leadership strategies with organizational knowledge goals. Future research should explore empirical case studies, hybrid leadership models, and the impact of digital KM transformations This research contributes to the growing discourse on leadership and KM, offering actionable insights for organizations seeking to enhance their knowledge assets, drive innovation, and sustain competitive advantage in knowledge-intensive industries.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge Management, Leadership Styles, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Servant Leadership

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and competitive business environment, knowledge is recognized as a key organizational asset that drives innovation, efficiency, and competitive advantage (Lauring & Selmer, 2012; Ritala et al., 2015). Knowledge-intensive organizations (KIOs), such as research institutions, technology firms, and consultancy agencies, rely heavily on effective knowledge management (KM) practices to sustain growth and maintain industry leadership (Liu et al., 2020; Lei et al., 2021). However, despite the acknowledged importance of KM, organizations often struggle to foster a culture where knowledge sharing is systematic and ingrained in everyday operations (Jolaee et al., 2014; Muhammed & Zaim, 2020). Leadership has been identified as a pivotal factor influencing KM effectiveness, with different leadership styles yielding varying outcomes in knowledge-sharing behaviors and organizational performance (Iqbal et al., 2015; Łukowski, 2017).

Transformational leadership, characterized by vision-setting, motivation, and trust-building, has been extensively linked to fostering a culture of collaboration and innovation in KM (Clinebell et al., 2013; Ng, 2020). Transformational leaders create an environment where employees feel empowered and valued, leading to enhanced organizational learning and competitive positioning (Mohiuddin, 2017; Son et al., 2020). On the other hand, transactional leadership, which emphasizes structure, performance metrics, and task execution, has been found effective in enforcing KM policies but is often criticized for its limited role in fostering innovation (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Servant leadership, which prioritizes the needs of employees and encourages trust-based knowledge sharing, has been identified as a powerful tool for developing a participatory culture (Pratama et al., 2021). However, empirical research remains limited on how these leadership styles compare in their effectiveness within KIOs, necessitating a comprehensive comparative analysis (Esfahani et al., 2021; Mustika et al., 2020).

One of the primary challenges in KM is overcoming barriers such as lack of trust, resistance to collaboration, and organizational silos (Rahab & Wahyuni, 2013; Vandavasi et al., 2020). Research suggests that leadership plays a crucial role in mitigating these challenges by shaping an organizational culture conducive to knowledge sharing (Widodo et al., 2022). However, while transformational leadership has been widely studied in the context of KM, there is limited comparative research evaluating how it performs relative to other leadership styles, such as transactional and servant leadership, particularly in knowledge-intensive environments (Afsar et al., 2019). Given the growing reliance on KM for organizational sustainability, understanding the comparative effectiveness of different leadership styles in KIOs is critical for developing robust leadership strategies that enhance KM efficiency and contribute to long-term competitiveness (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014).

This research aims to examine the role of different leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and servant leadership—in influencing knowledge-sharing behaviors and knowledge-management practices within KIOs. It seeks to explore the mechanisms through which leadership fosters collaboration and knowledge exchange while also identifying the key enablers and barriers to effective KM within knowledge-intensive settings. By comparing the effectiveness of these leadership styles, this study will provide actionable insights for organizations looking to optimize their leadership strategies to enhance KM effectiveness. Moreover, this research will contribute to the ongoing discourse on leadership and KM by offering a nuanced understanding of how leadership styles interact with organizational culture to shape knowledge-sharing behaviors and, ultimately, organizational competitiveness (Widodo et al., 2022; Mustika et al., 2020).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
- What are the dominant leadership styles in knowledge-intensive organizations?
- How do these leadership styles influence knowledge-sharing behaviors?
- What factors mediate the relationship between leadership and KM effectiveness?
- How can leadership strategies be optimized for better KM outcomes?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership and Knowledge Management: Theoretical Link
Leadership plays a crucial role in shaping knowledge management (KM) practices within organizations, particularly in knowledge-intensive environments. Research has extensively explored how leadership styles influence knowledge-sharing behaviors, organizational learning, and overall competitiveness (Iqbal et al., 2015; Łukowski, 2017). Knowledge-intensive organizations (KIOs) depend on effective knowledge-sharing to drive innovation and maintain their competitive edge, and leadership is often the determining factor in whether knowledge-sharing behaviors are encouraged or hindered (Lauring & Selmer, 2012; Ritala et al., 2015).

Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and servant leadership have been widely studied as key leadership styles influencing KM outcomes (Clinebell et al., 2013; Ng, 2020). Transformational leaders inspire employees by articulating a vision and motivating them to engage in knowledge-sharing behaviors, thereby creating an environment that fosters innovation (Mohiuddin, 2017; Son et al., 2020). In contrast, transactional leadership focuses on structured performance management and reward-based systems, which can enforce KM practices but may not necessarily drive innovation (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Servant leadership, which emphasizes employee empowerment and interpersonal trust, is particularly effective in fostering a participatory KM culture (Pratama et al., 2021). Despite extensive research on leadership and KM, studies evaluating the comparative effectiveness of different leadership styles in KIOs remain limited (Esfahani et al., 2021; Mustika et al., 2020). The need for a comparative approach to understanding how leadership styles interact with KM practices has become more pressing as organizations increasingly recognize knowledge as a critical resource for sustaining long-term competitiveness (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014).

Different leadership styles influence knowledge-sharing behaviors in varying ways, making it important to analyze their comparative effectiveness. Transformational leadership is associated with fostering collaboration, innovation, and open communication, which are essential for effective KM (Iqbal et al., 2015; Le & Lei, 2018). Leaders employing a transformational style encourage employees to engage in continuous learning and knowledge exchange, which enhances organizational adaptability and innovation (Widodo et al., 2022). Conversely, transactional leadership emphasizes structured KM approaches, ensuring that knowledge-sharing practices are embedded into organizational policies and procedures (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). While this approach can ensure consistency, it often lacks the flexibility and creativity required to adapt to rapid changes in knowledge-driven industries (Son et al., 2020).

Servant leadership is increasingly recognized as a valuable approach to fostering KM, particularly in organizations where trust and psychological safety are essential (Pratama et al., 2021). Servant leaders prioritize employee well-being and create environments that encourage voluntary knowledge sharing, which can lead to deeper collaboration and stronger team cohesion (Rahab & Wahyuni, 2013; Vandavasi et al., 2020). However, some studies suggest that servant leadership may lack the strategic direction required to implement large-scale KM initiatives effectively (Esfahani et al., 2021). Despite the potential benefits of leadership-driven KM, numerous challenges hinder the effective implementation of knowledge-sharing practices. Organizational culture plays a significant role in either enabling or obstructing KM efforts (Lombardi et al., 2020). In many cases, hierarchical silos, lack of trust, and resistance to collaboration prevent employees from freely sharing their knowledge (Rahab & Wahyuni, 2013).

One of the primary obstacles to knowledge sharing is the absence of leadership support. Employees are more likely to engage in KM practices when they perceive that their leaders value and reward knowledge-sharing behaviors (Ng, 2020). Studies have shown that transformational leadership can mitigate these barriers by fostering a culture of openness and mutual respect (Mohiuddin, 2017; Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). Transactional leadership, while effective in enforcing KM policies, may contribute to rigid bureaucratic structures that discourage spontaneous knowledge sharing (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). On the other hand, servant leadership can address trust-related barriers but may not provide the strategic direction necessary to institutionalize KM practices at an organizational level (Pratama et al., 2021).

Knowledge sharing is a key enabler of organizational competitiveness, as it allows organizations to convert individual expertise into collective capabilities (Liu et al., 2020). Organizations that actively promote knowledge-sharing behaviors are better positioned to adapt to market changes, develop innovative solutions, and maintain a competitive advantage (Lei et al., 2021). Transformational leadership has been widely recognized as a catalyst for fostering a knowledge-sharing culture that drives innovation and business growth (Widodo et al., 2022). Leaders who create a shared vision and motivate employees to contribute their knowledge enhance the organization's ability to remain competitive in dynamic environments (Son et al., 2020).

Transactional leadership can also play a role in ensuring that KM practices are systematically implemented. However, studies indicate that organizations led by transactional leaders may struggle to cultivate a culture of continuous learning and knowledge exchange (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). In contrast, servant leadership has been shown to promote employee engagement and voluntary knowledge sharing, which can lead to more sustainable competitive advantages (Pratama et al., 2021). While existing literature highlights the impact of various leadership styles on KM, there is a limited understanding of how these leadership styles compare within KIOs (Afsar et al., 2019). Given the increasing reliance on KM for organizational success, there is a need for more empirical research that examines the comparative effectiveness of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership in driving knowledge-sharing behaviors (Esfahani et al., 2021). By addressing this gap, the current study will provide insights into how different leadership styles influence KM and what factors mediate their effectiveness in fostering a knowledge-sharing culture (Mustika et al., 2020). This comparative approach will contribute to both leadership theory and practical KM strategies, offering organizations a clearer framework for optimizing leadership practices in knowledge-intensive settings (Widodo et al., 2022).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopts a comparative qualitative research design to examine how different leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and servant leadership—influence knowledge-sharing behaviors in knowledge-intensive organizations (KIOs). Given that leadership and KM are social constructs shaped by organizational culture and human interactions, a qualitative approach is well-suited for capturing the complexities of these relationships (Leavy, 2017).

An inductive research approach is employed, allowing insights to emerge from the collected data rather than testing predefined hypotheses. This approach facilitates the exploration of themes and patterns that illustrate how leadership styles mediate knowledge-sharing effectiveness in various organizational contexts (Holden & Lynch, 2004). The study follows an interpretive research philosophy, focusing on understanding the subjective experiences of employees and leaders in KIOs.

The study integrates thematic analysis, a widely used method in qualitative research that allows the researcher to categorize and interpret recurring patterns related to leadership, KM, and organizational competitiveness (Nowell et al., 2017). The research design is summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Research Design Overview

Research Approach	Justification
Qualitative Comparative Study	Enables in-depth comparison of leadership styles and KM effectiveness.
Inductive Research	Allows findings to emerge from patterns in collected data.
Interpretive Philosophy	Focuses on the subjective and contextual understanding of KM behaviors.
Thematic Analysis	Facilitates systematic identification of leadership-KM dynamics.

Data Collection

The data collection process involves a systematic literature review from academic databases and organizational reports. Secondary data is collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, case studies, and industry reports on leadership and KM. Using a structured keyword search, relevant studies published between 2015 and 2023 are selected to ensure contemporary insights into leadership styles and KM practices (Page et al., 2021).

The study applies purposeful sampling, selecting sources that provide empirical evidence on leadership's impact on KM in knowledge-intensive settings. The data collection criteria are illustrated in **Table 2** below:

Table 2: Data Collection Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Articles published in peer-reviewed journals (2015–2023)	Non-peer-reviewed sources (blogs, opinion pieces)
Studies examining leadership and KM in KIOs	Studies unrelated to leadership and KM
Empirical research on leadership's influence on knowledge sharing	Conceptual papers without empirical validation
Case studies from research institutions, technology firms, and R&D centers	Papers focused solely on leadership styles without KM integration

Data Sources

To ensure the validity of findings, data is sourced from high-impact academic databases such as Business Source Complete, Emerald Journals, PsychINFO, ProQuest, and Scopus. These databases provide access to peer-reviewed research on leadership, KM, and organizational behavior (Jaffe & Cowell, 2014).

A keyword-based search strategy is applied, using Boolean operators to refine results. Search terms include:

- "Transformational leadership AND knowledge management"
- "Transactional leadership AND knowledge sharing"
- "Servant leadership AND organizational knowledge"
- "Leadership styles AND knowledge-intensive organizations"

A summary of the sources used for data extraction is provided in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Data Sources and Keywords

Data Source	Search Keywords Used	Justification
Business Source Complete	"Transformational leadership AND knowledge sharing"	Covers organizational leadership studies.
Emerald Journals	"Transactional leadership AND knowledge management"	Focuses on knowledge-intensive environments.
PsychINFO	"Servant leadership AND organizational knowledge"	Captures psychological perspectives of leadership.
ProQuest	"Leadership styles AND knowledge-intensive organizations"	Provides empirical evidence on leadership-KM effectiveness.
Scopus	"Leadership AND knowledge sharing in technology firms"	Includes high-impact management research.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is employed to identify recurring themes, patterns, and relationships between leadership styles and KM effectiveness. Using an open coding approach, key insights from selected studies are categorized into the following thematic dimensions:

- Leadership Influence on KM: Identifies how different leadership styles shape knowledge-sharing behaviors.
- Barriers to Knowledge Sharing: Analyzes organizational challenges in KM implementation.
- Leadership-Driven KM Enablers: Highlights leadership strategies that facilitate KM.
- Comparative Effectiveness of Leadership Styles: Evaluate which leadership styles are most effective in KIOs.

The analytical framework used for thematic categorization is illustrated in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Thematic Analysis Framework

Thematic Category	Key Themes Identified	Example Findings
Leadership Influence on KM	Vision-setting, motivation, trust-building	Transformational leaders foster innovation through knowledge-sharing cultures.
Barriers to Knowledge Sharing	Lack of trust, hierarchical silos, leadership support gaps	Transactional leadership enforces KM but lacks flexibility for innovation.
Leadership-Driven KM Enablers	Psychological safety, open communication, structured policies	Servant leadership builds trust but lacks strategic direction.
Comparative Effectiveness of Leadership Styles	Innovation vs. structure vs. trust-based leadership	Transformational leadership best supports dynamic KM in KIOs.

The findings from the thematic analysis will be used to conclude the comparative effectiveness of leadership styles in KM, providing actionable insights for organizations in knowledge-intensive industries.

This research methodology ensures a rigorous comparative analysis of how different leadership styles impact knowledge sharing and KM effectiveness in knowledge-intensive organizations. By integrating qualitative thematic analysis with data sourced from reputable academic databases, this study aims to contribute valuable insights into the leadership-KM nexus. The structured approach outlined here will enable the identification of best practices in leadership for KM, providing theoretical and practical contributions to both leadership studies and knowledge management strategies.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of different leadership styles—transformational, transactional, and servant leadership—in knowledge-intensive organizations (KIOs) reveals significant insights into their respective impacts on knowledge-sharing behaviors and knowledge management (KM) effectiveness. The findings indicate that while transformational leadership is the most effective in fostering a collaborative and innovation-driven KM culture, transactional leadership ensures structured and systematic KM practices and servant leadership strengthens trust-based knowledge exchange. However, the comparative effectiveness of these styles varies based on organizational culture, leadership engagement, and the nature of knowledge-intensive work.

Leadership Influence on Knowledge Management in Knowledge-Intensive Organizations

Leadership plays a defining role in shaping knowledge-sharing behaviors, organizational learning, and overall competitiveness in KIOs. The findings strongly support the notion that transformational leadership fosters a culture of collaboration and innovation, making it the most effective leadership style for dynamic and fast-paced knowledge-intensive industries (Iqbal et al., 2015; Le & Lei, 2018). Transformational leaders inspire employees by setting a vision, motivating them to engage in continuous knowledge-sharing practices, and creating a supportive environment that facilitates learning and adaptation (Clinebell et al., 2013; Ng, 2020). Studies indicate that transformational leadership is positively correlated with knowledge-sharing intensity, as employees feel psychologically safe and are motivated to contribute their expertise (Widodo et al., 2022).

Conversely, transactional leadership is highly structured and goal-oriented, making it effective in enforcing formal KM processes and compliance with knowledge-sharing policies (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Transactional leaders typically use incentives, rewards, and performance metrics to regulate KM, ensuring that employees engage in knowledge-sharing behaviors that align with organizational goals (Son et al., 2020). While this leadership style promotes efficiency, it lacks the flexibility and creativity needed to adapt KM practices in dynamic knowledge-intensive environments (Liu et al.,

2020). As a result, transactional leadership is more suitable for structured, process-driven knowledge-sharing mechanisms, such as codified knowledge repositories and standardized knowledge transfer practices (Mohiuddin, 2017). Servant leadership, on the other hand, builds a knowledge-sharing culture based on trust, employee empowerment, and personal development (Pratama et al., 2021). By prioritizing interpersonal trust and employee well-being, servant leaders create an environment where knowledge sharing becomes voluntary and intrinsic rather than policy-driven (Rahab & Wahyuni, 2013; Vandavasi et al., 2020). However, while servant leadership is effective in overcoming knowledge-sharing barriers related to distrust and resistance, it lacks the strategic direction necessary for institutionalizing KM at an organizational level (Esfahani et al., 2021). This means that servant leadership is more suitable for organizations with strong intrinsic motivation and decentralized knowledge-sharing networks, rather than highly structured knowledge-driven corporations.

Comparative Effectiveness of Leadership Styles in Knowledge-Intensive Organizations

The comparative analysis highlights that transformational leadership is the most effective style in fostering long-term KM success, especially in dynamic and innovation-driven knowledge-intensive environments (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014). Organizations with transformational leaders demonstrate higher levels of knowledge-sharing engagement, adaptability, and learning agility (Lei et al., 2021). Transactional leadership, while effective in ensuring compliance and structured KM execution, lacks the flexibility needed to promote dynamic and spontaneous knowledge sharing (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Servant leadership excels in building a trust-based knowledge-sharing culture, but without strategic reinforcement, its impact on formalized KM structures is limited (Pratama et al., 2021).

Barriers, Enablers, and Strategic Recommendations for Leadership in Knowledge Management

Despite the potential benefits of leadership-driven KM, numerous barriers hinder knowledge-sharing practices in KIOs. The most significant challenges include:

- Lack of trust among employees: A major inhibitor of knowledge sharing is the fear of knowledge hoarding, where employees hesitate to share expertise due to concerns about competitive disadvantage (Rahab & Wahyuni, 2013). Servant leadership is particularly effective in overcoming this barrier by fostering psychological safety and trust-based relationships (Pratama et al., 2021).
- Hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational cultures: Transactional leadership, while ensuring KM structure, can inadvertently reinforce rigid organizational hierarchies that discourage spontaneous knowledge exchange (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). In contrast, transformational leadership helps break down silos by creating a shared knowledge vision and collaborative culture (Son et al., 2020).
- Resistance to collaboration: Some employees perceive KM initiatives as additional workloads rather than opportunities for professional growth (Ng, 2020). Transformational leadership addresses this challenge by aligning knowledge-sharing behaviors with personal and organizational growth, making knowledge-sharing initiatives intrinsically rewarding (Mohiuddin, 2017).
- Leadership support gaps: Employees are more likely to engage in knowledge-sharing behaviors when they perceive strong leadership commitment (Widodo et al., 2022). Leaders must actively participate in KM initiatives, provide incentives for knowledge-sharing, and establish knowledge-sharing norms (Mustika et al., 2020).

Strategic Recommendations for Enhancing Leadership-Driven Knowledge Management

Given the comparative insights from this study, organizations can optimize KM by tailoring leadership styles to their knowledge-sharing needs:

- Organizations that rely on innovation and creativity should prioritize transformational leadership, ensuring that leaders motivate and inspire employees to share knowledge as part of the organizational learning culture (Esfahani et al., 2021).
- Highly structured knowledge-intensive firms, such as research institutions, can benefit from transactional leadership, ensuring standardized knowledge documentation and compliance-driven knowledge transfer (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000).
- Organizations that require trust-driven collaboration, such as consultancy firms, should integrate servant leadership, promoting psychological safety and voluntary knowledge-sharing mechanisms (Pratama et al., 2021).

A hybrid leadership model that combines transformational leadership for innovation, transactional leadership for structure, and servant leadership for trust-building may offer the most balanced approach to knowledge management in KIOs (Lei et al., 2021). The findings of this study confirm that leadership is a critical determinant of knowledge-sharing effectiveness in knowledge-intensive organizations. Transformational leadership emerges as the most effective leadership style for fostering collaboration, innovation, and dynamic KM practices, while transactional leadership provides the structure necessary for standardizing KM initiatives. Servant leadership, though effective in trust-based knowledge

sharing, requires strategic reinforcement to ensure large-scale KM impact. By aligning leadership styles with organizational KM needs, knowledge-intensive firms can enhance their knowledge-sharing capabilities, drive innovation, and maintain a competitive edge in dynamic business environments.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic Integration of Leadership Styles in Knowledge Management
Given the varying strengths and limitations of different leadership styles in KM, organizations should adopt a hybrid leadership approach to balance innovation, structure, and trust-building in knowledge-sharing initiatives. For innovation-driven firms, such as technology and R&D organizations, transformational leadership should be prioritized to foster a collaborative, adaptable, and knowledge-sharing culture (Widodo et al., 2022). In structured, compliance-driven knowledge management environments, such as research institutions or government agencies, transactional leadership is effective in ensuring standardized KM processes and knowledge documentation (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). For organizations with trust-based knowledge-sharing needs, such as consultancy firms and creative industries, servant leadership should be encouraged to enhance psychological safety and voluntary knowledge-sharing (Pratama et al., 2021).
A context-specific leadership model that combines transformational leadership for motivation, transactional leadership for structure, and servant leadership for trust-building will enable organizations to optimize KM efficiency while addressing knowledge-sharing barriers.

Enhancing Leadership Development Programs for Knowledge Management
To maximize the effectiveness of leadership in KM, organizations should implement targeted leadership development programs that equip leaders with skills in fostering knowledge-sharing cultures. Knowledge-centric leadership training should focus on how to integrate KM principles into leadership strategies, ensuring that leaders understand their role in knowledge facilitation (Clinebell et al., 2013; Ng, 2020). Adaptive leadership workshops should be conducted to train leaders in switching between transformational, transactional, and servant leadership strategies depending on KM needs (Mohiuddin, 2017). Additionally, incentive-based knowledge leadership frameworks should be introduced, where leadership performance is evaluated based on KM success and employee knowledge-sharing engagement (Son et al., 2020). By ensuring that leaders are well-equipped to manage KM dynamics, organizations can strengthen their knowledge-sharing culture and innovation potential.

Overcoming Barriers to Knowledge Sharing Through Leadership Interventions
Despite the significant role of leadership in enhancing knowledge sharing, barriers such as knowledge hoarding, hierarchical silos, and leadership support gaps continue to hinder KM effectiveness. Leaders should implement proactive measures to address these challenges. To reduce knowledge hoarding, leaders should introduce incentive programs and recognition frameworks that reward employees for sharing their expertise openly (Rahab & Wahyuni, 2013). Breaking down organizational silos requires transformational leaders to foster cross-departmental collaboration through interdisciplinary KM initiatives, ensuring that knowledge is not restricted to isolated teams (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Creating psychological safety is crucial for encouraging employees to share knowledge freely without fear of repercussions (Pratama et al., 2021). Servant leadership can be leveraged to build a culture of interpersonal trust, ensuring that KM efforts are not hindered by workplace insecurities. Additionally, aligning KM practices with business strategy through transactional leadership mechanisms ensures that knowledge-sharing initiatives are embedded into the organization's long-term strategic objectives (Lei et al., 2021). By adopting leadership-driven interventions, organizations can establish a sustainable KM ecosystem that promotes continuous learning, knowledge retention, and innovation.

VI. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

While this study provides valuable insights into leadership styles and KM effectiveness, further research is needed to expand the theoretical and practical understanding of this relationship. Future studies should conduct industry-specific case studies to examine how leadership styles impact KM across different knowledge-intensive industries (Esfahani et al., 2021). Additionally, longitudinal studies are needed to explore how leadership influences on KM evolves, particularly in response to technological changes and digital transformation (Widodo et al., 2022). Further research should also investigate the effectiveness of hybrid leadership approaches, analyzing how a balanced mix of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership can drive KM success (Lei et al., 2021). Lastly, leadership and digital knowledge management should be explored, particularly in AI-driven knowledge-sharing ecosystems and virtual team collaboration frameworks (Son et al., 2020). By addressing these research gaps, future studies can provide deeper insights into optimizing leadership styles for knowledge-driven organizations.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study examined the comparative effectiveness of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership styles in fostering knowledge-sharing behaviors and optimizing knowledge management (KM) practices in knowledge-intensive organizations (KIOs). Findings indicate that leadership is a critical determinant of KM success, with each leadership style contributing differently to knowledge-sharing effectiveness, organizational learning, and competitiveness. Transformational leadership emerged as the most effective style in fostering knowledge-sharing cultures, particularly in dynamic and innovation-driven organizations. Transformational leaders inspire employees through vision-setting, motivation, and trust-building, fostering a collaborative and innovative KM environment (Iqbal et al., 2015; Le & Lei, 2018). However, transformational leadership requires strong leadership engagement to sustain long-term KM success (Clinebell et al., 2013; Ng, 2020).

Transactional leadership, while less flexible than transformational leadership, ensures structured KM practices through policies, incentives, and performance monitoring (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). This leadership style is effective in ensuring compliance with KM protocols and institutionalizing knowledge-sharing processes, making it particularly useful in structured knowledge environments such as research institutions and corporate KM systems (Son et al., 2020). However, its rigid and bureaucratic nature can limit spontaneous knowledge exchange and adaptability (Liu et al., 2020). Servant leadership, which focuses on trust-building, employee empowerment, and psychological safety, has proven effective in promoting voluntary knowledge sharing (Pratama et al., 2021). Employees under servant leaders are more likely to share knowledge freely due to high levels of interpersonal trust and leader support (Rahab & Wahyuni, 2013; Vandavasi et al., 2020). However, servant leadership is less effective in structured KM settings where explicit leadership directives are needed to implement large-scale KM initiatives (Esfahani et al., 2021).

The study concludes that no single leadership style is universally superior for KM in KIOs. Instead, the effectiveness of leadership styles depends on organizational context, culture, and KM objectives. A hybrid leadership approach, integrating elements of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership, may offer the most balanced KM strategy, ensuring both innovation and structured knowledge retention (Lei et al., 2021). This study confirms that leadership is a central driver of KM success. While transformational leadership is the most effective for fostering innovation and collaboration, transactional leadership provides essential structure and compliance, and servant leadership enhances trust-based knowledge sharing. To maximize KM effectiveness, organizations should adopt a context-specific leadership approach, integrating elements of each leadership style based on organizational KM goals and challenges. By investing in leadership training, removing knowledge-sharing barriers, and aligning leadership with KM strategy, organizations can enhance their knowledge assets, drive innovation, and sustain long-term competitiveness in an ever-evolving knowledge economy.

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