

Knowledge Management and Performance: Unveiling Creativity's Role in Higher Education for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates the impact of knowledge management on team member performance, with a focus on the mediating role of team member creativity, within the context of higher education institutions as strategic contributors to sustainable economic development.

Method: This research adopts a quantitative explanatory approach, utilizing a survey methodology that includes 100 respondents, comprising lecturers and educational staff from a university located in Central Java, Indonesia. Data were gathered through a closed-ended Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed employing the Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method, facilitated by SmartPLS software.

Result: The findings of the study reveal that knowledge management exerts a positive and significant influence on team member performance, both directly and indirectly through team member creativity as a mediating variable. Furthermore, team member creativity has been identified as a critical factor in enhancing the relationship between knowledge management and individual performance.

Practical Implications for Economic Growth and Development: These results provide substantial practical implications, indicating that the implementation of effective knowledge management practices can cultivate a creative, innovative, and productive organizational culture, thereby contributing to knowledge-based economic growth within the higher education sector. This research contributes theoretically by deepening the understanding of creativity as a cognitive mechanism within the Knowledge-Based View framework, while also offering practical insights for institutional leaders to develop policies aimed at enhancing human resource capabilities.

Originality/Value: This study presents an integrative model that explores the mediating role of psychological variables within a theoretical framework pertinent to the reinforcement of knowledge-based organizations in the higher education sector.

Keywords: *Economic Development, Higher Education, Knowledge Management, Team Member Creativity, Team Member Performance*

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of a knowledge-based economy, universities serve not only as educational institutions but also as primary catalysts for driving sustainable economic growth (Hausman, 2022). They play a strategic role in the production, dissemination, and application of knowledge, thereby creating added value for society and the national economy. It is noteworthy that over 80% of innovation in developing countries originates from research and



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development conducted within higher education institutions (Wu & Liu, 2021). This underscores the critical importance of effective knowledge management as a vital instrument for enhancing institutional competitiveness and fostering innovation-driven sustainable development (Zhang et al., 2023).

However, the implementation of knowledge management within higher education environments often encounters significant challenges, particularly in optimizing human resource performance and fostering collaborative teamwork. Many higher education institutions have yet to fully integrate knowledge management systems into their academic and administrative processes. Research indicates that only approximately 47% of lecturers and educational staff in Indonesian universities are actively engaged in knowledge sharing and cross-unit collaboration activities (Suparwadi et al., 2024). The effectiveness of an organization and the performance of its teams can be markedly diminished as a result, adversely affecting the quality of academic services and the achievement of institutional performance metrics. In this context, the creativity of team members emerges as a crucial factor that strengthens the relationship between knowledge management practices and overall team performance.

The unique characteristics of individual team members reflect their capacity for innovation, the formulation of alternative solutions, and the implementation of adaptive strategies to address workplace challenges. This adaptability demonstrates a high degree of responsiveness to change, a proactive approach in devising solutions to various obstacles, and active participation in the realization of organizational objectives (Rehman et al., 2022). Within the higher education context, enhancing the quality of academic services and bolstering innovation capacities are essential components that support the development of team member innovation (Zhao et al., 2021). Creativity has been identified as a pivotal element that connects knowledge management with team member performance, making it a significant focus of recent scholarly investigations. The insights garnered from this research are anticipated to contribute meaningfully to the formulation of a knowledge-based strategic management model. The findings will serve as a foundation for developing policies aimed at collaboratively enhancing the productivity of team member performance within higher education organizations, thereby yielding a substantial positive impact on sustainable economic growth.

Prior research consistently demonstrates a significant correlation between knowledge management and teamwork effectiveness. It is evident that all activities related to knowledge—such as its creation, storage, dissemination, and utilization—are critical for enhancing work efficiency (Kordab et al., 2020; Ledmaoui & Mokhtari, 2024). Furthermore, this research emphasizes the necessity of behavioral elements that connect this relationship, particularly how the creativity of team members catalyzes innovation within organizations (Du et al., 2022). In higher education institutions, effective knowledge management can markedly improve both academic and administrative efficiency (Rehman & Iqbal, 2020; Sahibzada et al., 2022). Nevertheless, studies acknowledging team member creativity as a mediating variable in the relationship between knowledge management and team member performance within universities remain relatively scarce, especially in developing countries such as Indonesia.

The novelty of this study resides in its integration of the behavioral dimension of team members, specifically creativity, as a mediating mechanism within the relational model linking knowledge management and team member performance, with a focus on the higher education sector in Indonesia. Unlike prior studies that often distinguish between structural and behavioral aspects of organizations, this research seeks to synthesize both dimensions within a unified conceptual framework grounded in the knowledge-based view and organizational creativity theory. This investigation enriches the empirical literature concerning the impact of knowledge management on performance through psychological processes pertinent to educational institutions.

This study empirically examines the mediating role of team member creativity in the relationship between knowledge management and team member performance within

universities. It also provides strategic recommendations for policymakers in higher education institutions, aimed at designing managerial policies that enhance organizational effectiveness and promote sustainable economic development through the optimization of knowledge assets and individual capabilities.

Hypotheses Development

Knowledge Management and Team Members Performance

Knowledge management is defined as a systematic approach to the creation, storage, sharing, and utilization of knowledge, aimed at securing a competitive advantage for organizations (Alfawaire & Atan, 2021). The effective implementation of knowledge management techniques is likely to enhance the operational productivity of teams, particularly within higher education institutions, such as universities and colleges. The facilitation of knowledge access contributes to a more precise and expedited decision-making process, enhances cross-departmental collaboration, and fosters a dynamic exchange of knowledge (Cisneros et al., 2023). From the perspective of knowledge-based theory, knowledge serves as a strategic asset that can expedite organizational development and elevate the quality of human resources. Consequently, effective knowledge management is intricately linked to the attainment of optimal team performance.

H1: Knowledge management possesses the potential to yield significant improvements in team member performance.

Knowledge Management and Team Members Creativity

Team member creativity is indicative of the capacity to devise innovations, identify novel solutions, and formulate effective responses to challenges (Park et al., 2021). A conducive work environment enhances motivation and maximally stimulates individual creativity (Aldabbas et al., 2023). In this context, optimal knowledge management plays a crucial role in fostering a culture that promotes the continuous enhancement of competencies (Nakash, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2020).

H2: Superior knowledge management significantly enhances team member creativity.

Team Members Creativity and Team Members Performance

Creativity is a fundamental element in the evaluation of individual performance, particularly within knowledge-intensive environments such as higher education institutions (Liu et al., 2021; Rese et al., 2020). It represents a distinctive and challenging-to-replicate internal capability that facilitates substantial contributions toward the attainment of organizational objectives (Do et al., 2022; Rumanti et al., 2023). Individuals exhibiting elevated levels of creativity tend to demonstrate strong initiative, possess the ability to address complex problems, and adapt effectively to change, thereby fostering enhancements in overall performance (Almulla, 2023; Van Hooijdonk et al., 2023).

H3: Enhancing the creativity of team members significantly elevates their overall performance.

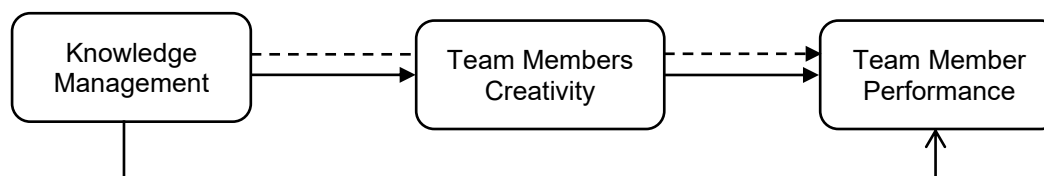
Team Members Creativity as the Mediator between Knowledge Management and Team Members Performance

The creativity of team members serves as a significant mediating factor between knowledge management and the attainment of team performance. Within this context, it elucidates the manner in which knowledge management influences the internal conditions of individuals, particularly their creative capacities, which in turn affect work performance (Ye et al., 2022).

Creativity functions as a psychological intermediary between knowledge management strategies and organizational performance (Liao et al., 2024).

H4: Team members' creativity mediates the relationship between knowledge management and performance outcomes.

Figure 1. Research Framework



Source: Developed by the authors (2025)

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research methodology utilizing a survey instrument to investigate the causal relationships among the variables delineated in the research model (Nogueira et al., 2022). This approach is suitable for hypothesis testing and elucidating both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs under examination (Wilms et al., 2021). The research was conducted at an accredited university in Central Java Province, Indonesia, selected due to the institution's need to enhance its organizational performance capabilities through superior human resource capital.

Primary data collection involved the distribution of questionnaires to respondents comprising permanent faculty members and educational staff with a minimum of two years of service. This criterion was established to ensure that respondents possessed a sufficient understanding of knowledge management and business processes relevant to their work units. The data collection instrument used a closed questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale, measuring respondent agreement from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The questionnaire was disseminated both online via Google Forms and in printed form to augment respondent participation.

During the data analysis phase, the researcher employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques based on Partial Least Squares (PLS), utilizing the latest version of SmartPLS software. SEM-PLS was selected for its capacity to analyze complex structural models involving latent constructs, its effectiveness in handling non-normally distributed data, and its applicability to relatively small to moderate sample sizes (Dash & Paul, 2021; Kono & Sato, 2023). The analysis procedure was conducted in two stages: initially, the measurement model was evaluated to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs, followed by structural model testing to examine the interrelationships among variables and to test the formulated hypotheses.

Table 1 presents the operational definitions of the three primary variables of this study: Knowledge Management, Team Member Creativity, and Team Member Performance. Each variable is operationalized through several indicators formulated as statements within the questionnaire. The selection of these indicators is based on the findings of a recent literature review from various internationally reputable scientific publications, thereby ensuring both theoretical rigor and practical relevance. This strategy facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the concepts under investigation and ensures consistency and accuracy in measuring each construct within the research framework.

Table 1. Operational Variables

Variables	Indicators	Statements	Sources
Knowledge Management (KM)	Knowledge creation (KM1)	Team members are actively involved in creating new ideas or knowledge relevant to the field of work.	(Cao et al., 2021)
	Knowledge storage (KM2)	The organization has an effective system for storing knowledge for future use.	(Argote et al., 2021)
	Knowledge distribution (KM3)	Team members routinely share the knowledge with colleagues.	(Wang et al., 2021)
	Knowledge implementation (KM4)	Team members apply the knowledge and information I have obtained to improve the quality of work results.	(Budur et al., 2024)
Team Members Creativity (CR)	Originality of idea (CR1)	Team members often develop original ideas that differ from the usual approaches.	(Spektor et al., 2022)
	Problem solving (CR2)	Team members can formulate creative solutions to complex problems in their work.	(Covin et al., 2020)
	Dare to calculate risks (CR3)	Team members dare to take new approaches despite the risk of failure in their implementation.	(Venkataramani & Tang, 2024)
	Innovation in work (CR4)	Team members actively strive to create innovation in the processes or results of work.	(Park et al., 2021)
Team Members Performance (PF)	Productivity (PF1)	Team members can complete the workload given efficiently and on time.	(Hansen et al., 2020)
	Work quality (PF2)	Team members' work results meet the quality standards set by the organization.	(Weidmann & Deming, 2021)
	Target achievement (PF3)	Team members consistently achieve work targets and objectives set by superiors or the organization.	(Lin et al., 2022)

Source: Developed by the authors (2025)

The Knowledge Management variables in this study encompass four primary components: the creation, management, distribution, and application of knowledge in a comprehensive manner. These four aspects delineate the entire cycle of knowledge management within a team. Statements such as "team members participate in generating new knowledge" and "team members utilize the knowledge acquired to enhance the quality of work outcomes" suggest that knowledge management in this context is both theoretical and discernible through practical work applications. Several theoretical foundations that underpin this component have been articulated by Cao et al. (2021), Argote, Wang et al. (2021), and Budur et al. (2024), who assert that these four elements constitute the fundamental pillars of contemporary knowledge management practices.

The Team Member Creativity (CR) variable is evaluated through indicators that highlight the originality of ideas, problem-solving abilities, willingness to take risks, and capacity for innovation within the work environment. Statements such as "team members are willing to explore new approaches despite the potential for failure" and "team members exhibit creative and innovative work outcomes" serve as significant representations of creativity in a dynamic and evolving work context. The selection of these indicators is grounded in empirical studies conducted by Spektor et al. (2022), Covin et al., Venkataramani & Tang (2024), and Park et al. (2020; 2021), which demonstrate a robust correlation between team creativity and organizational success.

The Team Member Performance (PF) variable encompasses dimensions of productivity, quality of work outcomes, and goal attainment. Indicators such as the capacity to complete tasks efficiently and punctually, as well as consistency in meeting organizational quality standards, underscore that performance assessments in this study are predicated on objective and measurable work results rather than solely on subjective perceptions or evaluations. The theoretical foundation for this measurement is derived from research conducted by Hansen et al. (2020), Weidmann & Deming (2021), and Lin et al. (2022), which underscore the significance of performance evaluation based on actual achievements as a benchmark for the success of teamwork.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Convergent Validity

Table 2 presents the findings from the convergent validity assessment of the latent constructs—Knowledge Management, Team Member Creativity, and Team Member Performance—within the proposed research model. Two primary metrics employed to evaluate convergent validity are the outer loading value for each indicator and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct. The recommended threshold for the outer loading value is greater than 0.70, while the minimum acceptable AVE value is set at 0.50, indicating that the construct accounts for more than half of the variance of its associated indicators. Data were collected through the application of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique.

Table 2. Convergent Validity

Variables	Codes	Outer Loading	AVE	Conclusion
Knowledge Management	KM1	0.950	0.809	Valid
	KM2	0.896		Valid
	KM3	0.802		Valid
	KM4	0.943		Valid
Team Member Creativity	CR1	0.838	0.672	Valid
	CR2	0.790		Valid
	CR3	0.8333		Valid
	CR4	0.819		Valid
	PF1	0.955	0.819	Valid

Variables	Codes	Outer Loading	AVE	Conclusion
Team Member Performance	PF2	0.795		Valid
	PF3	0.955		Valid

Source: Processed data (2025)

Based on the results presented in Table 2, it can be concluded that all constructs in the model have satisfied the criteria for convergent validity. The Knowledge Management construct comprises four indicators (KM1 to KM4) with outer loading values ranging from 0.802 to 0.950. These values significantly exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating that each indicator contributes meaningfully to the construct it is intended to measure. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for this construct is 0.809, suggesting that the Knowledge Management construct accounts for more than 80% of the variance in these indicators, thereby confirming its convergent validity.

The Team Member Creativity construct is assessed through four indicators (CR1 to CR4), with outer loading values ranging from 0.790 to 0.838. Although the outer loading value for CR2 approaches the lower limit, all values remain within the acceptable range. The AVE value of 0.672 indicates that this construct possesses a reasonably good capacity to explain the variance of its constituent indicators.

The Team Member Performance construct demonstrates strong convergent validity, with three indicators (PF1, PF2, and PF3) exhibiting outer loadings of 0.955, 0.795, and 0.955, respectively. With an AVE value of 0.819, it can be concluded that over 81% of the variance in the indicators is explained by the construct, which is statistically commendable. The results of this convergent validity assessment affirm that the three constructs within the research model possess adequate measurement capabilities, confirming that all measures employed are convergently valid. Collectively, these findings provide a robust empirical foundation for advancing to the structural testing phase.

Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Table 3 presents the results from two primary measures employed to evaluate the reliability of latent constructs: Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). This analysis aims to ascertain the internal consistency associated with the evaluation of the same construct. Traditionally, Cronbach's Alpha has been used to assess reliability; however, Composite Reliability is deemed more appropriate for the Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) technique, as it accounts for the contribution of each indicator. Generally, a reliability coefficient is considered acceptable if both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability exceed 0.70. Consequently, Table 3 serves as the principal reference point for determining whether the constructs in the model exhibit sufficient internal consistency to warrant further investigation.

Table 3. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Conclusion
Knowledge Management	0.920	0.944	Reliable
Team Member Creativity	0.838	0.891	Reliable
Team Member Performance	0.885	0.931	Reliable

Source: Processed data (2025)

Based on the data presented in Table 3, the three constructs within the research model demonstrate exceptionally high reliability. The Knowledge Management construct achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.920 and a Composite Reliability of 0.944, indicating its successful operationalization. The indicators associated with this construct exhibit substantial internal consistency, thereby affirming their reliability for accurately measuring the components of knowledge management. The Team Member Creativity construct recorded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.838 and a Composite Reliability of 0.891. Since both values exceed the recommended minimum threshold, this construct also reflects a consistent and stable assessment of team member creativity, providing robust support for the theoretical framework and confirming adequate measurement quality. Furthermore, the Team Member Performance construct exhibited remarkable reliability, achieving a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.885 and a Composite Reliability of 0.931. This suggests that all indicators within this construct reliably represent team member performance, thus ensuring the trustworthiness of the measurement data for structural model hypothesis testing. The reliability testing results, as summarized in Table 3, indicate that each construct in this study is dependable, offering compelling empirical evidence of excellent internal consistency within the measurement model, thereby rendering it suitable for advanced analysis in the structural model.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 4 presents the findings from the structural hypothesis testing conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) technique. This analysis assesses the strength and significance of the causal relationships among the latent variables within the research model. The leading indicators utilized in this evaluation include path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values, with decision-making based on the threshold of statistical significance set at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, this table illustrates the results of the mediation effect analysis, employing the indirect effect method alongside the direct relationships between variables. The conceptual model derived from these findings is employed to assess the interactions among the constructs of Knowledge Management, Team Member Creativity, and Team Member Performance.

Table 4. Hypotheses Testing

Relations	Path Coefficient	T-statistics	P-value	Decision
Knowledge Management → Team Member Creativity	0.872	46.90	0.000	Accepted
Knowledge Management → Team Member Performance	0.797	30.53	0.000	Accepted
Team Member Creativity → Team Member Performance	0.913	80.16	0.000	Accepted
Knowledge Management → Team Member Creativity → Team Member Performance (Mediation)	0.797	30.53	0.000	Accepted

Source: Processed data (2025)

Based on the results presented in Table 4, all hypotheses within this research model are accepted, as they demonstrate a high significance value ($p\text{-value} = 0.000$) and t-statistics that substantially exceed the critical threshold (>1.96). First, the relationship between Knowledge Management and Team Member Creativity is evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.872 and a t-statistic of 46.90, indicating a strong and statistically significant influence of knowledge management on team member creativity. This finding confirms that an effective knowledge management strategy can facilitate the generation of innovative ideas within a work team.

Furthermore, the direct relationship between Knowledge Management and Team Member Performance is also significant, with a coefficient of 0.797 and a t-statistic of 30.53. This suggests that the implementation of knowledge management not only affects the cognitive aspect (creativity) but also enhances team member performance directly.

Additionally, Team Member Creativity significantly enhances Team Member Performance, with a path coefficient of 0.913 and a t-statistic of 80.16. This substantial value indicates that individual creativity within a team is a primary determinant of achieving optimal performance. Analysis of the mediation effect reveals that Team Member Creativity mediates the relationship between Knowledge Management and Team Member Performance, with a fixed path coefficient of 0.797, a t-statistic of 30.53, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that the influence of knowledge management on team member performance is mediated by an increase in team creativity. Consequently, this mediation effect is significant and reinforces the role of creativity as a connecting mechanism within the structural model.

Discussion

Knowledge Management and Team Member Performance

The findings confirm that knowledge management significantly enhances team member performance. This conclusion is consistent with prior research, which underscores that an effective knowledge management system can optimize decision-making processes and operational efficiency within an organization (Litvaj et al., 2022). In the context of this research, the demonstrated success can be corroborated through direct field observations, particularly within the high-tech manufacturing company that served as the focal point of the study. The application of systematic knowledge management techniques—including documentation of work processes, knowledge-based training, and knowledge-sharing systems among team members—resulted in notable improvements in daily work efficiency, reductions in error rates, and expedited attainment of team objectives. These findings indicate that the positive correlation between knowledge management and team member performance is not only theoretical but also practical and pertinent in professional settings.

Knowledge Management and Team Member Creativity

This study confirms that the effectiveness of knowledge management positively contributes to the development of team member creativity. Implementing a structured knowledge management system allows organizations to create a work environment that supports idea exploration and continuous learning. Field findings show that teams with access to organizational knowledge resources tend to formulate solutions to overcome challenges more agilely and successfully. The use of internal knowledge-sharing facilities, such as digital discussion forums and information repositories, significantly enhances cognitive and collaborative cooperation among team members. If the knowledge management process is aligned with individual needs and work contexts, it will impact the strengthening of creativity capabilities in a sustainable manner.

Team Member Creativity and Team Member Performance

This study elucidates the direct influence of team member creativity on performance enhancement. Team members who exhibit creative behaviors when confronted with complex challenges are likely to yield superior quality and productivity outcomes. Empirical evidence supports this assertion, particularly among teams operating in dynamic environments such as technology-driven product development and customer service sectors. Creativity empowers team members to devise innovative strategies, adapt business processes, and implement continuous improvements that significantly enhance team performance. Consequently, the findings of this study underscore a substantial relationship between creativity and

performance, particularly within organizational contexts that prioritize flexibility and innovation.

Mediating Effect of Team Member Creativity between Knowledge Management and Team Member Performance

This study elucidates that creativity serves as a mediating factor in the relationship between knowledge management and team member performance. The process of transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, and vice versa, engenders dynamics that significantly influence organizational performance (Cabarcos et al., 2020). Direct observations of research participants indicate that the implementation of a knowledge management system does not yield immediate enhancements in work efficiency. However, such systems foster an environment that encourages team members to engage in creative thinking. For instance, the exchange of information regarding successful work techniques across different units can lead to innovative solutions for addressing operational challenges, thereby facilitating the attainment of team objectives. Consequently, creativity emerges as a vital component that links existing knowledge with the outcomes achieved in the workplace. This finding supports the notion that superior performance is derived not only from an individual's capacity to comprehend and apply knowledge creatively but also from their proficiency in managing information effectively.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the relationship between knowledge management, creativity, and team member performance within knowledge-oriented organizations. The primary objective of this research is to explore the role of individual creativity as a mediating factor linking knowledge management systems to work success in teams. Employing the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) methodology, this study formulates a conceptual framework elucidating how knowledge management systems can be effectively integrated into creative endeavors while enhancing overall team performance.

The analytical results indicate that knowledge management directly contributes to the enhancement of team member performance, with an indirect influence mediated by individual creativity. Team member creativity is established as an intermediary variable that amplifies the impact of knowledge management on work performance, while also directly fostering teamwork success. All hypotheses posited in this study are substantiated by empirical data, demonstrating that structured and systematic knowledge management practices can engender an innovative and productive work environment.

These findings bear significant implications for organizational decision-makers, particularly in the realms of human resource management and the formulation of strategies aimed at enhancing team performance. Knowledge management transcends mere information collection; it serves as a foundational element for cultivating a work culture that nurtures creativity. Consequently, organizations should develop knowledge management systems that not only prioritize the preservation of information but also promote the exploration of ideas, inter-individual collaboration, and the enhancement of team members' cognitive capacities. This approach is likely to yield sustainable performance improvements, contingent upon procedural compliance and bolstered by continuous innovation.

For future research, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted within more diverse organizational contexts, such as the creative industry sector, public services, and innovative start-ups. Additionally, longitudinal studies are essential to capture the temporal dynamics of the relationships between variables, thus facilitating a deeper understanding of the transformation of knowledge into performance through creativity. Incorporating moderator variables, such as organizational culture or leadership style, is also advisable to identify contextual factors that may strengthen or attenuate the relationships among constructs within the developed model.

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