

A Review of Individual Level Knowledge Sharing in the Workplace

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Abstract: This paper explores individual-level knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is a key organizational citizenship behaviour that contributes to an organization's innovation and competitiveness and as such has received much attention from the research community. However, most of the studies which reviewed the area of knowledge sharing did so by combining organizational, team and individual level factors. As knowledge sharing is conducive to building collective intelligence and improving work performance the way it is approached should be more refined. The study explores the individual-level knowledge sharing focusing only on individual characteristics. Factors such interpersonal trust and justice, individual attitudes towards knowledge sharing, personality traits, cultural aspects, motivational factors, beliefs about knowledge ownership and perceived benefits and costs, are examined to understand their relationship with knowledge-sharing behaviour. Based on the detailed review future research directions are proposed. Deeper investigation is warranted on the personality traits, motivational theories, emotional intelligence, learning styles, mental well-being, cultural nuances, and neuroscientific perspectives in knowledge sharing.

Keywords: Knowledge Sharing Review. Personality and Knowledge, Knowledge sharing in organizations, Motivational Factors in Knowledge Sharing, Interpersonal Trust

1. Introduction

Knowledge sharing is a type of organizational citizenship Behavior that is not a part of operations or usually a part of the job description (Trong et al., 2017). However, it is one of the most essential activities that individuals undertake because collective intelligence is increased through working together and exchanging information and knowledge. The overall work results are improved (Indrajit et al., 2017). Specifically, the quality of output, the time of completion of specific tasks, and the quality of the process can be significantly enhanced. In past studies, it was found that knowledge sharing is conducive to both team and individual performance (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2009; Ahmed, 2019; Griffith, 2010). Additionally, knowledge sharing increases innovation behavior, team performance (Obrenovic et al., 2015) and leads to other positive outcomes on an individual level (Nham et al., 2020; Aulawi, 2018). Through sharing knowledge, community is built, social capital between coworkers is cultivated, and trust is built, so various positive outcomes result from this activity (Sheng, 2015).

Past studies distinguished various types of knowledge being exchanged, with the most researched ones being explicit and tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is a type of knowledge that is inherent and difficult to share, as it is more related to experience and know-how. In contrast, explicit knowledge can be in the form of specific procedures, documents, materials, and instructions on executing some tasks (Puusa, A. 2010). Tacit knowledge is needed to achieve higher expertise and is often found to be most valuable (Matošková, 2013). For companies to be influential and to have high productivity of their employees, to have a well-built community, and to have good team dynamics, it is essential to cultivate specific behaviors such as knowledge sharing. The field of knowledge sharing has been investigated before using

literature review methodology (Obrenovic et al., 2014; Wang and Noe, 2010; Asrar-ul-Haq and Anwar, 2016). This topic is well researched, and it would be helpful to review specifically individual-level knowledge sharing, which is done between individuals and not from the perspective of a team or from the perspective of knowledge transfer, which many researchers have done so in the past. In this paper, we want to see what specific factors have been connected to individual knowledge sharing that is more inherent in individual-level characteristics and individual-level factors. So, other organizational factors, even though they are instrumental, are not necessarily the point of our investigation.

Individual-level personality traits can be one of the factors that impact knowledge sharing. For instance, traits of conscientiousness and altruism are conducive to knowledge sharing (Obrenovic et al., 2020, Obrenovic et al., 2022). Other factors like individual reciprocity have also been linked to knowledge sharing (Kim, 2006). Other studies in their endeavor to dissect the field of knowledge sharing have not done so by separately investigating the individual factor and level. However, they have also taken some team and organizational factors that impact the individual (Shehab et al., 2018). So here, the perspective is that there should be an individual component of the factor, and such a factor is conducive. Companies, by choice and by specific methods, can cultivate those factors or choose individuals. They have established HR policies and ways to identify individuals with those characteristics. In the first level of this article, we define all the sharing on an individual level, followed by specific vital factors that impact knowledge sharing. Here, we distinguish between types of factors, name the most studies, and then dig deeper into the theories used to explain all the sharing. After we have done a systematic analysis, we make suggestions for future research in the field of knowledge sharing to investigate some specific factors.

2. Key Factors Review

2.1. Individual Characteristics

2.1.1. Cultural Influences

The interaction of employees in multinational organizations with varied national cultures offers exceptional knowledge-sharing challenges (Lauring, 2018; Ali, 2019). Siemens, for example, adapted their incentive mechanisms in their Indian and Chinese companies to conform to local economic criteria (Voelpel et al., 2005). Trust and management support substantially impact knowledge sharing among employees of various nationalities (Al-Qadhi, 2015). Cultural differences in knowledge-sharing behaviors between Chinese and Western (particularly Anglo-American) societies have been emphasized in comparative research (Marginson, 2022). Individuals from Chinese backgrounds, in particular, frequently prioritize organizational gains in their knowledge-sharing decisions, even when these conflict with personal interests (Chow et al., 2000). Furthermore, Chinese individuals are more hesitant to share knowledge with those they believe outside their close community. The cultural behavior of collectivism has also been found to positively affect the usage of collaborative technologies like group emails in educational contexts. This effect is mediated by identifying with the group and aligning with personal beliefs (Hwang and Kim, 2007). Collectivist cultural orientation has been found to mitigate the impacts of social norms in the context of sharing knowledge via email, with group norms being more significant (Ianole-Călin, 2020).

2.1.2. Personality and Dispositions

Several studies have observed the individual-level association between personality factors and knowledge sharing. Matzler (2008) exposed that agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness link favorably with others' knowledge sharing. Yusof (2010) established this by discovering a link between individual factors like awareness, trust, and personality and the value of knowledge sharing. Esmaeelinezhad (2018) explained this by involving particular personality abilities in knowledge management activities, with openness and meticulousness favorably persuading knowledge achievement, storage, and sharing. Cho (2007) exposed that agreeableness, reciprocity, and self-efficacy obstructed the longing to share knowledge. Conferring to this study, personality qualities affect an individual's desire and dimensions to share information. The connection between self-perceived knowledge and performance has revealed diverse outcomes.

2.2. Motivational Factors

2.2.1. Beliefs of Knowledge Ownership

Individual attitudes to knowledge sharing are partial to opinions about knowledge ownership (Rechberg, 2017). Individual and organizational opinions on knowledge sharing have been highlighted in the knowledge ownership investigation (Lekhawipat, 2018). Persons who see themselves as knowledge holders are likelier to share their knowledge (Cyr, 2010). Knowledge ownership, whether detained by people or organizations, has gathered limited but extensive attention. Rendering to research, when individuals deliberate themselves as knowledge owners, they are more likely to share their knowledge with others (Rechberg, 2017). This penchant stems partially from the social contentment of disseminating information (Rode, 2016). These concepts of ownership have also been linked to organizational culture components like solidarity and accomplishment expectations (Jarvenpaa and Staples, 2001). Finally, people's views about knowledge ownership influence their behavior, significantly impacting the more extensive knowledge exchange and collaboration landscape.

2.2.2. Perceived Benefits and Costs

The perceived benefits and costs of sharing knowledge are essential in social exchange theory (Cabrera, 2006). According to studies, people are more willing to share their expertise when they feel the advantages exceed the risks (Sedighi, 2016). Organizations that adequately communicate the advantages of knowledge sharing while simultaneously addressing the potential concerns. That concern may establish an environment where individuals feel encouraged and able to share their skills, resulting in creativity and collaboration. This is particularly relevant in online professional organizations, where personal pleasure encourages sharing knowledge. These factors are related to a desire to reciprocate, a better reputation and community expansion, and encouraging knowledge-sharing (Cheung, 2013; Imlawi, 2020). People may be prevented from sharing knowledge because of the perceived time and effort. They are required for knowledge codification and a lack of confidence in reciprocation (Kankanhalli et al., 2005).

2.2.3. Interpersonal Trust and Justice

Trust and Justice, two critical components of human relationships, are also required for sharing knowledge. In research, several activities that foster trust in knowledge-sharing situations have been documented (Abrams et al., 2003). Trust is typically a precursor or moderator in knowledge-sharing activities (Lin et al., 2012). On the other hand, dependence on trust may result in uncritical acceptance of information, potentially leading to misuse (Sondergaard et al., 2007). The relationship between management trust and knowledge sharing has produced contradictory results (Mooradian et al., 2006; Renzl, 2008). Though it has received little attention, the role of justice in knowledge sharing has been identified. As a factor affecting knowledge-sharing attitudes (Schepers and van den Berg, 2007).

2.2.4. Individual Attitudes

Individual opinions towards knowledge-sharing, as described by the theory of reasoned behavior and the technology acceptance model. The model dramatically influences knowledge-sharing attitudes and behaviors (Bock and Kim, 2002; Lin and Lee, 2004). Several vital characteristics have been revealed in studies on individual attitudes toward knowledge sharing. According to Kwok (2005), extrinsic incentives did not affect attitude, but absorptive capacity and channel richness contributed. Beliefs about the value of knowledge influence these attitudes. There is potential for improved relationships via sharing (yes, 2019). Bock (2005) emphasized the relevance of attitudes, subjective norms, and organizational environment in creating knowledge-sharing intents. These findings demonstrate that internal reasons and social-psychological forces affect attitudes toward sharing knowledge more than external variables.

3. Future Directions of Research in Individual-Level Knowledge Sharing

In-Depth Understanding of Cultural Nuances Future research should examine how cultural differences affect knowledge-sharing behaviors. Cross-cultural studies can uncover diverse patterns and motivations. This may lead to more effective, culturally appropriate techniques for encouraging information sharing in multinational organizations. Second, consider less-studied personality characteristics. While some personality traits have been linked to knowledge sharing, studying a broader range of features is possible. For example, understanding the value of attributes such as resilience or flexibility for knowledge sharing. They may provide new insights into individual motivations and drawbacks. Third, further research is needed to clarify the complex interplay of intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for sharing knowledge by expanding on Motivational Theories. Studies might be done to study how motivational variables interact and change over time. These studies are especially in response to evolving workplace dynamics and challenges. Fourth, what is emotional intelligence, and what role does it play? Emotional intelligence comprises empathy and social skills and has significantly influenced knowledge-sharing behaviors. Future studies might examine how emotional intelligence aids or hinders knowledge sharing, particularly in diverse and interdisciplinary teams. Finally, academics may get a more thorough and nuanced awareness of individual-level information sharing by focusing on these research topics. They are essential for more effective and adaptable knowledge management approaches in organizations.

3.1. Learning Styles and Knowledge Sharing

Forthcoming Research should observe how different learning styles affect people's knowledge-sharing behaviors. People learn differently; some prefer image information, while others select audio or kinesthetic learning. Consider how these partialities relate to knowledge sharing, which may result in more modified and successful organizational knowledge-sharing strategies. According to studies, individuals with precise learning styles can be more eager to share knowledge using specific methods or circumstances.

3.2. Mental Well-being and Health in Knowledge Sharing

The part of mental health and well-being in sharing knowledge is ailing understood. Stress, anxiety, and overall mental health might all be deliberated. These aspects to see how they impact an individual's skill and readiness to share knowledge. This aspect might be supportive in intense work environments or areas where loss is comprehensive. Understanding these relationships might support the conception of a happier place of work that encourages knowledge sharing.

3.3. Neuroscientific Perspectives on Knowledge Sharing

Considerate knowledge-sharing change via neuroscientific processes is an emerging area. This study examines how different neural procedures and cognitive functions impact knowledge-sharing behavior. For example, studies may observe how the brain relates to empathy and social thoughtful operate in collaborative environments. This project employs neuroimaging knowledge to identify neural activity throughout knowledge-sharing activities. It allows researchers to get perception into the fundamental trainers of these behaviors.

4. Conclusion

Identifying the consequence of creating a culture that inspires open communication and support. These are critical for organizations that must control their workers' shared knowledge. As altering trends and skills continue to impact the environment, there is an increasing claim for approaches. They capitalize on these developments to improve knowledge-sharing methods. The importance remains on producing situations that balance the supposed benefits and costs of sharing knowledge through immersive knowledge, artificial intelligence, or cooperative platforms. By identifying and addressing individual problems, organizations

progress a value of constant learning, creativity, and shared success at the individual level. They are ultimately adding to their general growth and competitiveness.

The practical suggestions and research directions of the knowledge-sharing area are significant. Organizations may make their knowledge managing systems more complete and profitable. They understand how new features such as mental health, learning styles, personality traits, and others influence knowledge sharing. Consider how these factors influence knowledge sharing and can aid in increasing organizational policies and support structures. Neuroscientific advances may open the technique for fresh methods for developing collaborative tools. Neuroscientific affect the environments that reproduce natural cognitive and social procedures. Finally, investigating these emerging challenges will improve the scholarly debate. This research gives applied insights for organizations looking to enhance their knowledge-sharing procedures. Several forthcoming developments and technologies are estimated to influence individual knowledge sharing suggestively. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning growth enable personalized content references, making it easier for users to find and share related information. The Internet of Things (IoT) allows people to interchange real-time data and perceptions as the world interacts more. This allows a more vibrant and informed cooperative environment. These emerging movements and technologies can alter how people share knowledge while enhancing efficiency, accessibility, and creativity.

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