A Conceptual Framework of the Organizational Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing- With Empirical Evidence and Managerial Implications

*Muhammad Abdul Basit Memon, Assistant Professor Sukkur IBA University, Sukkur, Pakistan

*Corresponding author’s email: basit.memon@iba-suk.edu.pk

ARTICLE DETAILS

History
Revised format: May 2024
Available Online: Jun 2024

Keywords
Knowledge Sharing, Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing, Organizational Culture, Interpersonal Trust.

JEL Classification
M1, M2

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Knowledge sharing has gained the attention and focus of academicians, researchers and scholars from all around the world for almost two decades; since its role and contribution toward organizational success is globally recognized. However, despite its growing significance and recognition, business managers and practitioners fail to earn the benefits of the same due to not being properly aware of the organizational factors that can contribute toward the creation and implementation of efficient knowledge management systems and sharing of knowledge within organizations.

Design/Methodology/Approach: This research is based on the PhD research dissertation of the author and it was conducted through qualitative content analysis of research articles on the subject matter.

Findings: In this paper, in the light of the existing literature and available empirical evidence, a conceptual framework of the organizational antecedents (determinants) of knowledge sharing is presented. Based on the findings of this research, organizational culture, organizational absorptive capacity, technology, interpersonal trust and relationships, team orientation, organizational support, decentralized organizational structure, employee empowerment and transformational leadership are the most important organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing.

Implications/Originality/Value: This paper presents some valuable implications and recommendations for the managers and practitioners concerning the implementation of efficient and effective knowledge management systems and the facilitation of knowledge sharing within organizations.

© 2024, The authors, under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0


DOI: https://doi.org/10.26710/jafee.v10i2.2970

113
Introduction
The world economy is rapidly converting from production orientation to knowledge orientation (Bilan et al., 2023; Powell & Snellman, 2004; Drucker, 1994). Resultantly, business firms are also becoming more knowledge-oriented (Farooq, 2018; Alvesson, 1995), and therefore the question of exploitation, generation and accumulation of knowledge is very important for organizations (Zhao et al., 2022; Kim and Mauborgne, 1997). An important reason for the recent emphasis on knowledge management is the fact that knowledge has been recognized as a pivotal source of firms' competitive advantage ((Zheng, 2017, Drucker, 1994; Bell, 1973).

If the organizations aim at gaining competitive lead, it is not sufficient for them to only rely on hiring competent and capable employees who possess relevant knowledge and skills or help them in acquiring those skills (Brown & Duguid, 1991). Knowledge sharing among organizational members and within and across teams opens the way for organizations to exploit the knowledge-based assets and capitalize on them (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Numerous research studies (e.g., Lin, 2007; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Hansen, 2002) have proved the positive link between KS and individual and team performance, innovation, faster production cycles, cost reductions, faster completion of new product development projects, and increase in sales and revenues and market share of the organizations.

Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing
Keeping in view the importance of sharing organizational knowledge for gaining success and competitive advantage (Tedja, 2022; Drucker, 1994; Bell, 1973), it is very much essential for business firms to establish efficient and effective knowledge management systems; to identify, collect, create and distribute organizational knowledge within individuals and organizational units (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). On the other hand, this is ironic that many firms fail to reap the fruits of efficient knowledge management systems due to being unaware of the factors, processes and resources that facilitate or impede organizational knowledge, simply the antecedents to knowledge sharing (Wang and Noe, 2010). That is why, numerous researchers (e.g., Matzler and Mueller, 2011; Liu & Phillips, 2011; Levin & Cross Huang, 2008) have given special focus on antecedents of knowledge sharing (Witherspoon et al. 2013). Literature on determinants of KS presents a big list of factors in a vast number of research studies (Wijk et al. 2008), but in a fragmented manner by mixing individual factors with organizational and contextual ones. That is why, according to (Wijk et al. (2008), despite a continuous focus of about two decades, a systematic study of the antecedents to knowledge sharing is still evasive. Whereas the antecedents to knowledge sharing need to be classified separately concerning individual and organizational factors to help the practitioners and academicians for proper and systematic understanding and analysis of the individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing. Keeping these facts in mind, the author of this article endeavors to classify both streams of antecedents to knowledge sharing by presenting separate conceptual frameworks for the two types of antecedents to knowledge sharing. Here, in this paper, organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing are discussed.

Organizational Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing
Organizational Culture
Organizational culture, according to many researchers (e.g., Oliver & Kandadi, 2006; Gold et al., 2001; Alavi & Leidner, 2001) is the most significant factor for effective organizational learning and knowledge sharing; since it determines beliefs, values, attitudes and processes that can facilitate or impede the process of learning and knowledge sharing within organizations (Schein, 1985). Extant literature on knowledge management supports the idea that organizational culture directly influences the process and pattern of organizational knowledge sharing (McDermott & O'Dell, 2001).
Organizational or corporate culture according to Denison (1990) and Smiricich (1983) helps in understanding the reasons for the success and failure of different initiatives since it unveils trends in organizational behavior. In the light of the ‘dynamic perspective’ as suggested by (Sackmann) 1991, 1993, organizational culture is defined as the fundamental beliefs, norms and values that are held, learned and practiced by a group, that govern the behavioral patterns of the members of that group (Sackmann, 2003). Owing to shared corporate norms and values; common identification, motivation, cooperation and commitment can be attained, which can positively influence the working of an organization (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Logically, knowledge-sharing activities can only be fruitful if they align with the cultural norms and values of organizations (Davenport et al., 1998). From this perspective, the terms ‘knowledge culture’ (Oliver & Kandadi, 2006), ‘learning culture’ (Schein, 1992), and ‘knowledge-friendly culture’ (Davenport et al., 1998) are coined by different scholars. Learning culture is generally expected to have a drastic impact on individual, group, as well as overall organizational learning (Alavi & Leidner, 2001).

Organizational Absorptive Capacity

In the knowledge management literature, organizational absorptive capacity has been discussed as one of the prominent factors for the creation and exchange of knowledge within organizations (Lane et al., 2001). Numerous previous studies posit that absorptive capacity plays a significant role in organizational knowledge sharing and the ability of firms to innovate new products and services (e.g., Knudsen & Roman, 2004; Cohen, & Levinthal, 1990). Absorptive capacity recounts an organization's ability to identify, gather, process and utilize new existing knowledge (Zahra & George, 2002). It also includes the willingness and motivation of the members of an organization to collect external knowledge and their ability to apply it to enhance organizational efficiency. Zahra and George (2002) have documented the available empirical work on organizational knowledge absorptive capacity. In their view, organizational absorptive capacity tends to have four dimensions: first acquisition, second assimilation, third transformation, and fourth exploitation (Zahra & George, 2002). Out of these four, acquisition and assimilation refer to potential absorptive capacity, and transformation and exploitation refer to realized/achieved absorptive capacity. Minbaeva et al. (2003) have investigated the influence of absorption capacity on the ability of an organization to exploit and utilize the previously collected knowledge. Numerous other empirical studies have tested that a firm's absorptive capacity positively contributes to the generation and sharing of knowledge within and across units (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Szulanski, 1996). Knudsen and Roman (2004) have also empirically proved a positive correlation between a firm's knowledge-sharing capability and absorption capacity.

Technology

Technology especially information technology, plays an important role in the creation, transfer and sharing of organizational knowledge (Kharabsheh, 2007). An organization's infrastructure of information technology encompasses the systems and tools that support and facilitate the process of knowledge sharing within and outside the boundaries of an organization (Bechina & Bommen, 2006). In the presence of multiple search engines, websites and other internet sources of emailing, video conferencing and online messaging; it is not difficult to understand and estimate the impact of technology on the transfer and dissemination of information all around the globe. Technology tools facilitating knowledge sharing also include databases, knowledge directories, discussion forums, electronic bulletin boards, groupware, intranets, personal web pages, electronic libraries, and many more (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). For example, employees can be trained on how to use systems of knowledge-sharing and also to detect knowledge-sharing traits through E-learning programs (Wild et. al., 2002). Many organizations, for example, develop knowledge maps whereby they facilitate their employees about expertise in any area and mode of communication for access to knowledge. This helps employees in locating and accessing the people they need to resolve their daily routine work-related problems (Desouza & Awazu, 2003).
Interpersonal Trust-based Relationships and Social Networks

Interpersonal relationship, social networks and social trust refers to employees' relations with their colleagues within the organizational setup (Chow & Chan, 2008). In the view of Witherspoon et al. (2013), social trust denotes the extent to which individuals think that other people are open, honest, sincere and reliable. Generally, higher degrees of mutual trust and stronger networks of social relationships, lead to higher amounts of information sharing (Witherspoon et al., 2013). Castelfranchi and Falcone, (2002), note that interpersonal relations and knowledge exchange tend to be positively correlated since social network-based ties tend to be crucial to knowledge exchange through the mediation of trust-based relationships (Levin et al., 2002). For instance, this has been observed that organizational members tied with strong social ties, tend to donate knowledge with the understanding that they own a social network of mutual cooperation-based ties to support the individual who seeks help or shares knowledge in performing the job (Castelfranchi & Falcone, 2002). Researchers (e.g., Newell et al., 1999) have specifically argued that good interpersonal interactions based on mutual trust and cooperation can support knowledge sharing by endorsing a group identity, improving communication and accelerating the frequency of meetings (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). Such interactions probably can also help to eliminate the cultural differences, regardless of being national or corporate, existing in organizations.

An increasing number of empirical findings posit that strong and reliable ties among organizational members lead to better knowledge transfer (Reagans & McEvily, 2003). It is assumed that strong social bonds lead the firms to magnify efforts confirming that knowledge donors and seekers sufficiently understand and capitalize on the acquired knowledge (Hansen et al. 1999). In addition to strong ties, existing research studies argue that interpersonal trust among the organizational members regulates organizational knowledge sharing (Szulanski et al., 2004); since it triggers partners’ inclination to help access and understand new existing knowledge (Lane et al., 2001). Trust denotes the belief of the trustor that the trustee is reliable and that he or she will fulfill his or her promise (Inkpen, 2007).

Team Orientation

A predominant view about team orientation is that group working is more desirable than individual working because teams can be more fruitful, efficient and effective than separate individual working (Alavi et al., 2005). Cooperative learning theory (Gilles & Adrian, 2003) argues that the outcome of the group will be increased if the group members possess common goals, feel collective group responsibility for performance, assist or guide their fellow members regarding the required skills for performing duties and time by time keep on assessing overall group performance and contribution.

In knowledge-based organizations according to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), teams tend to be major performing units and healthy teamwork mostly contributes to knowledge sharing. Team orientation creates a sense of cooperation and provides possibilities for organizational members to learn from their fellow workers who are senior to them or willing to help other team members by working together, watching out for one another and sharing information (Janz, 1999). Teams also play a critical role in the formation of fresh knowledge through dialogue and exchange of ideas (Nonaka, 1991). These kinds of behaviors provide the foundation for learning and knowledge-sharing activities.

Organizational Support

Organizational support means that an organization considers the welfare of its workers in a real sense and seriously appreciates their contributions (Lynch, 1997). To explain this concept, it can refer to three dimensions. First is the 'manager's attitude' which is based on the notion that the supportive and encouraging attitude of a manager is crucial for effective knowledge sharing.
Second is that of 'training', which is also widely known as a significant element of effective knowledge sharing (Davenport et al., 1998) since it equips organizational members with the necessary aids and attitudes needed for acquiring and sharing knowledge. 'Sanctions' is the third dimension of organizational support which refers to the cultivation and promotion of desirable behaviors that are effective in persuading collaboration in social interactions (Yamagishi & Sato, 1986). Sanctions relate to positive and negative actions and measures taken by organizations to the limit that sharing of knowledge may be appreciated and rewarded, and knowledge hoarding may be penalized, to make knowledge sharing both successful and effective (Bock and Kim, 2002). Organizational support also includes participants' beliefs relating to the extent that the management promotes a conducive atmosphere for sharing of knowledge, and provides leadership for the same (Uday et al., 2006). The belief of the organizational members that management values knowledge sharing should facilitate knowledge transfer among employees (Witherspoon et al., 2013).

Decentralized Organizational Structure
A considerable number of research studies have discussed the pros and cons of diverse organizational structures and the way they impact knowledge sharing within organizations. Zhou and Fink (2003), perceive organizational structure to be more impactful than OC and information technology for the effective sharing of knowledge within organizations. Researchers argue that a flexible and informal organizational structure supports KS (De Long & Fahey, 2000). On the contrary, a strict focus on internal regulations (punishing mistakes and failures) and hierarchies creates a workplace environment where people are expected to comply with organizational rules and regulations, formalities and procedures, thereby impeding effective knowledge-sharing practices (Michailova & Husted, 2003).

Grant (1996) suggests that when firms are acknowledged as entities integrating knowledge, a major portion of which is tacit, which can be shared only by those who possess it, then hierarchical boundaries disturb it. Hence, a centralized hierarchical set-up impedes open communication within departments and units and hampers the occurrence of the exchange of ideas (Woodman et al., 1993). A centralized structure may also distort the flow of ideas due to filtration or reduction of some of the contents of the message (knowledge) based on the feeling or fear as to what would be desirable or acceptable to the higher-level officials. Therefore, centralization is adversely correlated with knowledge transfer within organizations (Tsai, 2002). A flatter, decentralized structure on the other hand offers firms the needed flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing business setting (Sanchez & Mahoney, 1996). The decentralized structure can also foster the timely sharing of knowledge, since it promotes empowerment among organizational members, which means that the employees are encouraged to take initiatives on their own and the same results in enhanced knowledge transfer (Tsai, 2002).

Employee Empowerment
Employee empowerment or authority indicates the degree to which the employees of a firm, in the capacity of being an individual or group enjoy the independence, power and authority to decide which actions are needed and how best they can be achieved (Manz & Sims, 1980). Extant literature recommends that knowledge workers signify the need for autonomy and authority more than any other aspect of their job (Goldstein & Rockart, 1984). Based on this, Nonaka (1991) notes that self-motivated individuals or teams tend to be a critical success factor for creating a knowledge company. Empowerment is perceived as a crucial variable of learning culture that promotes learning both at the individual as well as group levels (Slater & Narver, 1995).

According to Hult et al. (2000), empowerment implies a critical cultural concept of "localness" which draws a drastic influence on organizational learning. Localness according to Burns & Stalker (1961), refers to a culture of an organization, characterized by decentralization, flexible job duties and trouble-free processes of communication. In a localized firm, employees are seen...
to be inclined to learn and share knowledge enthusiastically to enhance organizational productivity and effectiveness. Additionally, group autonomy infuses a strong sense of knowledge sharing which signifies the decentralized setup of organizations as an important feature of organizational knowledge transfer (Schulz, 2001).

**Transformational Leadership**
Transformational leadership generally tends to have a positive impact on individual as well as group work (Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders tend to be capable of realigning employees' norms and values and inspiring them to achieve higher standards of performance through the use of their power of personal expertise, charisma and inspirational motivation (Liu & Phillips, 2011). Transformational leaders are those who tend to have an enormous impact on their followers and command immense respect, trust, loyalty and admiration from them since they motivate their followers by addressing their key concerns, inducing their self-interest for the betterment of organizational functioning and instilling a sense of achievement and ownership towards the achievement of organizational goals (Krishnan, 2007).

The potential influence of efficient or transformational leadership on knowledge sharing is also enormous. Considering the influence of transformational leadership on OC and working, this has mostly been noted that organizational knowledge sharing will be congruent with individual values and organizational culture (Bock et al., 2005). Quite reasonably, efficient leadership will encourage an organizational culture in which employees would feel motivated to share their knowledge, since KS does not emerge automatically in a team, and the team leader has to play a critical role in making it possible (Srivastava, et al., 2006). Farooq (2018), empirically tested the impact of transformational leadership on knowledge sharing within organizations and found and positive relationship between knowledge sharing and transformational leadership in manufacturing firms. Mittal & Dhar (2015) have also tested and empirically verified the moderating effect impact of knowledge sharing on the relationship between knowledge-sharing transformational leadership and the creativity of employees. Mihardjo & Alamsjah (2019) have also empirically tested the impact of transformational leadership on KS and team performance.

**Shared Vision and Goals**
Shared vision relates to the processes within social ties that provide manifestations of collective systems of ideas, meanings, interpretations and representations (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). It fosters a sense of common shared thoughts and appropriate styles of performing in a social setup. Galer and van der Heijden (1992) referred to the 'congruence of goals among individuals' while defining shared vision. If the organizational members have convergence on knowledge sharing as a crucial element for superior organizational performance; then it is expected that knowledge sharing will take place. On the other hand, conflicting or divergent assumptions and goals reduce the likelihood of the organizational members agreeing upon the importance, acquisition and utilization of knowledge; which will discourage knowledge sharing in that organization reducing the organization's capability to respond successfully to market trends, problems or challenges as a consequence (Kharabsheh, 2007). Previous studies argue that shared vision and goals are critical cognitive factors of social relationships that affect knowledge sharing (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). Common goals and shared values facilitate mutual understanding integrating different actors of knowledge sharing by providing a crucial bonding mechanism. Hence, shared vision and values are expected to positively contribute toward better knowledge sharing within organizations (Kharabsheh, 2007).

**Reward System**
Incentives, based on the competitive instinct of human psychology and research on motivation, are triggering factors to optimize employee performance. There has been a continual debate, over the years, on the application of intrinsic and extrinsic reward mechanism systems to encourage
employees to share knowledge. Several research studies suggested that the application of an incentive system is essential for the effective and successful sharing of knowledge within organizations. Bartol and Srivastava (2002) investigated the impact of financial rewards for boosting KS in organizations and identified a positive influence of financial rewards on knowledge sharing. In the same way, Kugel and Schostek (2004), examined the impact of financial incentives on KS in German giant company Siemens and suggested that financial rewards looked to draw an instant effect on employees' enthusiasm toward knowledge sharing. However, they warned that this could result in two thinkable issues. Firstly, the quality of that shared knowledge can be lower and second, it can strengthen the concept of the employees that knowledge is a privately owned asset (Kugel & Schostek, 2004).

On the other side, several authors maintain that the implementation of incentives or a reward system can rarely have a long-term impact on knowledge sharing; since it looks unnatural, whereas it should be natural (O'Dell & Grayson, 1999). Moreover, Michailova and Husted (2003) argue that the application of an incentive system for KS is unsuitable particularly in hostile and less trusting environments, since any kind of reward may create insecurity and jealousy among the organizational members. Therefore, managers instead of depending on rewards should inspire and compel their employees, in order to transform their organizations into knowledge-embracing cultures.

**Time Allocation**

Time allocation has also been recognized as an essential element for organizational knowledge sharing (Oliver & Kandadi, 2006). Since employees mostly remain busy performing their organizational duties, resulting in less time for sharing their knowledge with their colleagues, therefore, a simple way to spur employees' endeavors to knowledge sharing is to assure them that they have enough time to share their knowledge (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996). Researchers (e.g., Hew & Hara, 2007) have found that lack of time is generally perceived by employees as a major hurdle in knowledge sharing. In the study of Oliver and Kandadi (2006), almost every respondent stressed the allocation of time for learning and sharing ideas. The respondents suggested that the role of team leaders especially middle-level managers is very critical in this context. 'Time allocation' was also pointed out as a key determinant of the difference in habits, behaviors and attitudes of employees regarding knowledge sharing, within various departments and teams within a given organization. They further reported that it is not uncommon that some managers who possess predominantly short-term goals and targets, do not facilitate subordinates to spend proper time on knowledge-sharing activities. Therefore, they suggested that managers need to possess a long-term vision to develop a knowledge culture (Oliver and Kandadi, 2006). Krogh et al.

**Empirical Evidence and Discussions**

Several researchers and scholars have identified organizational culture being one of the most salient organizational antecedents to KS in their empirical research studies (e.g., Liu, 2018; Dasú, et al., 2017; Wei, & Miraglia, 2017; Chang et al., 2017; Siakas, Georgiadou, & Balstrup, 2010). For instance, the overarching impact of organizational culture can be analyzed from the note by Wei and Mraglia (2017). Their empirical evidence suggests that OC plays a crucial role in the process of KS. It determines, which knowledge to share, in which conditions to share, and the situations where it can be shared or hoarded (Wei and Mraglia, 2017). Learning culture tends to be equipped with knowledge and learning orientation. Jo and Joo (2011) also claimed that learning organizational culture was significantly associated with KS intentions of the organizational members. On the other hand, Suveatwatanakul (2013) strongly supported the idea that KS is a key aspect in developing the learning organization. Veer & Rowley (2017), highlight the crucial role of organizational leadership in instilling a brilliant and conducive organizational culture for effective sharing of KS within the organizations.
Han (2018), evidenced organizational support as a key antecedent for facilitating KS within organizations. He noted that the feeling of belongingness of an employee toward an organization can affect whether the individual acts in good faith. This also confirms the belief that organizational support can spur the intentions of the organizational members for knowledge sharing. These findings of Han (2018), support the findings of Lin and Lee's (2006) study that an organizational culture of employee support affects the level, frequency and quality of knowledge sharing, since it influences the commitment of employees to sharing of knowledge (Han 2018). Le and Lei (2018) also found organizational support to be very important for encouraging KS within organizations.

Several research studies (e.g., Dasi et al, (2017; Wang & Noe, 2010) have identified rewards especially direct or financial rewards being a good motivational tool for promoting KS within organizations and at the same time many studies (Aboelmaged, 2018; Han (2018; Kim, & Park, 2017) have found them non-supportive for ensuring effective sharing of knowledge within organizations. Having found evidence of the non-workability of the direct rewards, many scholars (e.g., Kim & Park, 2017; Zhang et al. 2017) have suggested indirect rewards and have highlighted the idea of intrinsic motivation for facilitating knowledge sharing within organizations.

Le & Lei (2018) emphasize that organizations need to promote ethical leadership to facilitate KS, as they noted that in order to stimulate employees' eagerness to share knowledge, management needs to highlight ethical leadership practices characterized by fair and balanced decision-making; ethically conducting their own lives; emphasizing business values and ethics; incorporating fairness in all actions and activities and disciplining the individuals who violate moral standards and rules etc. They highlighted the important role of ethical leadership in supporting knowledge-donating behaviors compared to knowledge-collecting behaviors. Honesty, integrity, and moral conduct of ethical leaders have a drastic impact on the beliefs and ethical values of organizational members.

Managerial Implications and Recommendations
A key managerial implication coming out of this research relates to the identification and relative significance of the various antecedents to organizational knowledge sharing. The first and foremost important organizational consideration towards facilitating KS is none other than organizational culture; as it has been a strong dimension of learning orientation in the context of the current study. In fact, in the discussion of organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing, perhaps no other factor is more influential than organizational culture (e.g., Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Oliver & Kandadi, 2006); since it determines beliefs, values, attitudes, and work systems that can encourage or impede the process of organizational learning or knowledge sharing. Some researchers believe that organizational culture is important for knowledge sharing (Bock et al., 2005; Chow et al., 2000), while others have placed it as an unconditional requirement. However, developing and maintaining a culture of learning and sharing is essential for organizations, if they want to thrive and succeed (Slater& Narver, 1995; Moss-Kanter, 1983).

Managers need to facilitate and ensure the learning of employees within organizations. According to Liu, (2018), organizational learning needs constant support from management, especially HR managers and an appropriate mechanism for KS. For instance, management can provide possibilities of indirect learning for workers through discussion forums, informal gatherings and parties to elevate the level of mutual friendship and interpersonal trust among organizational members to exchange new ideas and foster self-directed learning to cultivate a pleasant environment to ensure the effective knowledge sharing among organizational members. Chang et al. (2017) have also evidenced that organizational learning is directly linked with effective organizational KS.
Shared values, social capital and mutual trust and coordination are also prerequisites to ensure smooth sharing of knowledge amongst the organizational members. Hence, managers need to help employees identify their ambitions and aspirations and enhance their mutual collaboration and trust at work. Social and structural capital starts to accumulate when organizational members pursue collective goals, mission and vision and the same can lead toward the effectiveness of exploitative learning also (Liu, 2018). Firms need to create a learning environment and it is essential to design such HRM policies that might not only be helpful in the accumulation of internal and external social capital but might also promote inter- and intra-organizational learning. These efforts and endeavors of the top management for a collaborative learning environment will enhance employees' feelings of belonging, trust and participation (Liu, 2018).

Management needs to understand how to empower their employees by delegating them authority and giving them proper control of their work and resources (Lin and Joe, 2012). Ryan et al. (2010) argues that when knowledge workers are not delegated decision-making authority, they become less likely to share their knowledge with others. Carebra et al. (2006) have found a positive relationship between employee empowerment and KS. While emphasizing empowerment, they argued that empowerment is a two-way communication between management and the employees; not only informing but also listening to employees and even motivating them to speak out, can positively contribute toward employees' self-efficacy and self-development. This kind of provision may also be instrumental in creating a kind of supportive organizational culture that would foster knowledge sharing (Carebra et al., 2006).

The application of organizational rewards to improve KS is extensively argued in the existing literature. Some researchers indicate it is productive (e.g., Holton et al., 1997) and others suggest it negatively affects KS (Bock et al., 2005). Davenport and Prusak (1998) propose that KS can be improved through incentives like goal setting, performance assessments, feedback and monetary rewards etc. However, there is the cost to be incurred in monitoring performance, and rewarding or punishing behavior through organizational measures. He argued that the economic argument of material incentive was inconclusive in analyzing interactions among individuals, groups or organizations. He emphasized that the "shared norms and trust-based dealings" were desirable to structural preferences (McNeish & Mann, 2010).

Managerial support also plays a powerful role in inducing the organizational members to share their knowledge with their colleagues. The studies of Lu et al. (2006) and Zboralski (2009) have found a positive relationship between managerial support and KS. In their view, the positive effects of perceived organizational support in terms of managers' attitude, emphasis and endorsements towards KS and training tend to have a drastic impact on organizational KS (Lu et al. 2006). Zboralski, (2009) argued that organizational members can be motivated for KS by efficient and capable leadership and appropriate managerial support that takes into consideration that the organizational members are motivated to share knowledge, but they require an encouraging and conducive environment and culture to promote KS (Zboralski, 2009). Wu, et. al. (2012) could not find a positive link between supervisor support and KS at work. Similar findings were arrived at in research studies on voluntary learning and development projects by Leibowitz, et. al. (1983) and it was found that these activities positively influenced employees' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and behavioral patterns (Leibowitz et. al., 1983).

Time constraints can also be a significant reason for the potential hoarding of knowledge and instead of KS, organizational members may focus on those activities that they deem more beneficial (Michailova and Husted, 2003). The results of this research also support the past research findings that found time and effort as barriers to knowledge sharing (Hew & Hara, 2007). These results suggest that allocating time for and prioritizing KS activities could be a mandatory step toward increasing KS at work (Wu, et. al., 2012).
Conclusion
The basic purpose of this research was to identify and explore the organizational factors that are essential for the effective and productive sharing of knowledge sharing within organizations. The research has concluded that organizational culture based on the principles of mutual trust, coordination, cooperation and employee empowerment is vital for the successful transfer of knowledge among employees. The study has also explored those factors like organizational absorption capacity, technology, interpersonal trust, social capital, team orientation and decentralized structure are also key factors in fostering KS within organizations. The findings of this study also suggest that organizational support and the culture of rewarding employees is also vital to the achievement of the goal of establishing an efficient system of knowledge management and sharing. Last but not least, organizational leadership plays a decisive role in the entire process of KS within the organization and the firms are supposed to pay serious attention to all these factors, if they are serious and sincere towards ensuring effective and efficient sharing of knowledge.

References


Liu, Chih-Hsing Sam (2108). "Examining social capital, organizational learning and knowledge transfer in cultural and creative industries of practice." Tourism Management 64, 258-270.


