The Influence of Organizational Trust on Knowledge Sharing Behavior: A Case Study of the Mineral Water Production Unit Manbaa El Ghezlan Biskra

أثر الثقة التنظيمية على سلوك التشارك المعرفي: دراسة حالة وحدة انتاج المياه المعدنية منبع الغزلان بسكرة

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***Abstract*:**

This study aims to investigate the impact of organizational trust on knowledge sharing behavior within the Mineral Water Production Unit Manbaa El Ghezlan in Biskra. A questionnaire was used as the primary tool for collecting data, with 65 forms distributed to a convenience sample. Of these, 50 were retrieved, and 6 were excluded from analysis. Using SPSS (Version 19) for statistical analysis, the study found that trust in colleagues positively influences knowledge sharing behavior in the unit under study. In contrast, the other two dimensions—trust in supervisors and trust in top management—were found to have no significant impact on enhancing knowledge sharing behavior in the unit. Based on these findings, a set of relevant recommendations was proposed.

Keywords: organizational trust; knowledge sharing behavior; Mineral Water Production Unit Manbaa El Ghezlan Biskra

JEL Classification Codes: M14, D83

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1. Introduction :

In the contemporary era, knowledge has become one of the most critical components of production, surpassing even traditional factors such as land and capital. Modern organizations, recognizing knowledge as a primary source of competitive advantage and a cornerstone for sustainability in a rapidly evolving environment, have come to adopt advanced managerial approaches that empower human resources to acquire essential competencies. Among these approaches, knowledge management stands out as the most appropriate strategy for harnessing, utilizing, and sharing available knowledge.

Knowledge sharing is a fundamental process within knowledge management, as it facilitates the dissemination, exchange, and transfer of knowledge among employees—positively influencing their skills, abilities, and expertise, and consequently enhancing their overall competencies. These improved competencies contribute significantly to achieving the organization's goals and long-term vision.

Although knowledge sharing activities are often supported by information technology and knowledge management systems, technology alone is only one of several influencing factors. Other key enablers include incentives, organizational culture, and, importantly, organizational trust. The latter has attracted substantial attention across the fields of humanities and administrative sciences, especially in the literature on organizational behavior, due to its direct impact on the actions of individuals, teams, and organizations as a whole.

1.1. Research Problem:

Based on the above, the central research problem can be formulated as follows:

"What is the impact of organizational trust on knowledge sharing behavior within the Mineral Water Production Unit Manbaa El Ghezlan – Biskra?"

In addition to this main question, the study also seeks to address the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of organizational trust in the unit under study?
- What is the level of knowledge sharing within the unit under study?
- What is the impact of each dimension of organizational trust on knowledge sharing behavior in the unit?

1.2. Research Hypotheses:

To address the primary research problem and the associated sub-questions, the following hypotheses were developed:

Main Hypothesis:

- There is a significant impact of organizational trust on knowledge sharing behavior in the unit under study.

Sub-Hypotheses:

- Trust in colleagues has a significant impact on knowledge sharing behavior in the unit.
- Trust in supervisors has a significant impact on knowledge sharing behavior in the unit.
- Trust in top management has a statistically significant relationship with knowledge sharing behavior.

1.3. Research Objectives:

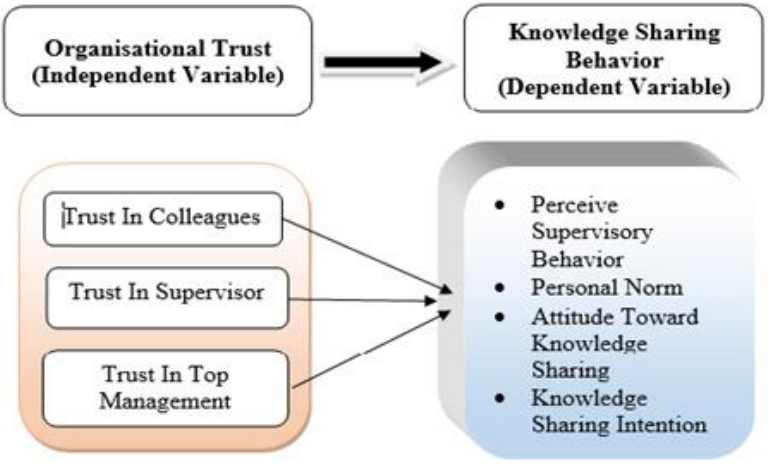
In light of the research problem, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To assess the level of organizational trust and its influence on knowledge sharing behavior in the unit.
- To measure and analyze the impact of organizational trust dimensions—trust in colleagues, trust in supervisors, and trust in top management—on knowledge sharing behavior.
- To offer a comprehensive set of recommendations for building trust that can foster an interactive organizational environment conducive to intellectual and knowledge exchange among all employees.

1.4. Research Model:

In alignment with the research questions and hypotheses, and to illustrate the relationship among the study variables, the theoretical model of the study is presented as follows:

Figure 1: Research Model



ource: Developed by the author based on previous studies

1.5. Previous Studies:

- **Study by Najimi Issa and Boutaleb Djahid (2020),** titled: *"The Impact of Organizational Trust on Knowledge Sharing Behavior among Employees: An Applied Study at the Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences – University of Jijel."*
  This study aimed to examine the levels of both organizational trust and knowledge sharing among employees at the Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences at the University of Jijel, as well as to test the nature of the impact of organizational trust, in its various dimensions, on knowledge sharing behavior. The questionnaire was used as the primary tool for data collection, distributed using a simple random sampling method to 32 employees out of a total of 96 at the faculty.
  Key findings of the study include:
  - A moderate level of organizational trust and a moderate level of knowledge sharing were observed among the faculty employees.
  - No positive effect of organizational trust or its dimensions on knowledge sharing behavior was found among

employees at the Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, University of Jijel.

- **Study by Hamkani Antara (2017/2018),** titled: *"The Impact of Knowledge Sharing on Faculty Performance: A Case Study of a Sample of Professors at Kasdi Merbah University – Ouargla."*
  This study sought to determine the impact of knowledge sharing on the performance of university professors at Kasdi Merbah University in Ouargla. The questionnaire was the main tool used for data collection, and it was distributed using a simple random sampling technique. The study sample comprised 115 individuals. Data from the completed forms were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

  Key findings of the study include:
  - A high level of knowledge sharing was found among professors at Kasdi Merbah University – Ouargla.
  - A strong positive correlation was identified between knowledge sharing (as an independent variable) and faculty performance (as a dependent variable).
  - No statistically significant differences were found in the respondents' perceptions regarding the impact of knowledge sharing on faculty performance based on personal variables.

2. Organizational Trust

Organizational trust has become one of the fundamental pillars that support organizations and drive them toward achieving their intended goals. It fosters interpersonal familiarity, collaboration, and the open exchange of ideas, emotions, and sentiments. Trust plays a crucial role in addressing organizational challenges and is a key determinant of individual efficiency and effectiveness within organizations.

2.1. Definition of Organizational Trust

Organizational trust is a concept that has garnered significant attention across various academic disciplines, including management sciences, psychology, and sociology. Each field has approached the concept from a different angle. According to Al-Enezi and Kadhem (2014, p. 232), Tijani (2020, p. 93) summarized several definitions, among them: organizational trust is the individual's belief that the organization's goals, decisions, and policies serve their interests, and that decisions made by supervisors and colleagues align with the

collective good. This, in turn, positively influences employees' organizational commitment.

Delhomme and Karbali define trust as adherence to shared principles by both parties, where these principles, values, and ethical standards—such as honesty and integrity—stem from within the individual.

Despite variations in the definitions of trust across scholars, organizational trust can be generally understood as an essential necessity. Every organization should work to instill trust across all levels of its human resources—beginning with peer-to-peer trust, extending to trust in supervisors, and ultimately culminating in trust in the organization as a whole (Ben Aliya & Mallouki, 2024, p. 369).

2.2. Importance of Organizational Trust

Organizational trust is significant due to its potential impacts at both individual and organizational levels. This importance has led organizations to pay increasing attention to building and maintaining trust, given its clear influence on core organizational functions. Trust ensures the smooth and effective operation of organizational activities, driven by the mutual confidence among the organization's key stakeholders (Bahri & Kharmouch, 2022, p. 1298).

According to Al-Enezi and Al-Saedi (2004, pp. 5–6), the importance of high levels of trust within organizations can be summarized as follows:

- Trust fosters a sense of future security among interacting parties, based on accumulated experience and mutual behavior.
- It strengthens personal relationships, motivates individuals to work, and encourages them to take on more responsibility.
- Trust reduces the need for direct supervision and continuous oversight.
- It plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational performance and facilitating the creation and sharing of knowledge.
- Trust increases employee loyalty to the organization.
- It promotes open dialogue and reduces organizational conflict.

2.3. Dimensions of Organizational Trust

Some researchers have defined the dimensions of organizational trust based on personal traits such as integrity, honesty, and competence. Others have adopted a hierarchical approach,

conceptualizing organizational trust as comprising three primary dimensions: trust in colleagues, trust in supervisors, and trust in top management. These dimensions are also adopted in this study as they offer the most practical framework for measuring the phenomenon under investigation.

A brief explanation of each dimension is provided below:

Trust in Colleagues

According to Srir Haritsi and Rebhi (2020, p. 269), trust in colleagues is the belief that coworkers are competent, fair, trustworthy, and will behave ethically. Trust among colleagues is a key element in the workplace, as it enhances productivity and quality. Employees who trust their peers tend to feel more satisfied, exhibit mutual confidence, and are more likely to work diligently and accept greater responsibilities and challenges. This stems from the interdependent relationships within the organization, where employees rely on each other to achieve both personal and organizational goals.

Furthermore, peer relationships are an important source of psychological and social support. Individuals often receive encouragement, affirmation, and relief from work stress primarily from their colleagues. Conversely, those with poor peer relationships may feel isolated, alienated, and disconnected, leading to diminished loyalty and organizational commitment.

Trust in Supervisors

This dimension is also referred to in some studies as trust in leaders or direct management. According to Nyhan and Marlowe Jr. (1997, p. 618), trust in supervisors reflects employees' confidence in their leaders' integrity and fairness, as well as their belief that leadership makes equitable decisions that support employee interests and foster a positive work environment. Such trust enhances employee morale and motivates higher performance.

Kadhem (2014, p. 233) adds that trust in supervisors develops when leaders provide support, motivation, meet personal needs, recognize efforts, and boost morale. Moreover, trust increases when supervisors possess the skills and capabilities necessary to effectively fulfill their responsibilities.

Thus, a supervisor earns the trust of subordinates through competence, integrity, ethical behavior, and openness.

Trust in Top Management

Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995, p. 710) define trust in top management as the belief among employees that the organization honors its commitments and enforces fair, transparent policies. When employees perceive their organization as keeping its promises and acting equitably, institutional loyalty and workplace stability are strengthened.

Fares (2014, p. 170) further emphasizes that top management earns employee trust by providing a flexible and suitable organizational structure, ensuring fairness across departments, and offering both material and moral support. A lack of trust can lead individuals to prioritize personal interests over organizational goals, resulting in reduced loyalty and commitment.

3. Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Knowledge sharing has become one of the core pillars of modern organizations. Success is no longer solely dependent on material or technological capabilities; rather, it increasingly hinges on an organization's ability to manage and disseminate knowledge among its members. Knowledge retained individually by employees may lose its strategic value if not collectively shared and utilized to serve organizational objectives. In this context, knowledge sharing behavior has emerged as a dynamic process through which employees exchange experiences, ideas, and information—ultimately contributing to improved individual and collective performance. Understanding and analyzing this behavior is vital for enhancing the competitive advantage of contemporary organizations and fostering a collaborative, trust-based work environment.

3.1. Definition of Knowledge Sharing

Ipe (2003, p. 341) defines knowledge sharing as a deliberate behavior through which individuals transfer or exchange knowledge—including ideas, experiences, and practices—with others to create added value.

Bart van den Hooff and De Ridder (2004, p. 118) describe knowledge sharing as a process of exchanging information and knowledge among individuals in the organization through mutual communication, ensuring shared benefits.

Wang and Noe (2010, p. 117) also emphasize the organizational context, defining knowledge sharing as the process through which organizational knowledge is exchanged among employees to foster innovation and improve performance.

From a behavioral perspective, Al-Hamdani (2018, p. 113) defines knowledge sharing as the intentional behavior of disseminating acquired knowledge with others to amplify its value.

3.2. Importance of Knowledge Sharing

The importance of valuing and promoting knowledge sharing behavior within organizations manifests in several key areas:

- **Fostering innovation and creativity:** By exchanging ideas and knowledge, employees generate new solutions to organizational challenges.
- **Enhancing human resource capabilities:** Employees can develop their skills by learning from colleagues and applying shared knowledge in their work.
- **Developing intellectual capital:** Knowledge sharing helps build a collective knowledge base that strengthens the organization's competitive edge and adaptability.
- **Transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge:** It allows individual expertise to be made accessible and applicable at the organizational level.
- **Strengthening social interaction and organizational culture:** Knowledge sharing is fundamentally a social process rooted in values of collaboration and trust among employees. (Alaoui & Touaiti, 2024, p. 418)

3.3. The Relationship Between Organizational Trust and Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Organizational trust is a fundamental determinant of the success of knowledge sharing behavior within organizations. As Abrams, Cross, Lesser, and Levin (2003, p. 65) observe, individuals are generally reluctant to share their knowledge and expertise unless they operate in an environment characterized by high levels of mutual trust—whether with peers, supervisors, or senior management. Trust alleviates fears related to status loss or misuse of shared knowledge, thereby encouraging employees to engage more actively in sharing activities.

Similarly, Mooradian, Renzl, and Matzler (2006, p. 525) argue that fostering organizational trust strengthens social bonds and supports a collaborative culture, which is essential for the success and sustainability of knowledge management initiatives.

Moreover, the level of trust among individuals plays a significant role in their willingness to share both explicit and tacit knowledge. The higher the level of organizational trust, the greater the employees' readiness to exchange undocumented experiences and skills.ik

It is worth noting that achieving high levels of trust among colleagues has a significant impact on fostering a "**teamwork**" culture, which constitutes a fertile environment where knowledge-sharing behaviors can thrive.

4. Study Methodology

4.1. Study Population and Sample

The study population consists of employees at the Mineral Water Production Unit Manbaa El Ghezlan – Biskra. Due to the difficulty of distributing questionnaires to all staff members, a convenience sample was selected. A total of 65 questionnaires were distributed to employees, of which 50 were returned, yielding a response rate of 76.92%. After excluding 6 invalid responses, the final sample comprised 44 valid questionnaires, representing 67.6% of the distributed forms.

Table 1: Distribution of Employees by Organizational Category

Category	**Count**	**Percentage**
Executive Managers	3	1.93%
Mid-Level Executives	5	3.22%
Technical Control Staff	40	25.80%
Commercial Staff	8	5.16%
Operators	9	5.80%
General Workers	60	38.70%
Distribution Truck Drivers	30	19.35%
Total	**155**	**100%**

Source: Human Resources Department, Mineral Water Production Unit, Manbaa El Ghezlan – Biskra

4.2. Reliability and Validity of the Study Instrument

Table 2: Reliability and Validity of the Study Instrument

Study Variables	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Validity Coefficient
Organizational Trust	1–18	0.815	0.902
Knowledge Sharing Behavior	19–37	0.659	0.811

Source: Developed by the researchers based on SPSS 19 analysis results

The table shows that the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) for the items measuring **organizational trust** exceeded 60%, reaching 81.5%, indicating acceptable reliability for this variable's dimensions. Likewise, the reliability coefficient for **knowledge sharing behavior** was 65.9%, also surpassing the 60% threshold, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Furthermore, validity coefficients were recorded at 90.2% and 81.1% respectively for items measuring organizational trust and knowledge sharing behavior, both exceeding the 60% benchmark at a 1% significance level. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the instrument used in this study demonstrates acceptable levels of reliability and validity.

4.3. Diagnosis of Study Variables

4.3.1. Respondents' Perceptions of Organizational Trust

Table 3: Respondents' Perceptions of Organizational Trust

Rank	Relative Importance	Standard Deviation	Mean	Variable
01	High	0.5094	4.0379	Trust in Colleagues
02	High	0.5811	3.8447	Trust in Supervisors
03	Moderate	0.6612	3.0947	Trust in Top Management
—	High	0.4327	3.6591	Overall Organizational Trust

Source: Developed by the researchers based on SPSS 19 analysis results

According to the table, respondents generally expressed high levels of agreement with statements relating to organizational trust and its dimensions. **Trust in colleagues** ranked highest, with a mean of 4.0379 and a standard deviation of 0.5094. This indicates a high degree of mutual trust among employees in the production unit, enabling them to rely on one another. It was followed by trust in supervisors and then trust in top management. Overall, the results suggest a high level of organizational trust within the unit.

4.3.2. Respondents' Perceptions of Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Knowledge Sharing Behavior Dimensions

Rank	Relative Importance	Standard Deviation	Mean	Variable
4	High	0.4325	3.9318	Perceived Supervisory Behavior
1	Very High	0.5838	4.2045	Attitude Toward Knowledge Sharing
5	High	0.5029	3.6818	Personal Norm
3	High	0.5053	3.9432	Knowledge Sharing Intention
2	High	0.3913	4.0909	Actual Knowledge Sharing
—	High	0.4841	3.9704	Overall Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Source: Developed by the researchers based on SPSS 19 analysis results

As illustrated, the mean values for all dimensions of knowledge sharing behavior were high. The **attitude toward knowledge sharing** ranked first with a mean of 4.2045 and a standard deviation of 0.5838, reflecting a very high level of agreement among participants. It was followed by **actual knowledge sharing** (mean = 4.0909), then **knowledge sharing intention**, **perceived supervisory behavior**, and **personal norm**, respectively.

Based on these high mean values, it can be concluded that active knowledge sharing behavior is present within the Mineral Water Production Unit Manbaa El Ghezlan – Biskra.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing

4.4.1. Overall Significance of the Regression Model

The overall significance of the regression model is assessed through the F-test. The calculated **F-value** was **4.065** with a **p-value of 0.013**, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. The details are presented in the following table:

Table 5: ANOVA Results of the Multiple Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	Sig. F	Adjusted R^2	R	Durbin-Watson
Regression	0.694	3	0.231	4.065	0.013a	0.176	0.483a	2.335
Residual	2.276	40	0.057					
Total	2.970	43						

Source: Developed by the researcher based on SPSS 19 results

From the table above, it can be observed that approximately **18% of the variance in knowledge sharing behavior** is explained by the variance in the dimensions of organizational trust.

4.4.2. Individual Significance of the Predictors

Individual significance is evaluated using the **t-test** for each regression coefficient. At least one of the predictors (excluding the constant) must be statistically significant. As shown in **Table 6**, only one of the standardized Beta coefficients is statistically significant.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis Results for the Impact of Organizational Trust Dimensions on Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
	(B)	Std. Error	(Beta)				
Constant	2.914	0.324	—	8.984	0.000	—	—
Trust in Colleagues	0.252	0.098	0.488	2.572	0.014	0.533	1.878
Trust in Supervisors	-0.013	0.088	-0.028	-0.143	0.887	0.510	1.962
Trust in Top	0.032	0.057	0.080	0.558	0.58	0.941	2.18

Predictor	Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
	(B)	Std. Error	(Beta)				
Management					0		8

Source: Developed by the researcher based on SPSS 19 analysis

According to the results in Table 6:

- Both **trust in supervisors** and **trust in top management** do **not** have a statistically significant impact on knowledge sharing behavior, with p-values of **0.887** and **0.580** respectively (both > 0.05). Therefore, **Hypotheses 2 and 3 are rejected**.
- In contrast, **trust in colleagues** shows a **statistically significant effect** on knowledge sharing behavior, with a p-value of **0.014** (which is < 0.05). This dimension explains **25.2%** of the variance in knowledge sharing behavior. Therefore, **Hypothesis 1 is accepted**.

5. Interpretation of Results

The findings confirm the existence of a statistically significant and positive relationship between organizational trust and knowledge sharing behavior. This indicates a **direct, positive correlation** between the prevailing level of organizational trust and the extent of knowledge sharing behavior within the unit. The observed effect is specifically attributed to the **dimension of trust in colleagues**, highlighting a direct influence of peer trust on knowledge-sharing behavior.

In practical terms, the more an employee trusts their colleagues, the more conducive the environment becomes for fostering a desire for teamwork, leading to greater willingness to collaborate and engage in group work. Furthermore, high levels of trust among colleagues promote openness and mutual disclosure. This effect is largely attributed to the nature of peer relationships, which typically involve more frequent interaction compared to other organizational relationships.

In contrast, the study found **no direct effect of trust in supervisors** on knowledge-sharing behavior, diverging from some previous studies that linked cooperative and participatory employee behaviors to trust in their supervisors. Despite the study's findings

indicating a high level of trust in supervisors within the Mineral Water Production Unit Manbaa El Ghezlan – Biskra, this trust did not translate into increased knowledge sharing. This could be due to employees not relying on supervisor encouragement to engage in knowledge sharing, viewing such behavior instead as a reflection of goodwill and respectful interpersonal relations.

Additionally, the study found **no significant impact of trust in top management** on knowledge sharing behavior. This may be due to the perception that the organization's leadership does not sufficiently consider employee interests when making decisions.

The absence of a correlation between trust in supervisors and trust in top management with knowledge-sharing behavior can be attributed to the specific characteristics of Algerian institutions, as well as to the nature of the Algerian individual, who tends to form relationships and bonds of friendship primarily with those he interacts with directly (work colleagues). In contrast, employees usually maintain boundaries in their relationships with supervisors or top management, often to avoid any potential misunderstandings that may arise from direct communication with them. Furthermore, Algerian institutions generally do not assess the three levels of trust; rather, their main indicator of the presence of trust is the continuity of organizational activity and the absence of high levels of conflict.

6. Conclusion

It is evident from the findings that **organizational trust** constitutes a foundational element for enhancing knowledge sharing behavior within organizations. It cultivates a work environment characterized by psychological safety and cooperation, encouraging individuals to exchange their knowledge and experiences without fear of exploitation or loss of individual advantage. Trust—whether among colleagues, between employees and their supervisors, or between staff and top management—directly contributes to fostering an organizational culture supportive of knowledge sharing. This, in turn, facilitates human capital development and strengthens the organization's competitive edge.

Based on our study, we reached the following conclusions:

- A **moderate level of organizational trust** prevails within the unit under study.

- A **high degree of trust among colleagues** was recorded at the Mineral Water Production Unit Manbaa El Ghezlan – Biskra.
- The **level of knowledge sharing behavior** within the unit is high.
- There is a **direct impact of organizational trust** on knowledge sharing behavior within the unit.
- A **statistically significant effect of trust in colleagues** on knowledge sharing behavior was established.
- **No direct effect** of trust in supervisors on knowledge-sharing behavior within the unit was found
- **No direct effect** of trust in senior management (top management) on knowledge-sharing behavior within the unit was found

Some of the recommendations reached by the study

- **Top management** should prioritize building trust among employees, as it significantly enhances transparency and knowledge sharing. This can be achieved through fair policies on compensation and rewards, as well as consistent fulfillment of commitments made to employees.
- Emphasize **self-monitoring and individual accountability**, encouraging a culture of personal responsibility.
- Ensure **robust communication infrastructure**, enabling continuous and efficient flow of information and knowledge within the organization.
- Promote **teamwork and collective engagement**, leveraging the diversity of ideas and perspectives for improved decision-making and innovation.

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