

Knowledge Sharing as a Pillar of Knowledge Management: A Theoretical Study of Motivators and Inhibitors

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Abstract: Knowledge management activities as well as knowledge sharing practices enhance the performance of the organization by achieving its mission. Therefore, this article aims to analyze and recognize the aspects that promote and inhibit knowledge management and knowledge sharing within organizations. This study discuss the concept of knowledge management and knowledge sharing and found that an individual's characteristics, personal attitude, the organization's culture, trust, and so on are factors that promote knowledge management and knowledge sharing within organizations

Keywords: Knowledge management, knowledge sharing, performance, organization

JEL Classification : M12

ملخص : تُعزز أنشطة إدارة المعرفة وكذلك ممارسات مشاركة المعرفة من أداء المنظمة من خلال تحقيق رسالتها. ولذلك، تهدف هذه المقالة إلى تحليل وتحديد الجوانب التي تُعزز وتُحد من إدارة المعرفة ومشاركة المعرفة داخل المنظمات. تناقش هذه الدراسة مفهوم إدارة المعرفة ومشاركة المعرفة ووجدت أن الخصائص الفردية، والموقف الشخصي، وثقافة المنظمة، والثقة، وما إلى ذلك، هي عوامل تُعزز إدارة المعرفة ومشاركة المعرفة داخل المنظمات.

الكلمات المفتاحية : إدارة المعرفة، مشاركة المعرفة، الأداء، المنظمة.

1. Introduction:

The growing importance of knowledge lies in its ability to drive positive organizational outcomes when managed effectively. Among the various knowledge management processes, knowledge sharing is considered the most crucial. (Gouri,2024) argues that knowledge originates from individuals, and sharing is essential to knowledge management success because it focuses on the human aspect of knowledge. Therefore, individuals play a central role in implementing knowledge management practices.

For years, HR professionals underestimated knowledge sharing, but have gradually recognized its importance within knowledge management strategies.

Effective knowledge sharing practices allow individuals to reuse and regenerate knowledge at both individual and organizational levels (Chaudhry, 2005).

According to (Van den Hooff et al., 2004), the knowledge sharing process involves two main dimensions: knowledge donating and knowledge collecting.

Sharing one's personal knowledge, skills, ideas, and intellectual capital with others is considered knowledge donating. In contrast, consulting colleagues and gathering their knowledge to support one's tasks is referred to as knowledge collecting.

As emphasized by (Witherspoon et al., 2013), knowledge sharing is a key element for organizational success and is often used as a survival strategy.

Organizations must develop their capabilities and overcome barriers to foster a participative knowledge sharing environment, thereby enhancing their efficiency and delivering higher quality services (Azhar, 2012).

Knowledge sharing is a process where individuals exchange ideas and expertise through discussions to

generate new knowledge or insights. It plays a fundamental role in fostering innovation and uncovering business opportunities through socialization and learning among knowledge workers.

Consequently, knowledge sharing can significantly influence long-term organizational performance and competitiveness (Du et al., 2007).

A key challenge for organizations is how to encourage knowledge sharing, considering that knowledge is both a strategic asset and a source of individual power. Sharing knowledge may cause employees to lose their unique position within the organization.

Hence, knowledge sharing presents a social dilemma involving complex interactions between individual behaviors and organizational politics.

Dominant organizational values and beliefs can either support or hinder knowledge sharing. Organizational culture significantly shapes knowledge-related behaviors (Auernhammer & Hall, 2014; Tseng, 2011).

Effective knowledge sharing occurs when appropriate solutions are embedded into the organization (Gouri, 2024).

Many organizations are now promoting knowledge sharing behaviors among employees to align with their goals and missions.

However, numerous obstacles continue to challenge the knowledge transfer process, including recipients' absorptive capacity, lack of motivation to share, and other critical factors that this study explores (Jen et al., 2020).

2. Hierarchy of Knowledge

Data refers to raw facts or observations that describe specific phenomena, in contrast, Information is data that has been organized and structured in a meaningful way to be useful (Sabherwal & Becerra, 2010).

Knowledge is the ability to translate information into performance to complete a specific task or solve a particular problem. Therefore: $\text{INFORMATION} = \text{DATA} + \text{MEANING}$, and $\text{KNOWLEDGE} = \text{STORED INFORMATION} + \text{THE ABILITY TO APPLY IT}$.

Some researchers equate information with knowledge, emphasizing explicit knowledge that can be disseminated and managed. Others differentiate them by considering information as the tangible product of intellectual work, while knowledge is intangible and resides in the human mind. Experience is a broad term encompassing deep, innate, and often intuitive understanding or skill (Marquardt, 2002).

Capability results from a thorough understanding and analysis of data, which is transformed into information, then into knowledge, and ultimately into experience (Rowley, 2007).

Wisdom is seen as an extension of knowledge—it encompasses the ability to apply insights in decision-making and problem-solving (Karadsheh et al., 2009). Other scholars define knowledge as an interdependent network of structures that integrates individual insights across the organization (Meyer & Sugiyama, 2007). In conclusion, knowledge resides in individuals' minds, making it inherently difficult to define, fully comprehend, or simplify.

We can resume Many types of Knowledge beginning with Declarative Knowledge ("Knowing What") represents the most basic form of knowledge, derived from data and information that help identify a subject or problem (Marquardt, 2002). Procedural

Knowledge ("Knowing How") refers to knowing how to perform tasks or activities. It forms the core of tacit knowledge and is a foundation for competitive advantage, making individuals who possess it highly valuable within the organization (Marquardt, 2002). Causal Knowledge ("Knowing Why") involves understanding cause-effect relationships across domains. It supports decision-making through comprehension and insight (Marquardt, 2002).

Knowledge can also be classified as Explicit Knowledge which is codifiable knowledge that can be documented, stored, transmitted, and learned more easily than tacit knowledge such as manuals, reports, databases, and patents (Afoui, 2007). Tacit Knowledge, is experiential and shaped by individual traits, making it vary across individuals. It is intangible, hard to codify, and therefore difficult to transfer and share (Tongo, 2012; Zamir, 2019).

Possession of knowledge allowed organizations to create a sustainable competitive advantage by Supporting the development and maturation of the organization. Also serving as a final product that can be sold or used to modify and develop new products and enabling the transition from a pre-knowledge state to a knowledge-based society by fostering creativity and innovation. (Nabil, 2009)

Researchers declare many Sources of Knowledge as Internal Sources include the accumulated experiences of organizational members across various topics, and the ability to leverage individual and group learning. External Sources found in the organization's external environment and depend on relationships with other organizations or affiliations with knowledge-sharing networks (competitors, suppliers, customers,) (Marquardt, 2002). the employees as Knowledge Repositories because substantial amount of knowledge resides within individuals or groups, particularly those with expertise and creative problem-solving skills (Sabherwal & Becerra, 2010). Knowledge Generated Internally in the form of procedures, rules, and values that can evolve through future experiences. Information systems and technologies help preserve and develop this knowledge, supporting better decision-making (Sabherwal & Becerra, 2010). Knowledge within Organizational Entities existing at three levels: functional units, the organization as a whole, and the relationships between its components (Sabherwal & Becerra, 2010).

The diverse social, intellectual, economic, political, and cultural contexts in which knowledge exists mean it has no universal traits. However, certain characteristics directly influence how knowledge is managed beginning with Personal Nature which is understanding of information that becomes knowledge varies from person to person and context to context. As such, new knowledge may emerge when it is interpreted by different individuals (Kluge et al., 2001). Cumulative because Knowledge grows through interaction with new knowledge, leading to innovation and creativity (Kluge et al, 2001). Self-Enhancing means that Knowledge sharing does not diminish the original holder's

knowledge. In fact, sharing enhances the knowledge of all participants (Gottschalk, 2005). Clarity which increases as it transitions from tacit to explicit. Codifiability Even when knowledge cannot be directly transferred. Teachability means that The clearer the knowledge, the easier it is to teach it to others through training and education. Implicit Nature means that the longer knowledge remains stored in an individual's mind, the more complex and difficult it becomes to identify, simulate, or convert into explicit knowledge (Kluge et al., 2001).Immediacy because The emergence of new knowledge is unpredictable; it cannot be scheduled but rather facilitated by providing the right conditions (Kluge et al., 2001). Divisibility and diminishing in value over time, especially in competitive or fast-changing environments. It can also disappear if not preserved—whether as documented knowledge or tacit knowledge held by individuals (Kluge et al., 2001).Transferability by sharing and disseminate successful experiences and constructive knowledge across sites, branches, and departments (Kluge et al., 2001).

3. Organizational Knowledge

Organizational knowledge encompasses all the information stored within the organization's memory. It also includes the mental processes of managers and employees—such as perception, learning, and thinking—that contribute to decision-making and organizational functioning.

When individual knowledge, whether tacit or explicit, is shared in a conducive environment, it inevitably transforms into organizational knowledge. This knowledge is more comprehensive as it combines both tacit and explicit insights and is embedded within the organization's memory—such as databases, files, structures, and short- and long-term plans (Elisabeth, 2006).

There is many forms of organizational knowledge, the most common one is the Declarative Organizational Knowledge which includes stated goals, systems and regulations, decision trees, reports, studies, budgets, databases, and other materials that clarify roles and organizational context. Latent Organizational Knowledge which is stored in employees' minds and emerges from personal study, experience, and daily observations, influencing individuals' mental models, social status, and capacities (Siachou & Ioannidis, 2008).Internal Organizational Knowledge arises from the interactions and activities between organizational members and their internal relationships with other departments and units (Jones et al., 2009). External Organizational Knowledge acquired from outside the organization through its communication with external actors, including competitors, partners, and the broader societal environment in which it operates (Siachou & Ioannidis, 2008).

As organizations face growing competition, globalization, and increased customer expectations, their knowledge management capabilities are viewed as critical to achieving

competitive advantage and long-term survival (Roberts, 2015).

In general, knowledge management can be defined as “the management function responsible for the regular selection, implementation, and evaluation of knowledge strategies that support an organization’s knowledge base” (Maier, 2005).

From an IT perspective, Kim and Trimi (2007) define knowledge management as “delivering the right information, in the right context, to the right person, at the right time, for the right purpose.” This process includes knowledge creation, storage, dissemination, and application.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Knowledge Management Processes

KMP refer to a set of core operations and integrated activities that must be carried out to manage organizational knowledge effectively (Ode & Ayavoo, 2020), and can be described as: Knowledge Creation which involves generating new knowledge at both individual and organizational levels. It can occur informally—through casual employee interactions—or formally—through structured activities organized by the company to acquire, generate, or transform tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. (Uriarte, 2008). Knowledge Storage which concerns primarily explicit knowledge, as tacit knowledge remains stored in individuals' minds. Effective storage highlights the importance of organizational memory, which comprises various formats such as electronic databases and human knowledge embedded in expert systems. Knowledge Transfer and Sharing as one of the most important and challenging aspects of Knowledge Management. It involves engaging individuals who possess knowledge and encouraging them to disclose it before they leave the organization. Knowledge is then distributed through direct and indirect communication channels, training programs, and learning activities to ensure accessibility across the organization (Han et al., 2016). Knowledge Application or the use of knowledge in producing new products and services that enhance the organization’s competitive advantage. It reflects the successful conversion of knowledge into actionable processes that improve individual and organizational performance, particularly in decision-making. Knowledge Organizing by categorizing data and information into structured groups known as knowledge maps. These maps typically include texts, stories, diagrams, models, and visual representations (Liebowitz, 2011). Knowledge Retrieval by ensuring easy and rapid access to stored knowledge, allowing it to be applied to problem-solving or the enhancement of daily operations (Gamble & Blackwell, 2001; Botha et al., 2008).

Proper management of both tacit and explicit knowledge leads to a range of positive outcomes at the individual, team, and organizational levels as Enhancing employee performance and Improving decision-making capabilities , and give More efficient

administrative processes also Reduced training time and cost—since knowledge becomes widely accessible (Zammit et al., 2017; Obeso et al., 2020).

4.2. Organizational Knowledge Transfer and Sharing

Knowledge sharing involves providing other employees with both explicit knowledge (such as formulas, processes, and routines) and tacit knowledge (such as personal experience and know-how) to help them achieve goals, solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies and procedures (Cummings, 2004; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Many organizations rely on technology-enabled information systems to document, distribute, and transfer both explicit and tacit knowledge among employees, thereby enhancing organizational effectiveness (Voelpel et al., 2005). Knowledge sharing (KS) can be defined as the process by which individuals mutually exchange knowledge—both tacit and explicit—and collaboratively create new knowledge (van den Hooff & de Ridder, 2004).

It essentially refers to making knowledge available to others within an organization. Knowledge sharing is often viewed as the most important component of knowledge management and to distributing knowledge across the organization to foster innovation, develop new ideas, products, and processes. (Gouri, 2024)

According to (Ipe ,2003), Knowledge sharing is "the process through which knowledge held by an individual is converted into a form that can be understood, absorbed, and used by others."

When new knowledge takes the form of routines or procedures and is transmitted to another department or branch under management directives, this process is referred to as knowledge exchange.

According to (Wang & Noe, 2010), effective teams are those in which members share, adapt, learn, and perform collaboratively. Learning occurs through discussions and knowledge sharing among team members as they complete tasks. Younger employees should be encouraged to learn from more experienced colleagues to gain new insights.

Employees contribute to the organization's knowledge base by sharing their ideas and expertise with peers (Lin, 2007). This not only enriches collective knowledge but also enhances their own cognitive systems through the verbalization and transmission of knowledge (Rhee & Choi, 2017).

Most organizations are unaware of the full extent of their internal knowledge. (Gouri, 2024)

They often suffer from internal factors that hinder the transfer of both tacit and explicit

knowledge across sites and among employees (Yamao & Fenwick, 2006). Thus, Knowledge sharing can also be defined as the process of transmitting knowledge through communication between individuals or locating knowledge repositories so that it becomes accessible and beneficial to others (Li, 2007; Lei et al., 2019).

According to Nonaka & Toyama (2002), Knowledge sharing occurs when an individual possesses knowledge and has the willingness to share it, using communication or social mechanisms that foster interaction within the organization, ultimately facilitating the creation of new knowledge.(Nguyen & Tran, 2019).

Granting knowledge and ensuring that recipients can absorb and retain it and successfully applying it to change behavior is Key Knowledge Sharing Activities (Wijk, 2008) .

Knowledge transfer can be understood as delivering the right knowledge to the right person at the right time, enabling its full potential—whether to modify behavior or improve performance (Berryman, 2005).

Despite advancements in technology, organizations often encounter what is referred to as a "cultural wall" that impedes knowledge sharing including the lack of trust and different terminologies because If an individual does not trust the knowledge or information received, he is unlikely to use it effectively, also the Low absorptive capacity among recipients and the idea that knowledge is the privilege of specific groups (Bureš, 2003).

Some employees also see no reciprocal benefit in sharing knowledge. Either they don't believe in such benefits or have never experienced them. In some cases, specific languages or terminologies are used exclusively within certain departments, making them incomprehensible to others (Bureš, 2003).

Resercher distinguishes many tools that help to share Knowledge like Storytelling / Narrative Workshops Which is “a spark that ignites tacit understanding in the listener’s mind.” When a problem is shared through a story, listeners are more likely to understand its full context (Linz & Resch, 2010). Learning Histories to evaluate the effectiveness of learning stories and provide feedback, especially for content involving tacit knowledge (Linz & Resch, 2010).

(Marquardt, 2002) Discuss tow Forms of Knowledge Transfer. firstly Intentional Transfer:

Which refers to deliberately planned sharing, through individual communication methods such as reports, memos, training programs, or task rotation Secondly Unintentional Transfer:

This occurs informally through stories, past incidents, or group conversations.

Knowledge transfer often fails due to Individual barriers as internal resistance, lack of

trust, lack of motivation, unwillingness or unreadiness to share, or cognitive gaps (Bureš, 2003) or to Organizational barriers: language issues (Bureš, 2003), conflict avoidance, bureaucracy, structure, policies, lack of a supportive environment, and distance (Nonaka, 1991).

5. Conclusion:

This study demonstrated the importance of overcoming barriers to knowledge sharing, as these barriers are key factors determining the success of knowledge management within organizations. Individual and social barriers often hinder effective knowledge sharing. Therefore, it has become imperative to identify these barriers and work to eliminate or reduce them as much as possible.

In this study, we proposed using a knowledge sharing approach through dialogue and conversation to address these barriers. This approach helped promote open and collaborative employee engagement, making knowledge sharing more efficient and effective.

In general, knowledge can be considered one of the key resources that enable organizations to make intelligent and informed decisions. The need to maximize organizational knowledge and extract the greatest value from it has become more important than ever. Knowledge management practices are a set of organizational activities aimed at developing a dedicated knowledge management infrastructure within the organization.

Although this study was designed as a conceptual study and provided a comprehensive review of the concepts of knowledge, knowledge management, and knowledge sharing, it is important to note that it does not seek to generate new theory but rather aims to contribute to the existing literature.

Knowledge and information management play an increasing role in achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Scholars have begun to explore the complex challenges of managing knowledge sharing among firms.

Dynamic processes involving the interaction and transformation of tacit and explicit knowledge contribute to the creation of new knowledge within organizations through knowledge sharing. Organizations that lack a culture that encourages sharing and learning from others will not fully benefit from the creation of new knowledge.

In a knowledge-based economy, the survival of organizations depends on finding the best ways to address multiple challenges. Knowledge management means adding or creating value by effectively leveraging the expertise, knowledge, and intuition held internally and externally. There is a critical need to share existing knowledge, generate

new knowledge, integrate competitive intelligence, and drive organizational strategy.

Furthermore, organizations need to facilitate the acquisition and use of knowledge by their employees to survive and compete in the marketplace. In today's volatile business world, organizations face rapid and fundamental changes internally and externally, requiring them to be more agile than ever. This agility can only be achieved if organizations can manage their knowledge across all levels of the organization.

Through the findings of this study, organizations can foster a culture of knowledge sharing to achieve effective knowledge management. This study helps fill the research gap in the field of knowledge sharing in the Algerian context to some extent. Since knowledge sharing is vital to organizations in both the public and private sectors, future studies could focus on the impact of knowledge sharing and knowledge management on organizations in both sectors.

Despite the clear benefits of knowledge sharing, the phenomenon of knowledge sharing in organizations is not simple, due to the complexity of the interactions between individuals and organizations. Individuals decide whether to share knowledge based on its value to them, and they may derive monopoly value from this knowledge, requiring incentives to share it. Furthermore, individuals' motivation to share knowledge may be influenced by other factors such as competition or self-gratification.

This study acknowledges some limitations, such as the assumption that employees have a strong desire to acquire knowledge, which may not be accurate in real life. Furthermore, the study focused only on employees' ability to share and absorb knowledge, while other characteristics such as employee motivation and social role may influence the effectiveness of knowledge sharing.

In conclusion, knowledge management and knowledge sharing are emerging as areas of interest to researchers and practitioners across a wide range of disciplines. Based on the review, it is clear that knowledge management and knowledge sharing are among the most important areas for future research. Although the methods of these processes may vary from organization to organization to address potential challenges, this study supports the view that knowledge sharing practices will provide significant benefits to organizations, especially in developing countries where resources are limited.

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