

ANTECEDENTS OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING: TRUST, COMMITMENT AND MOTIVATION

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Abstract

In the knowledge- based area the success and compatibility of organizations depends heavily on their ability to utilize their knowledge resources. Effectively sharing knowledge, especially tacit knowledge requires employees to have supportive attitude and motivation. Thus, the present study examines this issue that how and to what extends trust, commitment and motivation can facilitate tacit knowledge sharing in organization. Research method is descriptive and correlational in nature. The research population includes 1450 managers and experts of a Bank in Tehran, Iran where 304 subjects were selected using random sampling. Results show that these antecedents have positive and significant impact on tacit knowledge sharing. Accordingly some recommendations have been provided to managers and researchers.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Tacit Knowledge, Trust, Commitment and Motivation

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive environment faced by service organizations, successful and leading firms begin a wide variety of applications to a guarantee survival, productivity and growth. One of the best and the most conventional arrangement that may have a remarkable effect on improving the performance and quality of the bank's services is the successful implementation of knowledge management in the organization. The nature of service businesses including banking is in a way that human factor influences the quality of provided service and brings customer satisfaction. Having technical knowledge and job-related experiences can improve the ability of bank employees to provide high quality services. Therefore, many leading banks consider the successful implementation of knowledge management plans as the most important excellence programs in order to exploitation and effective development. Absorption of retired and experienced managers of state-owned banks and seeking to implement knowledge management system also has been conducted in this regards. It also attempts to create a variety of conditions and requirements for knowledge sharing and providing the valuable experience of r employees is one of the most important actions in this area have done.

On the other hand, knowledge management emphasize that people have the power of thinking and analysis of issues; hence it is thought that, organizations can improve their performance through effective knowledge sharing and reduces training costs and risks resulted from uncertainty (Kim S, Ju B, 2008). So an organization where employees are willing and able to share their knowledge, it will be progressive, leading and capable organization, and based on this using the conversion and transfer of knowledge, not only huge savings take place in the organization, but also a suitable situation is provided to become a powerful organization in terms of human resources.

Knowledge sharing is defined as all activities related to the transmission or distribution of knowledge of an individual or organization to individual, group or other organization (Lee, 2001), and according to Mc Dermoot, when we say someone is sharing his knowledge, means that the person guides another person with his knowledge, insight and thoughts to help him see his position better (Mc Dermoot, 1999).

However, in large organizations there are not infrastructure and facilitating conditions for knowledge sharing among employees and effective utilization of them. From the perspective of Denning, main problem for organizations is that many employees tend to share their knowledge with other members of organization (Denning, 2006). Recognition and extraction of knowledge and sharing it is the task of managers with which they can strengthen not only individuals, but they can internalize their commitment anywhere in the organization by creating areas of

participation in the actions and decisions and a sense of confidence and honesty. Hence, a better understanding of the factors influencing knowledge sharing and creation of facilitating context for knowledge sharing in an organization can improve the competitive performance of organizations.

Since knowledge sharing has human nature more than any other aspect and also unique role that human factor plays in performance of service organizations such as bank, in this research among various infrastructure, vital and determining role of human factor is considered and it tries to explain the effect of trust, commitment and motivation on implicit knowledge sharing in a valid method. Also it is examined that how and to what extent each of three factors can facilitate implicit knowledge sharing in the organization; how their ranking is and what practical proceedings of improving knowledge sharing are with the help of each factor.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing has been described by McDermott(1999) in a way that when we say someone shares his knowledge we mean that person guides another person with his knowledge, insight and thoughts to help him see his status better. Additionally, the ideal is that person who shares his knowledge, should be aware of the goal of shared knowledge and its application and also needs and informational gaps of the person who receives knowledge.

Hislop (2009) knows the potential benefit of knowledge sharing in the rewards or incentives. Incentives can be used as tools to extract, enhance and maintain knowledge sharing behavior among employees. However, a study by Wu and Zhu (2012), showed that incentives do not influence behaviors of knowledge sharing. It is like a trigger for knowledge sharing and cannot be a force to keep it in forming the attitude of a person. In many situations, organizational factors such as job involvement and job satisfaction, performance evaluation and recognition act as stimuli for increasing knowledge sharing behavior among employees. In addition, organizational culture, top management support and organizational communication influence knowledge sharing behavior (Sizlivati and Heng, 2015: 233).

Importance of Knowledge Sharing

Many believe that effective knowledge sharing is one of the most reliable ways of applying core competencies and gaining competitive advantage. Knowledge sharing is of such importance that many have embraced knowledge management success depends on effective knowledge sharing, as Bock and Kim (2002) believe that knowledge sharing is the most important part of knowledge management. In fact, the means by which knowledge is shared and the factors that

facilitate the sharing and transferring knowledge are among the basic issues for knowledge management (Renzel, 2008: 212). Knowledge sharing can be seen as an organizational innovation through its fundamental role in the creation of ideas and new business opportunities via the process of socialization and learning of personnel.

Key Success Factors of Knowledge Sharing

Effective and efficient knowledge sharing creates sustainable competitive advantage for organizations that are not easily imitated by competitors. But knowledge sharing for employees and the organization itself is worthless, unless the people, who need special knowledge, receive it at the right time and apply it. One of the problems faced by the majority of research in the field of knowledge management, is the absence of a theory and general guidelines for knowledge sharing that is applicable to all organizations, and there is no shortcuts that guarantees success in the field of knowledge-sharing and every organization has to identify key factors that ensure their success in this field, and move toward creating the sustainable competitive advantage with the investment and attention to these factors (Mc Derkut and O'Dell 2001 : 80).

Table 1: Key Factors Influencing Knowledge Sharing

Author	Factors of knowledge sharing
The & Sun(2012)	Job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, organizational citizen behavior
Wu & Zhu (2012)	Incentives, mutual benefits, increasing the credibility, loss of knowledge strength, the joy of helping others, and organizational climate and technology
Hendriks(1999)	Gaining success, responsibilities, knowledge, operational strength, promotion opportunities, job challenge
Zhang & Ng (2012)	Perceived embarrassment, bonuses, reducing workload, student feedback, personal relationships, self- efficacy of knowledge
Eze et al (2013)	Knowledge technology, motivation, reward system, confidence, leadership abilities, formalization
Fathi et al (2011)	Individualism, collectivism, social networks, trust, common purpose, drive system, metaphor orientation, self-efficacy, attitudes
Chaterglio & Varmiki (2013)	Attitude, intention, method of use of personal technology
Anitha (2006)	Incentives, mutual benefit, enhancing reputation, loss of knowledge strength, enjoy helping others, technology, organizational climate
Yee (2010)	Loss of personal competition, trust, anticipation, cooperation, learning, ability, fairness, supportive leadership, openness and information and communication technology
Jolae (2012)	Attitudes, self-efficacy, subjective norm, rewards, social networks, trust

Source: Sizlivati and Hong, 2015, 233-234

Trust

Trust facilitates collaboration. The more trust in a society is, the greater will be the likelihood of further collaboration and cooperation itself will foster trust (McElroy et al., 2006). Fukuyama defines trust as "the expectation that is created by regular, honest, and cooperative behavior in the community based on common norms and members of this community" (Fukuyama, 1998, quoted by McElroy et al., 2006). Trust is psychological state in people (Lesser, 2000, quoted by McElroy et al., 2006). Trust is a particular amount of subjective probability that the person assesses that another person or group will do a certain action (Ostrom and Ahen, 2003). All these writers know trust as what the person believes that another person will do in a particular situation in the future. So they point out the true beliefs that a person has about matters that are related to others in the future. So trust is a kind of belief. Trust is an attitude or preparedness about a belief or a belief about another belief. Trust is one's belief in this issue that someone else is doing the same thing he wants to do. So trust is the real form of subjective knowledge (McElroy et al., 2006).

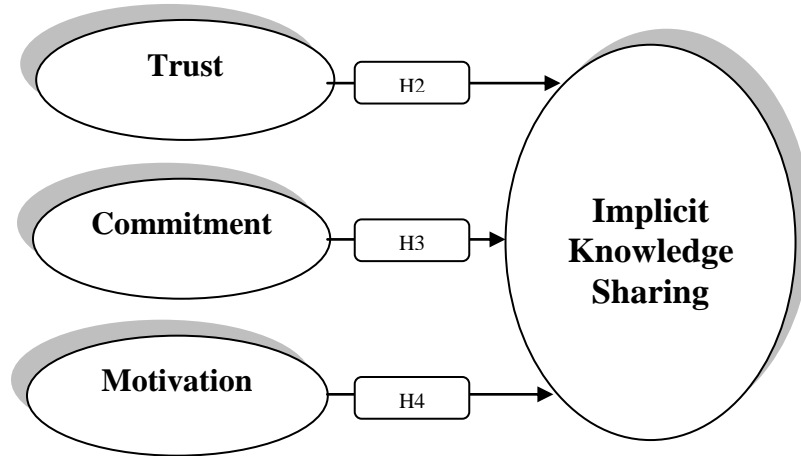
Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment represents the power which makes an individual to stay with organization and tries to achieve organizational goals longingly. The person who has a high organizational commitment would stay in the organization and accept its goals; he would show more efforts and devotions to achieve those goals (Gholi pour, 2011). Porter (1974) states three characteristics for organizational commitment: a strong belief in accepting the organizational aims and values, willingness to work hard for the benefit of the organization, and tendency to stay with the organization. In many research conducted on this subject, a three-component model of organizational commitment which divides commitment in three dimensions named as: continuous, affective and normative commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

Conceptual Model of Research

Knowledge management has a socio- human nature more than any other aspect and the ability and willingness of employees to participate in knowledge management practices have a significant impact on its effective implementation (Hislop, 2005). Therefore, creation and nurturing behaviors and facilitating attitudes of knowledge management practices are necessary for this purpose. In this study based on the mentioned literature, three human factors of trust, commitment and motivation are considered as independent variables and knowledge sharing is considered as a dependent variable. Based on this, conceptual model can be shown as in the Figure 1.

Figure1: The Conceptual Model



METHODOLOGY

The present study is an applied research in terms of objectives because its results are used to solve specific problems within the organization. From the perspective of how to collect data, it is considered as a descriptive-correlational study because the required information about the status quo of the sample is obtained using a questionnaire. And in terms of time, it is cross-sectional and in terms of data types, research is quantitative.

Population examined in this study included a sample of 1450 managers and experts of the investigated Bank in Tehran, among which 304 subjects were selected using a random sampling as sample.

A researcher-made questionnaire has been used for data gathering. In order to collect primary field data, a 25-item questionnaire was used based on five-level Likert scale. The first 10 questions were to measure the knowledge sharing and to assess any of trust, commitment and motivation, 5 questions have been considered. To test the reliability of the questionnaire, a primary sample containing 30 questionnaire was pre-tested and then reliability coefficient was calculated using Cronbach's alpha and the obtained data and with the help of SPSS statistical software. The reliability of the questionnaire and its variables are provided in table 2.

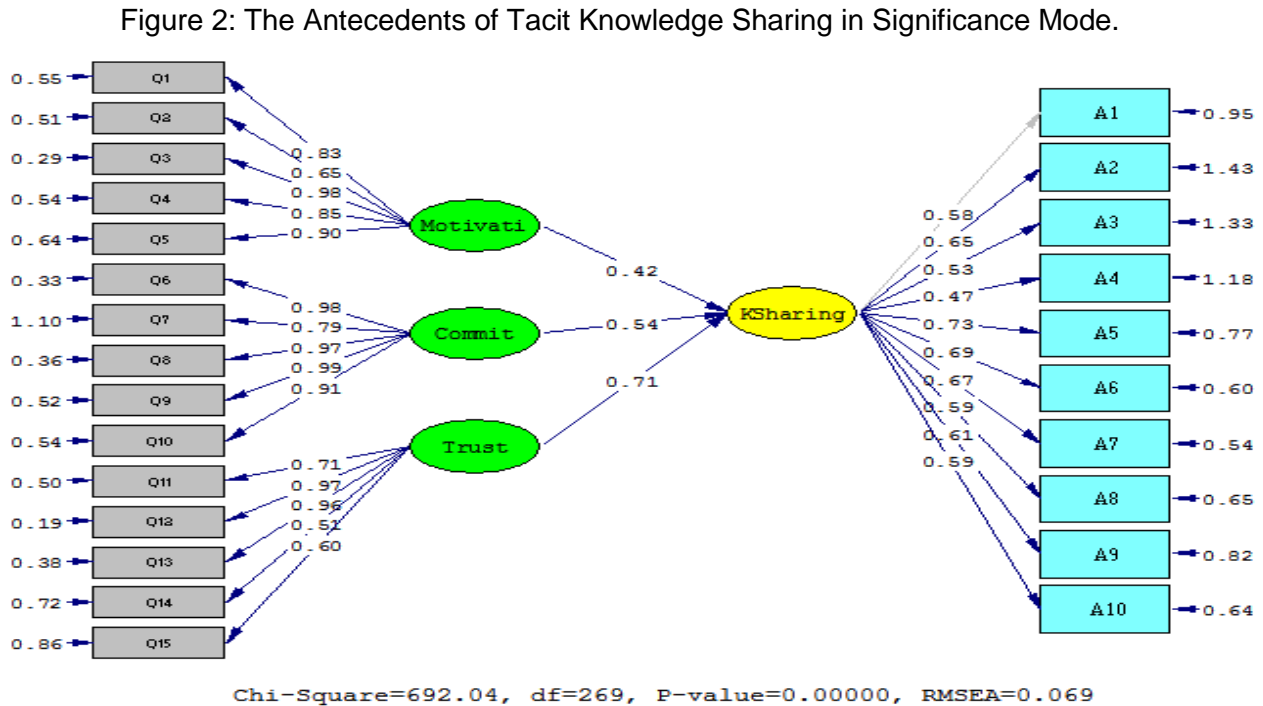
Table 2: Reliability of the Questionnaire and Each of the Variables

	Trust	Commitment	Motivation	Knowledge sharing	Total questionnaire
Reliability coefficient	0/79	0/75	0/81	0/84	0/86

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this study, structural equation modeling has been used to analyze the data and determine the presence or absence of the simultaneous relationship between the variables.

To investigate the relationship expressed in the hypotheses, first by using significance model the significance of every predicted relations will be studied and then by using standard model, the extend and quality of impact will be evaluated. Figure 2 shows the significance of trust, commitment and motivation on tacit knowledge sharing.



Based on the indicators outlined in table 3, the fitness of model can be judged.

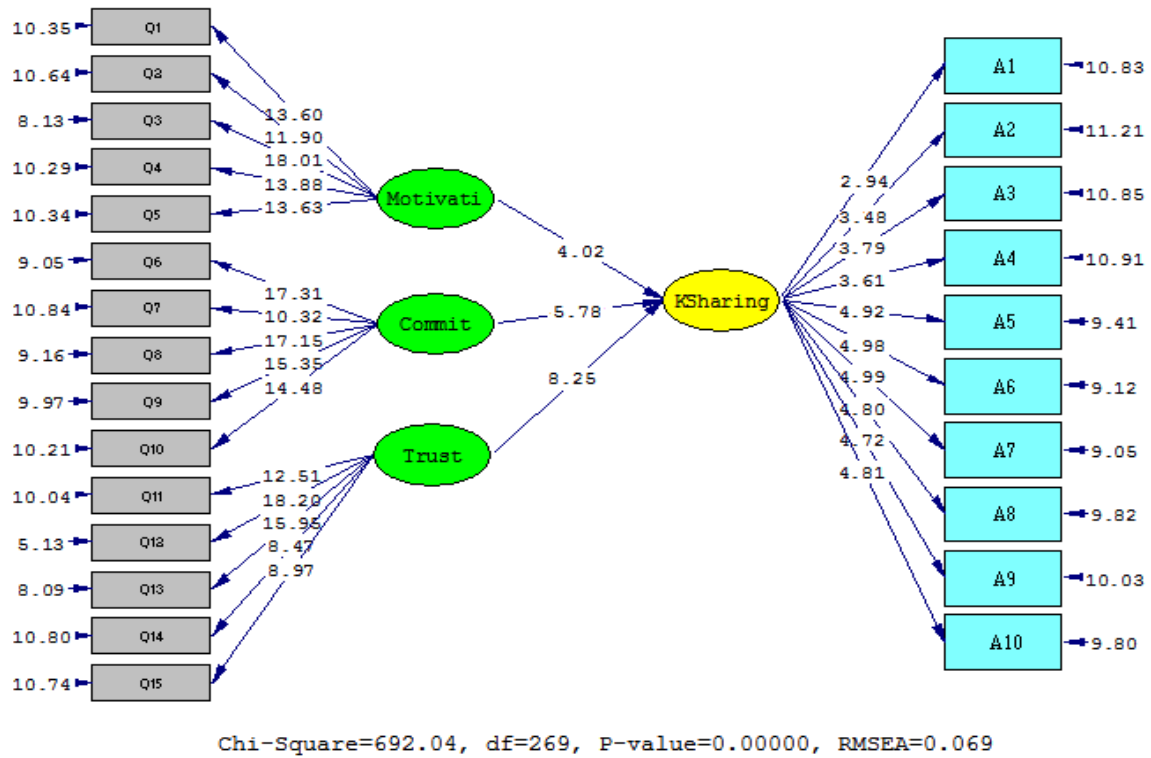
Table 3: Fitness Indicators of Antecedents of Tacit Knowledge Sharing

Indicators	Allowable value	numbers obtained	result
Chi-square to the degree of freedom ratio	$\chi^2 / df < 3$	2.57	Fit
P-Value	$p < .05$.0000	Fit
RMSEA	$.05 > RMSEA > .08$.069	fit

The fitness indicators of the appropriateness of model shows the measurement model of variables; because chi square to degree of freedom ratio equals 2.57 and less than 3, RMSEA (.069) in appropriate limit and P-value (.0000) is less than .05. Based on this model, the impact

of psychological empowerment dimensions on sharing tacit knowledge is significant because their values are higher than the 1.96. In addition, using the standard model we can also evaluate the impact of relationships that their significance have been confirmed in this study.

Figure 3: Model of Antecedents of Knowledge Sharing in Standard Mode



The significance model showed the impact of the psychological empowerment dimensions on sharing tacit knowledge is significant. The model in standard mode also shows that to what extend each of the studied antecedents explains the changes of tacit knowledge sharing. The summary of findings of the data analysis related to these hypotheses presented in table 5 and is concluded in this regard.

Table 5: The Results of Hypotheses Test

Hypothesis	Path: the significant and positive impact of the ...	Standard factor	Significant numbers	the Result
1	trust on knowledge sharing	.71	8.25	Confirmed
2	commitment on knowledge sharing	.54	5.78	Confirmed
3	motivation on knowledge sharing	.42	4.02	Confirmed

The general pattern of relationships between variables in the structural equation model has been consistent with expressed hypotheses; every three reviewed relationships were significant and important. Based on these obtained results, trust, commitment and motivation have significant and important impacts on knowledge sharing capacity. Based on these results, "trust" has had the highest determining impact on knowledge sharing (.71) and in the follow, commitment and motivation in influencing knowledge sharing value was on next places.

These findings are consistent with the results of previous research. For example, Gecas concluded that sense of competency leads to the initiative, effort and perseverance in the face of challenging situations. The freedom of action of employees in their jobs results in having rapid response in the face of obstacles and problems. From motivational aspect, Thomas and Taiwun found that empowerment can bring necessary motive to improve performance in employees by providing freedom of action for employees. Also, Ashforth believes that sense of having impact resulted from empowerment make people realize that their voices would be heard in the organization (Spreitzer, 1992).

CONCLUSION

Knowledge sharing is one of the key measures of knowledge management that have a huge impact on competitiveness and innovation of organization. The role of the human factor in knowledge sharing is crucial and irreplaceable. Thus, increasing the preparedness of employees can enhance their ability of knowledge sharing considerably. The existence of trust, commitment and motivation can improve the capacity of knowledge sharing by the employees.

Knowledge sharing requires the high level of cooperation and partnership between the individuals, particularly through socialization, and this collaboration is done well if there is trust between people. Friendly relations, encouraging employees to help solving the problem together, encouraging honest behaviors, emphasizing the promises and obligations to be met, the more attention to meritocracy in the organization, dealing with the destructive political behaviors in the organization, effective management of organizational conflicts can strengthen trust needed for cooperation among members of the organization.

The willingness to share knowledge and strive to improve the performance of employees and organizations depend on the level of organizational commitment in employees. Many of the actions people do in knowledge management systems are not their official duty. For example, a person is not responsible to transfer his experience or to think about improving organization, so there is needed a sense of responsibility and commitment to these actions in people.

Knowledge does not flow grow spontaneously; these are employees who create, share and use the knowledge and should have an incentive to do so. By analyzing the behavior of

members of the organization as rational beings it can be expected that their active participation in the organization's knowledge management depends on rational reasons and providing benefits and their personal demands. The findings of this study emphasize the importance of the role of internal motivations in this field. For example, people provide their knowledge to others when they feel that it will enhance their professional reputation. In many cases, an attempt is done to create, use, and share knowledge with internal motivations such as feelings of self-efficacy and earning a reputation among colleagues and a sense of belonging. When a person shares his knowledge and experience, is known as someone experienced and skilled, and this makes him feel competent in this respect. Also, people like to acquire a reputation among their peers. These incentives cause people to transfer their experiences to others in order to win their admiration.

As results, the efforts of organization to increase internal capabilities and motivation of employees, can be an important catalyst for the development of capacity of knowledge sharing within the organization and consequently it is considered as increasing the power of innovation and competitiveness of the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results showed that attitudes and motivation of employees play a decisive role in actively participating in knowledge sharing. In the following, there are suggestions provided for the development of each of the dimensions of organizational culture.

Trust

In order to strengthen trust between members, these measures are proposed: development of friendly relations, encouraging employees to solve problems together, encouraging honest behaviors, emphasizing the promises and obligations to be met, paying more attention to meritocracy in the organization, dealing with destructive political behaviors in the organization, effective management of organizational conflicts.

Organizational Commitment

In order to increase the level of commitment the following measures will be effective: creating a satisfying and motivating working conditions, strengthening the sense of identity of employees to the organization, alignment with personal goals, objectives and interests of individual employees with corporate interests, giving more importance to the commitment and responsibility of employees in performance evaluations and granting privileges, and appreciating the sense of responsibility and commitment of employees.

Motivation

Since the findings obtained in this field have focused on the importance of internal motivation, to strengthen incentives for the participation of members of the organization in knowledge management, these measures seem useful: paying attention to the knowledge activities in performance evaluations of employees, appreciation of knowledge workers because of their assistance to improve the collective and organizational performance, strengthening cooperative relations between members of the organization, providing the periodic reports of scientific activities of each member of the organization, creating constructive competition between the members of the organization for the creation and application of new and useful ideas, ratings and disclosure of knowledge activities of employees.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

There might be unwanted factors in any research that make limitations to the research; hence, some of the unwanted variables are not under researcher's control. These factors must be determined and the researcher must show his knowledge about the influence of these factors on the research results. In the present study, there were some limitations such as:

- 1) To study the variables the survey (questionnaire tools) has been used; while it was better to use observation and/or interview for some factors. The questionnaire is a tool by which the understandings and attitude of any person is investigated; whereas, the reality might be different with respondent's answers.
- 2) There are two issues must be considered regarding the nature and generalization of the research: firstly, there might be some practical behaviors like other survey researches that are mostly dependent on environmental conditions. Furthermore, intervening variables might affect the supposed relations among variables that are considered in this study.
- 3) Some other important limitations to this research include: reluctance of some of the respondents to answer the questionnaires, not enough carefulness of some of the respondents in answering the questions, the possibility of bias in answering the questions by some of the respondents.

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