



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

**Knowledge Sharing Practices on Work-Related Issues among Managerial  
Group in Private Organizations**

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# Knowledge Sharing Practices on Work-Related Issues among Managerial Group in Private Organizations

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Khaddraa Rajuli (12010047), Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development hereby declare that the work entitled “Knowledge Sharing Practices on Work-Related Issues among Managerial Group in Private Organizations” is my original work. I have not copied from any other students’ work or from any other sources where due references or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

Signature of Student:

Name:

Date:

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to

My wonderful parents- my wings,

Rajuli Rili and Norjannah Bujang,

for their continuous love, encouragement and support.

My late grandparents- my roots,

Hj. Raili Anis and Hjh. Dayang Rafe'ah Awang Hamzah, and

Hj. Bujang Hj. Ahmad and Hjh. Fatimah Abu Bakar,

for their legacy to be always striving for success in this world and the next.

All my family members, especially the younger generations.

May this thesis inspire them to embark on this journey of education,

as it is truly transformational.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to explore knowledge sharing practices in the organization. In order to get an in-depth understanding about the practice, various aspects related to knowledge sharing such as its contributing factors, barriers, methods and approaches that can help promote, the benefits, with whom knowledge is shared, types of knowledge shared as well as the characteristics of the knowledge sharer were studied. A qualitative method that is in an open-ended and structured questionnaire was used to collect data, followed by one or more interview with the subject matter, if further clarification is needed. A total of twenty-three informants, of executive and manager level from different private organizations in Malaysia were involved in this study. The conceptual analysis highlights various themes derived from the obtained data. The contributing factors of knowledge sharing and its inhibitors emerged similarly as previous studies. They include issues related to individual, institutional, relationship and knowledge. Meanwhile, the barriers consist of issues related to individual, institutional and technology. In addition, the benefits of knowledge sharing also supported previous studies linking knowledge sharing with innovation, performance and learning. On the other hand, the activities that promotes knowledge sharing in the organization ranges from written documentation, verbal communication, information technology tools and other organizational events or practices. The popular social platform-Facebook and Whatsapp applications were also found to assist employees in sharing knowledge freely. Other than that, the majority of informants consider conscientiousness as the top attribute of the knowledge sharer. Furthermore, there are two types of knowledge identified in this study, which informants were willing to share. They include tacit and explicit knowledge. On with whom to share knowledge, it was reported that knowledge was

not only disseminated within and between firms, but was also dependent on the characteristics of knowledge recipients whom perceived by the knowledge contributors as competent, have good attitude and willingness, inquirer, and rightful or relevant. In the relational analysis, several relationships between the informants' demographic background and knowledge sharing variables were found. Above all, the study also contributes toward the body of knowledge as well as policies, methodologies, practices, society and directions for future research.

**Keywords:** Knowledge sharing, knowledge management, Malaysia

***Amalan-Amalan Perkongsian Ilmu Berkaitan Kerja di kalangan Kumpulan Pengurusan di beberapa Organisasi Swasta***

**ABSTRAK**

*Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk meneroka amalan-amalan perkongsian ilmu di dalam organisasi. Pelbagai aspek yang dikaji termasuklah faktor-faktor yang membawa kepada perkongsian ilmu, penghalangnya, aktiviti-aktiviti yang boleh dilakukan, kelebihannya, dengan siapa ilmu dikongsi, jenis-jenis ilmu yang dikongsi serta karakter orang yang berkongsi ilmu. Kajian soal selidik berbentuk kualitatif telah digunakan yang mana dua puluh tiga orang informan berpangkat eksekutif dan pengurus dari industri berlainan telah terlibat. Analisis awal (konseptual analisis) telah merungkai beberapa tema daripada data yang telah dikumpul. Dapatan kajian untuk faktor-faktor yang menggalak dan menghalang perkongsian ilmu adalah sama seperti hasil kajian terdahulu. Faktor-faktor yang menggalakkan perkongsian ilmu datang daripada individu, institusi, perhubungan dan ilmu. Manakala, penghalangnya terdiri daripada isu individu, institusi dan teknologi. Kelebihan berkongsi ilmu juga menyokong dapatan kajian terdahulu yang mengaitkannya dengan inovasi, prestasi dan pembelajaran. Untuk aktiviti-aktiviti perkongsian ilmu pula, ia boleh dipromosikan melalui rekod penulisan, komunikasi secara lisan, penggunaan teknologi maklumat serta lain-lain acara dan praktis. Rangkaian sosial seperti Facebook dan aplikasi Whatsapp turut digunakan sebagai platform perkongsian ilmu. Selain itu, majoriti daripada informan menyatakan “conscientiousness” sebagai karakter utama pengkongsi ilmu. Jenis-jenis ilmu yang dikongsi oleh para informan pula merangkumi ilmu “tacit” dan “explicit”. Kajian juga menunjukkan ilmu bukan sahaja dikongsi dalam dan di antara organisasi tetapi turut menekankan ciri-ciri penerima ilmu. Aras kedua analisis pula telah menemukan*



*beberapa hubungan antara demografi informan dan data yang telah dikategorikan di dalam analisis pertama. Secara umumnya, kajian ini memberikan sumbangan kepada model dan konsep sedia ada serta polisi, kaedah metodologi, pengamal, masyarakat serta halatuju pengkaji pada masa akan datang.*

***Kata kunci:*** *Perkongsian ilmu, pengurusan ilmu, Malaysia*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	i
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	ii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	iv
<b>ABSTRAK</b> .....	vi
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	viii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	xvi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	xvii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of Problem .....	3
1.3 Research Objectives .....	9
1.3.1 General Objective .....	9
1.3.2 Specific Objectives .....	9
1.4 Research Questions .....	9
1.5 Significance of the Study .....	10
1.5.1 Significance to the Body of Knowledge .....	10
1.5.2 Significance to Policy .....	17

1.5.3	Significance to Methodology .....	18
1.5.4	Significance to HRD Practitioners/Practices.....	19
1.5.5	Significance to Society .....	19
1.6	Definition of Terms .....	20
1.6.1	Knowledge .....	20
1.6.2	Knowledge Sharing .....	20
1.6.3	Knowledge Sharer .....	21
1.6.4	Private Organization.....	21
1.6.5	Practices .....	22
1.6.6	Promote .....	22
1.6.7	Contribute.....	23
1.6.8	Inhibit .....	23
1.6.9	Benefit .....	23
1.6.10	Characteristic.....	23
1.7	Summary.....	24
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>		<b>25</b>
2.0	Introduction .....	25
2.1	Data, Information, Knowledge and Wisdom.....	25
2.2	The Concept of Knowledge Management .....	26
2.3	Knowledge Sharing in Private Organizations .....	28
2.4	Related Theories on Knowledge Sharing .....	32

2.4.1	Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) .....	32
2.4.2	Social Exchange Theory .....	35
2.4.3	Social Network Theory .....	38
2.4.4	Self-Determination Theory .....	41
2.5	Review of Knowledge Sharing Studies .....	44
2.5.1	Different Types of Knowledge to Share .....	44
2.5.2	With Whom to Share Knowledge .....	48
2.5.3	Knowledge Sharing Activities .....	50
2.5.4	The Contributing Factors of Knowledge Sharing .....	51
2.5.5	The Inhibiting Factors of Knowledge Sharing .....	61
2.5.6	The Benefits of Knowledge Sharing .....	74
2.5.7	Knowledge Sharer's Personal Attributes .....	77
2.6	Related Models on Knowledge Sharing .....	78
2.6.1	Socialization, Externalization, Combination and Internalization Model .....	78
2.6.2	Five-Factor Model of Personality .....	80
2.7	Summary .....	82
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....</b>		<b>84</b>
3.0	Introduction .....	84
3.1	Research Design .....	84
3.2	Research Instrument .....	86
3.3	Reliability and Validity .....	88

3.4	Pretest .....	89
3.5	Ethical Considerations.....	90
3.6	Data Collection Techniques.....	91
3.6.1	Standardized Open-Ended Survey Questionnaire and Follow-up Interview .....	91
3.6.2	Literature Review Method .....	92
3.6.3	Personality Test .....	92
3.7	Actual Data Collection and Analysis.....	93
3.7.1	Research Population, Sample and Sampling.....	93
3.7.2	Data Collection Procedures .....	94
3.7.3	Data Analysis Procedures.....	95
3.7.4	Data Analysis Techniques .....	97
3.8	Summary.....	100
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS .....</b>		<b>101</b>
4.0	Introduction .....	101
4.1	Informants' Demographic Background (Descriptive).....	101
4.2	Informants' Profile Report.....	106
4.2.1	Informant 1 .....	106
4.2.2	Informant 2.....	106
4.2.3	Informant 3 .....	106
4.2.4	Informant 4.....	107
4.2.5	Informant 5.....	107

4.2.6	Informant 6.....	108
4.2.7	Informant 7.....	108
4.2.8	Informant 8.....	108
4.2.9	Informant 9.....	109
4.2.10	Informant 10.....	109
4.2.11	Informant 11.....	110
4.2.12	Informant 12.....	110
4.2.13	Informant 13.....	111
4.2.14	Informant 14.....	111
4.2.15	Informant 15.....	111
4.2.16	Informant 16.....	112
4.2.17	Informant 17.....	112
4.2.18	Informant 18.....	113
4.2.19	Informant 19.....	113
4.2.20	Informant 20.....	114
4.2.21	Informant 21.....	114
4.2.22	Informant 22.....	115
4.2.23	Informant 23.....	115
4.3	Research Findings.....	116
4.3.1	Research Objective 1: To identify what types of work-related knowledge employees are willing to share .....	116

4.3.2	Research Objective 2: To identify with whom people are willing to share knowledge with .....	120
4.3.3	Research Objective 3: To find out how the organization promotes knowledge sharing among employees.....	125
4.3.4	Research Objective 4: To identify factors that contribute towards knowledge sharing in the organization .....	131
4.3.5	Research Objective 5: To identify factors that inhibit knowledge sharing in the organization.....	140
4.3.6	Research Objective 6: To identify the benefits of knowledge sharing in the organization.....	150
4.3.7	Research Objective 7: To identify the characteristics of the knowledge sharer .....	155
4.3.8	Research Objective 8: To identify the relationship between demographic factors and knowledge sharing variables .....	158
4.3.9	Research Objective 9: To develop a proposition model on knowledge sharing .....	163
4.4	Possible New Findings .....	165
4.4.1	Possible new finding on how is knowledge sharing being promoted in the organization.....	165
4.4.2	Possible new finding on the benefits of knowledge sharing .....	165
4.5	Summary.....	166

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION, RECOMMENDATION AND**

<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	167
5.0    Introduction .....	167
5.1    Discussion: Research Objective 1 .....	167
5.2    Discussion: Research Objective 2 .....	170
5.3    Discussion: Research Objective 3 .....	173
5.3.1    Written documentation .....	173
5.3.2    Verbal communication .....	174
5.3.3    Information technologies (IT) tools or applications.....	177
5.3.4    Other events or practices .....	179
5.4    Discussion: Research Objective 4 .....	180
5.4.1    Individual factors.....	180
5.4.2    Institutional factors.....	183
5.4.3    Knowledge: Nature, content or representation.....	187
5.4.4    Relationship.....	188
5.5    Discussion: Research Objective 5 .....	189
5.5.1    Individual barriers .....	189
5.5.2    Institutional barriers .....	194
5.5.3    Technological barriers.....	198
5.6    Discussion: Research Objective 6 .....	200
5.6.1    Organizational outcome .....	200



5.6.2	Individual outcome.....	204
5.7	Discussion: Research Question 7 .....	205
5.8	A Proposition Model on Knowledge Sharing.....	207
5.9	Limitations of the Study .....	210
5.10	Recommendations for Future Research .....	211
5.11	Conclusion.....	212
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>		<b>217</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>		<b>233</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

		<b>Page</b>
Table 2.1	Categorization of knowledge.....	47
Table 2.2	Five-factor model of personality.....	82
Table 3.1	Interview questions.....	87
Table 3.2	An example of data translation.....	96
Table 3.3	An example of data weeding.....	96
Table 4.1	Informants' demographic background.....	101
Table 5.1	Different kinds of knowledge to share with supporting studies.....	170

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Page</b>
Figure 3.1 Data collection procedure.....	95
Figure 3.2 Analysis of framework.....	95
Figure 3.3 Relational analysis process.....	100
Figure 4.1 Number of informant according to service period.....	103
Figure 4.2 Number of informant according to gender.....	104
Figure 4.3 Number of informant according to ethnicity.....	104
Figure 4.4 Number of informant according to educational level.....	105
Figure 4.5 Number of informant according to job position.....	105
Figure 4.6 Number of informant according to industry.....	105
Figure 4.7 Types of knowledge shared.....	116
Figure 4.8 With whom people are willing to share knowledge.....	121
Figure 4.9 The various ways of implementing knowledge sharing.....	125
Figure 4.10 Written documentation activities that promote knowledge sharing.....	126
Figure 4.11 Verbal communication activities that promote knowledge sharing.....	127
Figure 4.12 IT tools/applications that promote knowledge sharing.....	128
Figure 4.13 Internet as IT tools/applications to promote knowledge sharing.....	128
Figure 4.14 Telecommunication as IT tools/applications to promote knowledge sharing.....	129
Figure 4.15 Other events/practices that promote knowledge sharing.....	130
Figure 4.16 Contributing factors of knowledge sharing.....	131
Figure 4.17 Individual factors that help knowledge sharing.....	132
Figure 4.18 Organizational factors that help knowledge sharing.....	135
Figure 4.19 Social group factors that help knowledge sharing.....	137

Figure 4.20	Knowledge as a contributing factor to knowledge sharing.....	139
Figure 4.21	Relationship as a contributing factor to knowledge sharing.....	139
Figure 4.22	Inhibiting factors of knowledge sharing.....	141
Figure 4.23	Individual barriers toward knowledge sharing.....	141
Figure 4.24	Organizational barriers toward knowledge sharing.....	146
Figure 4.25	Social group barriers toward knowledge sharing.....	148
Figure 4.26	Technological barriers of knowledge sharing.....	149
Figure 4.27	The benefits of knowledge sharing.....	150
Figure 4.28	The organizational benefits of knowledge sharing.....	151
Figure 4.29	The individual benefits of knowledge sharing.....	153
Figure 4.30	The personality of knowledge sharer.....	156
Figure 4.31	Relationship between demographic variables on willingness to share knowledge as a sense of responsibility.....	158
Figure 4.32	Relationship between demographic variables on willingness to share knowledge as an organizational commitment.....	160
Figure 4.33	Relationship between demographic variables on unwillingness to share knowledge relating to recipient's cognitive capacity issue.....	161
Figure 4.34	Relationship between demographic on the benefits of knowledge sharing....	162
Figure 4.35	A proposition model on knowledge sharing.....	163
Figure 4.36	Possible new finding on how is knowledge sharing being promoted in the organization.....	165
Figure 4.37	Possible new finding on the benefits of knowledge sharing.....	165
Figure 5.1	With whom to share knowledge with supporting studies.....	171
Figure 5.2	Ways to promote knowledge sharing with supporting studies.....	175

Figure 5.3	Contributing factors to knowledge sharing with supporting studies.....	182
Figure 5.4	Inhibiting factors to knowledge sharing with supporting studies.....	192
Figure 5.5	The benefits of knowledge sharing with supporting studies.....	201
Figure 5.6	Knowledge sharer's personality with supporting studies.....	206

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This introductory chapter is divided into seven sections. Section 1.1 provides the background of the study while Section 1.2 describes the problem statement. The next section, Section 1.3 discusses the objectives of the study followed by Section 1.4, which discusses the research questions of the study. The next section, Section 1.5 and Section 1.6 explains the significance and the definition of terms respectively. Lastly, Section 1.7 summarizes the discussion of the first chapter of the study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The emergence of today's economy is the result of the third wave of globalization, which is enabled by technology (Thurow, 2000, as cited in Squicciarini & Loikkanen, 2008). Huang, Wei, and Chang (2007) further support that technology has a significant influence towards the new type of economy where knowledge is an important source of competitive advantage. In line with a global knowledge-based economy, organizations have raised attention towards knowledge management to minimize the adverse impact of the fast changing environment. The focus is being placed on the creation and sharing of knowledge that is fundamental for the development of intellectual capital (Ichijo & Nonaka, 2006).

The value of knowledge is beyond price. As the competition is getting more ferocious, knowledge is being perceived as the critical element that differentiates one organization from another as well as becoming a driving factor for success. Adding to the fact that today's

workforce is increasingly diversified (Henson, 2009), organizations can be said to be rich in knowledge. While experienced employees hold a great amount of knowledge, the younger generations are armed with creative thinking and are more open to ideas. This signifies that an organization is not only employing the people, but also employing their brainpower.

Deleteriously, knowledge can easily be gone if no proper approach is being taken to preserve it. The consequences can be seen when the employees leave the organization, retire or explore new chances to work with other organizations (Ling, Sandhu, & Jain, 2009). In this regard, the capability of an organization to retain and leverage the use of knowledge is of utmost importance (Chu, Krishnakumar, & Khosla, 2014).

The intention of having knowledge is not to fill minds; rather it is intended to make them open (Siemens, 2006). On many occasions, when new recruits are hired, guidance from those who are familiar with the job is essential, as they may not be capable to complete new and complicated tasks entirely on their own. The acquired knowledge of the experts from their previous experiences or mistakes has to be shared for the collective good as opposed to personal advantage. Hence, people in the organization must collaborate and integrate with each other regardless of the gaps surrounding them.

The perceived “sensitivity” of knowledge and its “ownership” varies among people (Marouf, 2007). People have their own perception on how knowledge is regarded. Viewing knowledge sharing as a loss is a wrong and apprehensive perception that should be discarded. Rather, knowledge will keep on growing when shared. As Tsai, Chen, and Chien (2012) suggested that the purpose of knowledge sharing is not merely for storing and making knowledge available, but also doubling the worthiness of the knowledge itself. In due course, organizations will gain something greater than data and information in their information

systems, which are beneficial for their success (Blair, 2002, as cited in Tohidinia & Mosakhani, 2010).

To remain in the competition, organizations need to inherent capabilities that are crucial for their survival and competitiveness. To keep abreast in the world where globalization has changed the structure of economy, organizations must be able to amplify their adaptability, innovation and process speed (Myers, 1996). Particularly, by imparting the access, donation and sharing of knowledge as part of organizational practices, organizational productivity will be increased (Tsai, Chang, Cheng, & Lien, 2012). Hence, knowledge sharing can act as a mechanism to catalyze the need of an organization to use knowledge at its best.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

Knowledge sharing is a very interesting topic to explore. It has received a lot of attention from researchers who aims to understand the sharing process amongst people in the organization. Indeed, the nature of knowledge itself, which can represent a symbol of power, can also positively bring benefit when being invested in and be a stimulating factor for the study. Despite the existence of knowledge in the organization, Davenport and Prusak (1998) argue that it can be unused and not maximized. Meaning, the knowledge, may only reside in the mind of its owner without being disseminated to others. This restraint is described by Syed-Ikhsan and Rowland (2004) as a failure of knowledge transfer, which can only be made possible by the sharing process.

Given a growing recognition on the study of knowledge sharing, however, there have been very little studies done using qualitative methods. Most of the previous research (Cheng, Yeh, & Tu, 2008; H. F. Lin, 2007; Ling et al., 2009; Sáenz , Aramburu, & Rivera, 2009; Sohail & Daud, 2009; Tohidinia & Mosakhani, 2010) are using quantitative questionnaires, in which could lead to potential threats of common method biasness such as recall ability,