

**KNOWLEDGE SHARING PRACTICES AMONGST EMPLOYEES IN AN  
EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION**

**MARTHYA LINA BETTIE**

This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
Bachelor of Science with Honours  
(Human Resource Development)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK  
(2011)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

My deepest appreciation to my Final Year Project supervisor, Dr Shahren Ahmad Zaidi Adruce, Dean Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, for giving me guidance and valuable support during the process of completion of this report. His constant guidance and patience have given me a lot of confidence to complete this report. I really appreciate what I have learnt from this research, which provides a lot of valuable experience that motivates me to complete this report. I would also like to thank Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) for giving me the opportunity to broaden my knowledge on Human Resource Development and to complete my research on knowledge sharing practices among employees in an excellent organization.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) staff members for participating in my survey and giving me the chance and opportunity to do my research in their organization. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the organization and the individuals for being able to spare their valuable times to participate in the study which is critical to this research.

Finally, I would like to thank my family members for their moral support and encouragement.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
Abstrak	xii
Abstract	xiii

### CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Background of Study	1
1.2	Statement of Problems	3
1.3	Objectives of The Study	6
	1.3.1 General objective	
	1.3.2 Specific objective	
1.4	Research Questions	7
1.5	Research Schedule	8
1.6	Definition of Terms	9
1.9	Summary	11

### CHAPTER 2- LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction	12
2.1	Review of Related Studies	13
	1. Social Exchange Theory	12
	2. Model of Knowledge Tranfer	13
	3. Information Theory	14
2.2	Review of related Studies	14
2.1	With Whom employees want to share knowledge	14
2.2	Characteristics of Employees That Are Most Wiling To Share Knowledge	16
	2.2.1 Self Efficacy	16
	2.2.2 Enjoy Helping Others	17
	2.2.3 Postitive Personality	17
	2.2.4 Social Interaction	17
	2.2.5 Employee's Passion on Work	17
2.3	Organizational Factors That Inhibits Knowledge Sharing	18
	2.3.1 Differeces of Knowledge	18
	2.3.2 Lack of Common Identity	18

2.3.3	No Relations Between The Receiver and Sender of Knowledge	19
2.3.4	No Knowledge of Knowledge Sharing	19
2.3.5	Unwilling To Share Knowledge	19
2.3.6	Lack of Time	19
2.3.7	Negative Attitudes Towards Learning	20
2.4	Organizational Factors Contribute to Knowledge Sharing	20
2.4.1	Trust	20
2.4.2	Top Management Support	21
2.4.3	Information Technology Support	21
2.4.4	A Felling of Being Valued	22
2.4.5	Reduce The Reseources Spent At Work	22
2.4.6	Creation of New Knowledge	22
2.4.7	Organization's Climate	23
2.4.8	Need to Gain Better Understanding of Current Knowledge and Best Practices	23
2.4.9	Develop Competent and Knowledgable Workers	24
2.4.10	Wants Others to Know The Knowledge Holds	24
2.4.11	Giving Opportunities For Others To Learn	25
2.5	Promoting Knowledge Sharing	25
2.5.1	Financial Rewards	26
2.5.2	Recognition and Acknowlegment	26
2.5.3	No Rewards System	27
2.5.4	Training	27
2.5.5	Story Telling	27
2.6	Capturing Employees' Knowledge	28
2.6.1	Face to Face Communication	28
2.6.2	Documented	29
2.6.3	Media Communication	29
2.7	Benefits of Having Knowledge Sharing In Organization	29
2.3	Theoritical Evidence Supporting This Study	32
2.4	Summary	34

## CHAPTER 3- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction	35
3.1	Design of the Study	35
3.2	Population under Study	36
3.3	Sample and Sampling Procedures	37
3.4	Data Collection Method and Procedures	38
3.4.1	Open- Ended Questionnaires	38
3.4.2	Documentary Analysis	39
3.4.3	Data Collection Procedures	39
3.5	Instrument of The Study	40
3.6	Reliability and Validity	41

3.7	Pre-test and Preparation for Data Collection	42
3.8	Data analysis framework and procedure	43
3.9	Summary	44

## CHAPTER 4- RESEARCH FINDINNGS

4.0	Introduction	45
4.1	Informants Demographic Background Matrix	46
4.2	Description of Research Sample	47
4.2.1	Informant Number 1	47
4.2.2	Informant Number 248	48
4.2.3	Informant Number 3	48
4.2.4	Informant Number 4	48
4.2.5	Informant Number 5	49
4.5.6	Informant Number 6	49
4.5.7	Informant Number 7	50
4.5.8	Informant Number 8	50
4.3	Research Findings	51
4.4	Research Question I: With Whom Employees Want to Share Knowledge	51
4.4.1	Colleagues	51
4.4.2	Subordinates	52
4.4.3	Superior	52
4.5	Research Question 2: Characteristics of Employees Who Are Knowledge Sharer	53
4.5.1	Social Interaction	54
4.5.2	Enjoy Helping Others	54
4.5.3	Positive Personality	55
4.5.4	Employee's Passion on Work	55
4.5.6	Self- efficacy	56
4.6	Research Questions 3: Factors That inhibit Kwnledge Sharing	57
4.6.1	Lack of Common Identity	57
4.6.2	Unwilling To Share Knowledge	58
4.6.4	Differences in Knowledge	58
4.6.4	Lack of Time	59
4.6.5	Negative Attitudes Towards learning	59
4.6.6	Slow Feedback and Respones From Colleagues	59
4.7	Research Question 4: Factors That Promote Knowledge Sharing	60
4.7.1	Develop Team Interaction	61
4.7.2	Creation of New Knowledge	61
4.7.3	Reduce Resources Spent at Workplace	62
4.7.4	Need to Gain Better Understanding of Current Knowledge and Best Practices	62
4.7.5	Wants Others to Know The Knowledge Have	63
4. 7.6	Giving Opportunities For Others To Learn	64

4.7.7	Develop Competent and Knowledgeable Workers	64
4.7.8	A Feeling of Being Valued	64
4.7.9	Organization's Climate	65
4.7.10	Working Environment	65
4.8	Research Questions 5: Organizational Efforts in Promoting Knowledge Sharing	66
4.8.1	No Rewards System	66
4.8.2	Recognition and Acknowledgment	67
4.8.3	Get Together	67
4.8.4	Training	68
4.8.5	Story Telling	68
4.8.6	Info-Telly News	69
4.8.7	Morning Starter	69
4.9	Research Question 6: Method(s) Used to Capture or Obtained Employee Knowledge	70
4.9.1	Documented	70
4.9.2	Face to Face Communication	71
4.9.3	Media Communication	71
4.9.4	Strategic Business Plan	72
4.9.5	Resource Centre	72
4.10	Research Question 7: Benefits of Having Knowledge Sharing In Organization	73
4.10.1	Enhance Organization Innovation and Performance	73
4.10.2	Knowledge Learned and Applied	74
4.10.3	Better Social Network	74
4.10.4	Awareness to Organization's Environment	75
4.10.5	Organizational Learning	75
4.10.6	Enhance Employees' Innovation and Performance	76
4.11	Summary	76

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

5.0	Introduction	77
5.1	Discussion of Research Findings	77
5.1.1	With Whom Employees Want to Share Knowledge	78
5.1.2	Characteristics of Employees Who Are Knowledge Sharer	79
5.1.3	Factors That Inhibits Knowledge Sharing	81
5.1.4	Factors That Promotes Knowledge Sharing	83
5.1.5	Organization's Efforts in Promoting Knowledge Sharing	88
5.1.6	Method(s) Used To Capture/ Retain Knowledge	91
5.1.7	Benefits of Knowledge Sharing in The Organization	93
5.2	Summarization of Chapters	95
5.3	Research Summary	96
5.4	Significance of Study	100
5.4.1	Significance in Human Resource Fields	100

5.4.2	Significance To The Society	101
5.4.3	Significance to The Theory	101
5.4.4	Significance to The Methodology	102
5.5	Research Limitation	102
5.6	Research Recommendation	103
5.6.1	Sarawak Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)	103
5.6.2	Future Researchers	104

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1</b>	
Summary of research schedule	8
<b>Table 2</b>	
Summary of Data Collection Methods	40
<b>Table 3</b>	
Summary of the Instruments Used in Study	41
<b>Table 4</b>	
Informants' Demographic background	46



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1</b>	
With whom employees are willing to share	51
<b>Figure 2</b>	
Characteristics of employees who are knowledge sharer	53
<b>Figure 3</b>	
Factors that inhibit knowledge sharing	57
<b>Figure 4</b>	
Factors that promotes knowledge sharing	60
<b>Figure 5</b>	
Organization's effort in promoting knowledge sharing	66
<b>Figure 6</b>	
Method(s) used to capture or obtained employee knowledge	70
<b>Figures 7</b>	
Benefits of having knowledge sharing in the organization	73
<b>Figure 8</b>	
Supporting studies of with whom employees want to share knowledge	78
<b>Figure 9</b>	
Supporting studied for characteristics of employees who are knowledge sharers	80
<b>Figure 10</b>	
Supporting studies for factors that inhibit knowledge sharing	82
<b>Figure 11</b>	
Supporting studies for factors that promote knowledge sharing	85
<b>Figures 12</b>	
Supporting studies for organization's efforts in promoting knowledge sharing	89
<b>Figure 13</b>	
Supporting studies for method(s) used to capture or retain employees' knowledge	92
<b>Figure14</b>	
Supporting studies for benefits of knowledge sharing practices in the organization	94
<b>Figure 15</b>	

New findings on factors that inhibits knowledge sharing 98

**Figure 16**  
New findings on the organization’s strategies in promoting knowledge sharing 99

**Figure 17**  
New findings on method(s) used to capture/ retain knowledge 99

**Figure 18**  
New findings on benefits of having knowledge sharing in the organization 100

## **ABSTRACT**

### **KNOWLEDGE SHARING PRACTICES AMONGST EMPLOYEES IN AN EXCELLENT ORGANIZATION**

Marthya Lina Bettie

This study aims to explore knowledge sharing practices amongst employees. In addition to that, it also looks into with whom employees willing to share knowledge and what are the benefits gained from sharing knowledge. The study was also conducted to find out the characteristics of employees who are willing to share knowledge and what are the organizational factors that may inhibits or contributes to knowledge sharing amongst employees. In this study, efforts of organization to promote knowledge sharing practices and methods to capturing employees' knowledge were also covered. Qualitative approach was used where eight (8) informants were given open ended questionnaire to fill in. Findings from the study indicated that there were several new findings and some also support results found in previous studies.

## ABSTRAK

### AMALAN PERKONGSIAN ILMU PENGETAHUAN DI KALANGAN PEKERJA DI SEBUAH ORGANISASI YANG BERJAYA

Marthya Lina Bettie

*Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti amalan perkongsian ilmu pengetahuan di kalangan pekerja. Selain itu, kajian ini juga dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti bersama siapa pekerja ingin berkongsi ilmu pengetahuan dan juga mengetahui faedah yang diperolehi setelah berkongsi ilmu pengetahuan. Selain itu, kajian ini dijalankan untuk mengenal pasti ciri- ciri pekerja yang sanggup berkongsi ilmu pengetahuan dan untuk mengenal pasti faktor-faktor organisasi yang menghalang dan mengalakkan amalan perkongsian ilmu pengetahuan di kalangan pekerja. Di dalam kajian ini, pengenalan terhadap usaha organisasi untuk mempromosikan amalan perkongsian ilmu pengetahuan dan kaedah yang digunakan untuk menyimpan ilmu pengetahuan pekerja akan dilakukan. Metodologi kajian yang dijalankan adalah secara kualitatif iaitu dengan mengedarkan borang kajian yang mengandungi soalan terbuka kepada lapan (8) informan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan beberapa dapatan baru dan ada juga dapatan yang menyokong dapatan kajian-kajian lepas.*

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter consisted of nine important sections. The first section discussed on the background of the study. The statement of the problem was discussed in the second section followed by the objectives of this study. The fourth section was on research questions, and the fifth section was the research schedule. The sixth section explained definition of terms and the last section is the summary.

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

With the rapid development of technologies, organizations evolved and employees needed to adapt and tune themselves to a specific organizational objective which is essential for them as members of an organization. This study was conducted to explore employees' knowledge sharing practices in their workplace. Knowledge sharing is important to determine the learning needs and to

create a development plan for organizations. Knowledge sharing has been known to provide business with competitive advantages by creating opportunities to enhance the organization ability to develop a solution in order to meet the basic requirements of employees (Reid, 2003, as cited in Lin, 2007). Knowledge sharing was a process of helping organizations to develop employees' knowledge efficiently, enhanced innovation capability, increased managerial capacity, reduced costs of operations and created competitive advantages to lift the market value of the organization. Knowledge sharing was the primary sources of being competitive, which led continued sustainability and organization's success (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, as cited in Sohail & Salina , 2009 ).

Today, challenges faced by the management were to create opportunities to utilize employees' knowledge to its optimum. In order to address the existing challenges, the area of knowledge sharing has been widely scrutinized by researchers. Organization developed themselves with a position of knowledgeable actions in the workplace to compete in knowledge based- economy. Knowledge was known as the main driver of new knowledge- based economy. Most of the organizations still have an old paradigm perception whereby only the upper levels in an organization has the rights to the decision making process. Shifts in paradigm were required so that employees shared their knowledge and maximized their knowledge utility within the organization, maintained survival of organizations in the new knowledge based- economy.

Do the organizations encouraged knowledge sharing among employees? What are employees' expectations towards sharing their knowledge with a colleague? It was important for them to value the knowledge sharing practices and had the sense of accomplishment and pleased from the knowledge and experienced gained from knowledge sharing. Yang (2007) stated that knowledge sharing exists when employees were willing to assist and learned from others in the advance of new competencies. Employees accessed to relevant information and utilized the knowledge network to achieve the level of shared understanding during the process of knowledge sharing in organizations (Hogel et al., 2003, as

cited in Lin, 2007). Organizations needed to emphasize on employees' knowledge and social values. However, transmission and absorption of information from sender and receiver were carefully conducted for effective knowledge sharing (Hawamdeh, 2003, as cited in Sohail & Salina, 2009).

Several studies regarding employees' attitudes towards knowledge sharing in organization were done mainly outside Malaysia. This study was conducted in one of the organization in Malaysia which it intended to explore employees' knowledge on sharing practices in their workplace. Therefore, to implement an effective of knowledge sharing process, having the right person at the right place and on the right time is crucial to attain organization success.

## **1.2 Statement of problems**

There were several studies conducted to explore the effectiveness of knowledge sharing as it helped organizations to develop their performance and decreased unnecessary learning efforts (Lin, 2007). However, most were done in the west and few attempts were made to explore the effectiveness of knowledge sharing in organization from the Malaysian perspective. The differences of cultures in Malaysia led to different knowledge sharing practices and organization system. Thus, there was a need to understand the knowledge sharing practices among Malaysian's perspectives by exploring how employees shared knowledge.

Previous researchers explained that individuals who shared knowledge were highly associated with their personal traits and characteristic (Hendriks, 1999). Therefore, it was crucial for the researcher to take a major concern on how employee's personal traits and characteristics would affect the knowledge sharing practices in organization.

According to Christensen (2005), organization needed to know what were the fundamental problems that caused the failure of knowledge sharing. Through his finding, he founds that problems arose from the combination of not being able

or willing to share knowledge. The organizations as well as the employees needed to put more commitment and effort in viewing ways to overcome problems caused failure of knowledge sharing as motivational problems in workplace.

In the context of knowledge sharing, it was highly recommended that organization understand on what were factors that drove employees' motivation (Christensen, 2005). One of the challenges of knowledge sharing was getting people in the organization to share their knowledge (Skyrme, 2002, as cited in Peariasamy, 2007). According to Peariasamy (2007), many studies were conducted to determine causes why employees were not interested in sharing knowledge with their colleagues at workplace. Therefore, researcher needed to gain in-depth information on how to encourage employees to share knowledge and with whom employees shared their knowledge within an organization. Therefore, researcher carried out the study by identified various factors that helped to promote or motivate employees to share knowledge.

Organization needed to identify what kind of incentives that could be applied to increase individual's willingness to share knowledge (Christensen, 2005). Most of the studies done on knowledge sharing practices emphasized on what kind of incentives could be given in order to promote knowledge sharing as a returned for their willingness to share knowledge. The argument continued when previous researchers said that financial rewards were more important in promoting knowledge sharing (Nickerson & Zenger, 2004, as cited in Christensen, 2005). However, a study conducted by Christensen (2005) in the research of knowledge sharing emphasized on non-financial rewards in order to promote employees' knowledge on sharing practices. Therefore, there was a need to find out if financial rewards and non-financial rewards promoted knowledge sharing.

Knowledge transferred to others was applicable in their work routine and it was shared through all type of sharing media. A study by Yang (2007) stated that most of the knowledge in the workplace were often not captured and retained to ensure organization learning took places. When the organization did not



implement proper methods to captures the knowledge, knowledge were wasted and led to low learning cultures in organization. Therefore, researcher were encouraged to explore effective methods to capture knowledge especially during the process of knowledge transfer, in order to create individuals' aprreciation towards knowledge.

Yang (2007) founds that when individuals delivered their knowledge to organization assets, it increased the effectiveness of organization. This proved that organization effectiveness was part of the criteria to assist employees in knowledge sharing. Hence, employees with positive influence of knowledge sharing would led to organizational efficieny.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The following research objectives were developed to accomplish the problems:

#### **General Objectives:**

- To find out employees' knowledge sharing practices in an excellent organization

#### **Specifics Objectives:**

1. To find out with whom employees are willing to share knowledge with.
2. To find out the characteristics of employees who are knowledge sharer.
3. To find out what are the factor(s) that inhibit knowledge sharing.
4. To find out what are the factor(s) in the organization that contribute(s) to knowledge sharing.
5. To find out efforts by organization to promote knowledge sharing.
6. To find out the various methods that organization used to capture employees knowledge.
7. To find out how knowledge sharing benefits the organization.

## **1.4 Research questions**

The seven research questions related to this study were:

- i. With whom are employees willing to share knowledge in the organization?
- ii. What are the characteristics of employees who are most willing to share knowledge?
- iii. What are the organizational factor(s) that inhibit knowledge sharing?
- iv. What are the organizational factor(s) that promote knowledge sharing?
- v. How does the organization promote knowledge sharing?
- vi. What are the method(s) used by the organization to capture employees knowledge?
- vii. What are the benefits that organization gained form knowledge sharing practices among employees?

## 1.5 Research schedule

Activities	Weeks (June-April)										
	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mac	April
Library Search	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*
FYP 1 Writing		*	*	*	*	*					
Instrument Planning		*	*	*	*	*					
FYP 1 Presentation					*						
FYP 1 Submission						*					
Data Collection								*	*		
Data Analysis								*	*	*	
FYP 2 Writing									*	*	*
FYP 2 Presentation											*
FYP 2 Submission											*

**Table 1: Summary of research schedule**

## **1.6 Definition of terms**

For the purpose of the study, some of the specific terms used in this study were defined:

### **1.6.1 Knowledge sharing**

#### Conceptual

- According to Lin (2007), knowledge sharing was a process of social interaction culture whereby employee knowledge, experiences, and skills were exchanged throughout the whole department or organization.

#### Operational

- In this study, knowledge sharing occurred among the individuals and organizational levels to achieve an understanding in exchanged knowledge and created new knowledge to improve innovation performance. Therefore, knowledge sharing was defined similar to the conceptual definition above.

### **1.6.2 Knowledge**

#### Conceptual

- According to Davenport and Prusak (1998), knowledge was known as a fluid mix of framed experiences, contextual information, values and expert insight that provided a framework for evaluated and incorporated new experiences and information.

### Operational

- In this study, knowledge was defined similar to the conceptual definition above whereby employees' knowledge was applied through their experiences and information gathered to perform the work assigned in an organization.

### **1.6.3 Employee**

#### Conceptual

- A person who was hired to provide services to a company on a regular basis in exchanged for compensation and who did not provided these services as part of an independent business (Zigarmi et.al., 2009).

#### Operational

- In this study, an employee was defined as a group of people worked together in an organization to perform task and services.

### **1.6.4 Organization**

#### Conceptual

- The act of organized and arranged in a systematic way for used or action took by the organization of an army, or of a deliberative body (Duymedjian & Ruling, 2010).

## Operational

- In this study, researcher used the same definition of organization defined by Duymedjian & Ruling (2010). An organization (SEDC) was formed from people together in a group and took actions to organize a desired achievement for its business strategy.

### **1.6.5 Practices**

## Conceptual

- Practices were activities which embedded in practice with a meaningful way for the people or the practice were being analyzed. It was people's performing activities, they used and created knowledge, skills or competences of those who performed the activities or of the community (Schatzki, 2001).

## Operational

- Practices in this specific study were methods and activities performed by employees in SEDC through processes of knowledge sharing which were performed by employees in the organization.

### **1.7 Summary**

This chapter has briefly discussed the research which was carried out. It had discussed the background of study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, research schedule as well as definition of terms. The next chapter discussed the literature review, theories and concepts that were related to the study based on literature findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

There were four parts in this section. The first section was explained the review of related studies on knowledge sharing practices. Review of related theories was discussed on section two. Meanwhile, the third section explained theoretical evidence in supporting the knowledge sharing practices amongst employees in an excellent organization. The last section was the summary of the chapter.

#### **2.1 Review of related theories**

In this research, two theories and one model were related to knowledge sharing practices in organization.