

Trust on Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour Among Academicians in Public Universities: A Review

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Abstract - Universities are probably the places, where knowledge is freely and openly shared among the academicians. Although, the knowledge sharing is hardly presented within the university level these days in reality. Academic institutions, specifically the public universities are now experiencing the ever rising faculty demands for quality expertise and resource sharing. As a consequence, knowledge sharing has become a rising concern in academia. The study has aimed to assess the factors concerned with knowledge sharing among academicians in public universities. The study has reviewed the knowledge-sharing behaviour concept from the academic perspective in terms of written contribution, organizational communications, and communities of practice. Trust based on Social Exchange Theory has also been reviewed along with the association between trusts and knowledge-sharing behaviour. The study has highlighted trust as an essential factor, which makes an organization strive on valuable resources. Knowledge, on the other hand, is deemed as a power and considered as an undeniable aspect. Knowledge-sharing behaviour and humans are the two main constituents of knowledge. The study has presented the theoretical assessment of how the academicians are disposed positively towards the knowledge sharing within an organization. It is essential to assist practitioners to create and promote a knowledge-sharing environment especially within the context of public universities.

Keywords: Trust, knowledge, knowledge-sharing behavior, public universities, Malaysia.

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1 Introduction

Knowledge is valuable when it is shared with other employees (Renzl, 2008). According to O'neil and Adya (2007), knowledge is a prime source, which drives strategic competitive advantages in organisations, especially in today's dynamic business arena. It is believed that society values individual achievements more in comparison to organisation successes, which are aimed towards the accomplishment of organisational goals and objectives. Therefore, there is a relatively weak willingness in sharing knowledge among academicians as it is seen as individuals' personal asset. According to Fullwood, Rowley, and Delbridge (2012), universities act as constituents in promoting knowledge creation by research, which can later be disseminated through publications. Subsequently, universities play an important role in enhancing the need for innovation by learning and teaching particularly pertaining to the conduction of business and communication. However, despite the existence of strong bodies of research, the matter still lacks adequate attention of higher education institutions.

Trust is an important determinant of knowledge sharing, which seeks communication, performance, virtual space, physical space and goal-setting among academicians in educational institutions (LI, 2013). Previously, the attitude of academicians toward knowledge sharing is influenced by his or her knowledge sharing behaviour. It is because that mostly individuals are not born to share what they knew or not willing to share knowledge what they knew with other colleagues. Another important reason besides this factor is the lack of social trust among academicians (Abbas, 2017). Therefore, trust is based on understanding, non-judgmental, and encouraging nature that occur when the demands of both parties are agreed, understood, accepted, and recognized. Similarly, trust assists academicians in promoting active knowledge sharing behaviour.

Likewise, trust is important for the mutual exchange process and social interaction and; therefore, it is an essential component in a social exchange relationship. The social exchange relationship will be strengthened when trust is higher among individuals (Mallasi & Ainin, 2015). Moreover, social climate and trust are