INFLUENCE OF THEORIES ON FACTORS AFFECTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge is an essential resource for an individual or organization. While knowledge sharing is an important human daily activity to create opportunities in maximizing employees' innovation in organization to achieve performance or to grow individually, Knowledge sharing is the process of transferring knowledge from a person to another in organization. However, previous studies have indicated that employees are refused to share knowledge. Many factors influencing knowledge sharing were identified to solve the problem. Critical reviews on factors affecting knowledge sharing; individual, organization and technology factors are frequent mentioned in literature. Thus, this study proposes a conceptual model that takes into consideration the three factors and related theories to support the constructs in developing a fit knowledge sharing model. This study will improve the understanding on theories, factors affecting knowledge sharing. For the paradigm model of theory, the concepts were drawn from the causal condition, contextual condition, main context, intervening condition, interaction strategy and result. In this study, 'the process of development through the sharing of experience' is identified as being the key category. The study suggests how to improve the quality of the knowledge concerned, organize such knowledge and/or advance its utilization and sharing.

Keywords: *Knowledge Sharing, Influence factors and Theories*

1. Introduction

Knowledge recognized as an important asset in any organization. The success of societies and economies will depend on how well they enabled these valuable assets to be shared, learned and created so as to add a new value from it. The management guru Peter Drucker had also acknowledged knowledge "as an important economic resource in an organization" (Drucker, 1993). To maintain and to remain competitive, organization must ensure that knowledge is managed in the most effective manner. Knowledge sharing (KS) is one of the most efficient human daily activities in organization. By sharing, knowledge is continuously created and transferred among employees and makes it available to others in business. A number of studies provided direct evidence of important role of knowledge sharing and innovative capabilities to firm performance

(Andrew, Arvind and Segars, 2001). Today, Government, companies, public organizations, education institutes and others emphasized on the importance of 'knowledge sharing' in their organization for innovation and organizational performance.

But, to make people share their knowledge is not an easy work. In some organizations, sharing is natural, but in others the old dictum "knowledge is power" reigns (Skyrme, 1998). Knowledge Sharing (KS) need the capability and the willingness of individuals to engage in knowledge sharing. It may not happen if employees

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are not willing to share their knowledge and expertise. Literature has identified numerous barriers on Knowledge Sharing because people are reluctant to share knowledge. Some of the factors are categorized into three main factors; individual, organization and technology.

In order to reap the benefits of KS, this study proposed a conceptual model that takes into consideration the three factors; individual organization and technology in developing a fit KS model. In addition, each variable identified for the factors are based on the related theories to support the constructs. The theories could be used as a basis to improve understanding on factors influencing KS in organization. Then, this study will measure the relationship of KS with innovation and organizational performance.

2. Previous studies

According to Senge (1990), organizations that facilitate knowledge sharing and learning among its members will continuously transform into a learning organization. The knowledge sharing will connect people to people and people to information for things such as problem solving, dynamic learning, strategic planning and decision making (Nonaka, 2004). Empirical research has proven the positive impact of knowledge management (KM) and Knowledge Sharing on organizational effectiveness (Yang, 2004) and innovation capability (Lin, 2007).

3. Knowledge sharing

Knowledge Sharing is "the process of transferring knowledge from a person to another in an organization" (Park and Im, 2003). The process occurs at individual and organizational levels. For an individual (employee), KS is talking to colleagues to help them get something done better, more quickly, or more efficiently. For an organization, KS is capturing, organizing, reusing, and transferring experience based knowledge that resides within the organization between and among employees. While sharing, knowledge shared is either tacit or explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is defined as personal, intangible and embedded knowledge. It is deeply rooted in action, procedures, routines, commitment, ideals, values and emotions (Nonaka, Toyama. and Byosiere, 2003). Tacit knowledge is always in the cognitive minds of people and is obtained through learning and experience. On the other hand, explicit knowledge is a systematic knowledge which is in written form such as books, documents and reports. Generally, KS is the solution necessary for companies to secure their differentiated competitive edge and to create the opportunities for maximizing the capability of company to achieve performance (Reid, 2003).

4. Theory in Knowledge Sharing

A theory has been defined as a set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of events or situations by specifying relations among variables in order to explain and predict events or situations (Glanz et al., 1997a). Research on KS has drawn upon a wide range of theories. Among the theories are Social Exchange Theory (SET), Social Capital Theory (SCT), Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), Expectancy Theory (ET),Theory of Reasonable Action (TRA), Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm (KBT) or also known as Knowledge-Based View of the firm (KBV).However, a review on knowledge sharing for future research by Wang and Noe (2009), found that several studies used Social Capital and Network Theories to improve understanding of knowledge sharing in teams and communities of practice. According to Liang et al. (2008), the diversity of these theories due to the tendency of researchers' to take different factors to suit the theories.

A review by Perkins and colleagues (2007) was limited to applications of the theories of reasoned action (TRA) and planned behaviour (TPB) to understand clinicians' behaviour (*i.e.* physicians, nurses, pharmacists and other health workers). They found very few studies and only half of them included a measure of behaviour (eight self-reported; one objective from medical record). As in the review by Eccles and colleagues (2006), they also did not quantify the strength of association between TRA/TPB constructs and actual behaviour, but nonetheless concluded that different constructs of these two theories predict intention and behaviour among different groups of clinicians.

A wide range of other theories have been used in knowledge sharing research including expectancy theory, agency theory, knowledge-based view of the firm, equity theory, Kelley and Thibaut's (1978) interdependence theory, Hofstede's cultural framework, theory of absorptive capacity, social power theory, innovation diffusion theory, the similarity-attraction paradigm, social cognitive theory, economic exchange theory, Zand's (1972) model of the dynamic of trust, job characteristics model, expectation–confirmation theory, social categorization theory, the Big Five personality theory, attribution theory, balance theory, social influence theory, Detert et al.'s (2000) framework of culture, Constant et al.'s (1994) theory of information sharing, McAllister's (1995) classification of trust empowering leadership, Swan's (1999) community model, mechanistic versus organic organizational models social interdependence theory, socio-technical perspective, Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1981) framework for organizational effectiveness, socially-situated view of knowledge and learning, organizational learning perspective, social categorization theory, and resource-based view of the firm.

5. Factors Affecting Knowledge Sharing

The biggest value of knowledge to organization is when it is shared because it can increase job performance and facilitate new knowledge creation (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990). KS will benefit both sharers; the giver and the receiver, and the organization. However, to get people share their knowledge is a big challenge. To make it happen, it must be supported by several factors like 'social factors' such as trust, care and emotional commitment and the quality of the relationship (McDermott and O' Dell, 2000, Yang, 2004, von Krogh, 1998) and 'technical factors' such as ICT infrastructure and ICT tools/IT applications (Goh 2002, Syed Ikhsan and Rowland 2004, Bakhari and Zawiyah 2008, Willcoxson 2003, Kim and Lee 2006). Among the factors, some researchers grouped them into three main factors; individual, organizational and technological (Van den Brink 2003), Riege 2003), Bakhari and Zawiyah 2008). The three factors also have proposed by Orlikowski (1992) as the key factors in knowledge sharing in his study on a model of technology. It is because in order to fully leverage organizational knowledge-based assets, they must first understand factors that affect knowledge sharing at individual level. Then, KS takes place in organization and to facilitate the knowledge sharing process, information and communication technology play an important role.

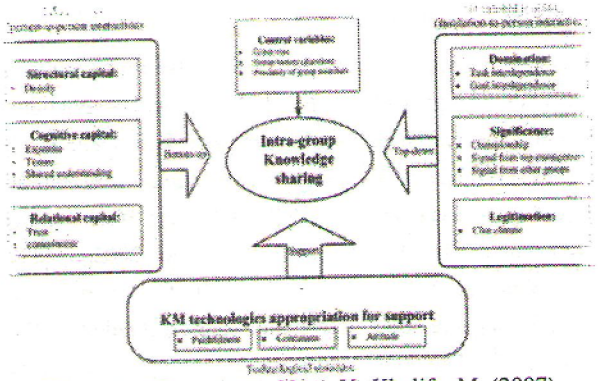
6. Research Gaps

Regarding knowledge sharing as a social action in a certain community, prior scholars often rely on social capital and social exchange theories to explain the individuals' collective behavior. For instances, Wasko and Faraj (2005) reveal that the individuals' social capital determines their contribution to the electronic community of interests in social context, whereas Kankanhalli et al (2005) suggest the anticipated costs and benefits of social exchange influence the individual knowledge contribution to the electronic knowledge repository in organizations. Also, some research depends on the theory of reasoned action and demonstrates individuals' attitudes toward

sharing and subjective norms influence their intentions of knowledge sharing in organizations Bock et al.,(2005). Although these studies provide good understanding on why individuals would contribute knowledge to a certain virtual community or organizational repository, they simply account for the individual motivations of knowledge sharing, either the calculative benefits (e.g., benefit and cost) or social benefits (e.g., reciprocity). The group-level knowledge sharing involving a cluster of people in organizations is much more complex and remains as a black-box.

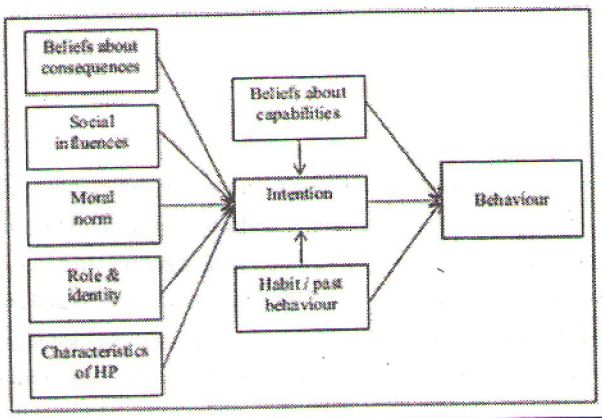
7. Theoretical Framework

Knowledge sharing: "Knowledge sharing refers to the provision of task information and know how to help others and to collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures", Wang and Noe, (2010), p. 117. Individuals share information relevant to the organization, and expertise with one another (Bartol and Srivastava, 2002).Since knowledge sharing is a deliberate behavior, the theory of planned behavior is appropriate framework for this study, Gagné (2009). The theory of planned behavior, intentionsare influenced my three factors: (1) one's disposition toward a behavior or the extent to which the behavior is beneficial or detrimental; (2) the perceived social pressure to engage or not in a behavior; and people's beliefs about their abilities, resources, and opportunity to engage in abehavior (Gagné, 2009). According to Bock and Kim (2002), individuals' attitudes about knowledge sharing are influenced by their beliefs about expected rewards. Smith and McKeen (2003) found that the existence of a reward system increases workers' motivation to engage in knowledge sharing.



Theoritical Framework.Yu, A.Y., Khalifa, M. (2007).

8. Conclusion



(HP: Health care professionals)

In conclusion, this study was the systematic review aimed at investigating applications of different social cognitive theories for the study of clinical-related behaviours of health professionals. This is an important first step in identifying variables explaining intention and predicting clinical-related behaviours. Nonetheless, a number of methodological factors were identified as potential moderators of the efficacy in prediction of studies based on social cognitive theories. Future studies should take in to consideration methodological aspects in order to contribute to the development of a significant corpus of data on the clinical behaviours of healthcare professionals. In particular, special care should be given to better define the context of behaviour performance. In addition, we noted that there is a lack of prospective studies predicting healthcare professionals' clinical-related behaviours. Thus, there is an urgent need of additional prospective studies based on sound theoretical frameworks. We hope that the information provided in this review of the scientific literature will be useful to researchers in the planning of studies that may lead to improved strategies to change healthcare professionals' Knowledge Sharing behaviours.

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