

# EVALUATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN WORK TEAMS

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## ABSTRACT

It is Important in today's organizations, to share knowledge and skills of employees. Sharing knowledge with other colleagues in the organization can improve the functions and operations of the organization. This requires, managers understand the factors affecting knowledge sharing in organizations. This is especially true in today's world tending to use work teams in organizations. In this paper, after reviewing the definition of knowledge and knowledge sharing, the affecting factors on employee's behavior in knowledge sharing have been discussed. As a dominant approach in this paper, we view studies on organizations with feisty structures, and incongruous work teams, and finally, after discussion and conclusions, recommendations by the author to increase efficiency and improve the process of knowledge sharing in organizations is provided.

**KEYWORDS:** Knowledge, Knowledge Sharing, Team, Organization

Knowledge sharing is an important process that contributes employee's ability to recover data and resources for the purpose of learning, problem solving, and improving the individual skills (ozilhan and Hakan kuzu2014). In The literature of organizational health and safety, organizational learning and knowledge sharing are gaining more attention. In point of organizational view, learning represents the capability of the organization for change and in point of individual view, the basic assumption is that people should always have the qualifications necessary for the tenure of their organizational posts, understand Organizational procedures, and be able to obtain and use of information and knowledge of their colleagues. In closely-knit enterprise systems, experiences and knowledge exchange with in organizational boundaries is important (Nesheim and Gressgard 2014). Many international companies are trying to improve their organization's ability to use and apply knowledge dispersed in different geographic units, as they called knowledge packets. Because these companies have found that increasing capability of using dispersed knowledge is the basis for higher performance and Sustainable competitive advantage. Given the importance of knowledge sharing in organizations, it is appropriate that managers understand the importance of this issue and make efforts to understand its various aspects. This paper is trying, with scholarly approach, to discuss about the factors that influence employee's behavior after presenting brief definitions of knowledge and knowledge sharing. Finally, some recommendations

to increase performance and improve the process of knowledge sharing in organizations is presented.

## KNOWLEDGE DEFINITION

Webster's English Dictionary offers the following definition of knowledge: Knowledge is the fact or condition of knowing something with familiarize gained through experience or having relation with the problem or issue. Persian dictionaries Dehkhoda defines knowledge as the act of knowing, science, and the grace and knowing something. In a relatively old definition, knowledge is understood the agreement or disagreement between two opinions (John Locke, 1689). Peter Drucker defines knowledge as information that changes something or someone. Knowledge is an indispensable resource for organizations and the basis for their performance and gain competitive advantage (Nesheim and Gressgard2014).

## KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Knowledge management should be defined before knowledge sharing as knowledge sharing is part of it. Knowledge management basically is creating the proper knowledge or suitable source of knowledge in order to access the right people at the right time. According to this definition, knowledge sharing process is an important aspect of knowledge management. Knowledge sharing is a topic that has been discussed in many organizational contexts. Knowledge sharing experts believe that, Staffing system which choose the right people who have the required abilities and capabilities and also training systems which assist staff in acquiring

knowledge are vital and essential, but not sufficient. Organization managers should focus and emphasize on the transfer of skills and knowledge from people who have them, to the ones who don't have. Managers, themselves should have a contribution in this process (Alan Forst, 2013).

## **FACTORS AFFECTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING**

Research carried out in an oil company and its eight contractors indicated that work experience, education, intrinsic motivation, job autonomy, workplace, and management support have an impact on employees' behavior of knowledge sharing. In this research workplace is an important state variable Compared with the other variables affecting employee knowledge sharing behavior. Hence, in designing initiatives related to knowledge sharing, employees' workplace factor should be paid special attention. The role of job autonomy at the level of knowledge sharing is important because people, who have more job autonomy, have a greater chance to get knowledge of other colleagues (and thus more sharing knowledge with them). The high level of employees' experiences increases the possibility of learning new knowledge and also increases transfer their knowledge to others. In the research, staff who work on the beach, have more chances to share knowledge than others. This is for two reasons: First, the nature of the work on the beach, And secondly, the staff who work on the beach had more opportunity to share their own knowledge than who work on the ship. In addition, the amount of training provided to employees was the affecting factor that improves employees' participation in knowledge sharing. Education level, when examined individually, had a great impact on knowledge sharing, but when other variables added, this factor gradually became less important. Management support variable, and job role (job autonomy) as the intrinsic motivation factors of employees, had a positive impact on knowledge sharing, which shows their great importance on employee's behavior in knowledge sharing (Nesheim and Gressgard 2014). Another study by Julia Mueller about the impact of cultural factors on knowledge sharing in the project teams show that time, the structure, output orientation, and openness have positive effects on knowledge sharing. The results of this study differ from the results obtained in similar studies that are centered on public knowledge culture. The author believes that due to increasing use of project teams in today's work environment, there should be pay more need to

understand the cultural conditions of these teams that influence on knowledge sharing. Based on the research of Mrs. Muller, the time allocated for the knowledge sharing process clearly has a positive impact on the process of knowledge. Additionally, organizational structure has a direct and positive impact on knowledge sharing in project teams. The impact of organizational structure is predictable, because the organizational structure provides a clear framework for performances and interactions of team members that this can be impeded or accelerate factor in knowledge exchange. Output orienting of team works has a positive impact on knowledge sharing process, because team members are looking for new ways to achieve better and easier results that requires interaction and exchange of knowledge. The openness of the team project' space has a relation with components such as change, identifying opportunities and, improving ways of doing things. If knowledge sharing is not supported by chief managers or job descriptions, it will be critical making open space for knowledge sharing in organizations boundaries (Julia Mueller 2013).

## **MANAGEMENT IMPACT ON KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Multinational organizations which have different business units in different geographical locations, like other organizations, need knowledge sharing to be successful, hence the concerned experts need to pay attention to this type of knowledge sharing. In the study conducted by Raab and colleagues, they concluded that the managers of organizations play an important role, in the knowledge sharing in geographically dispersed work groups. The results of several studies indicate an increase in knowledge sharing in the formal and informal work groups with Geographical and cultural differences. But the role of management in knowledge sharing in work groups is controversial. Raab and his colleagues survey results, indicate Simultaneously the need for solving the problem of managerial controlling and independence of the members. They found that management can reduce the cultural barriers between members of the working groups in multinational organizations, but the relationship between trust and knowledge sharing effectiveness, does not effect by manager's actions (Raab et al 2014). Although the study of Raab and colleagues has confined to an organization and there is a need to be more accurate in generalizing it to other organizations, but this study

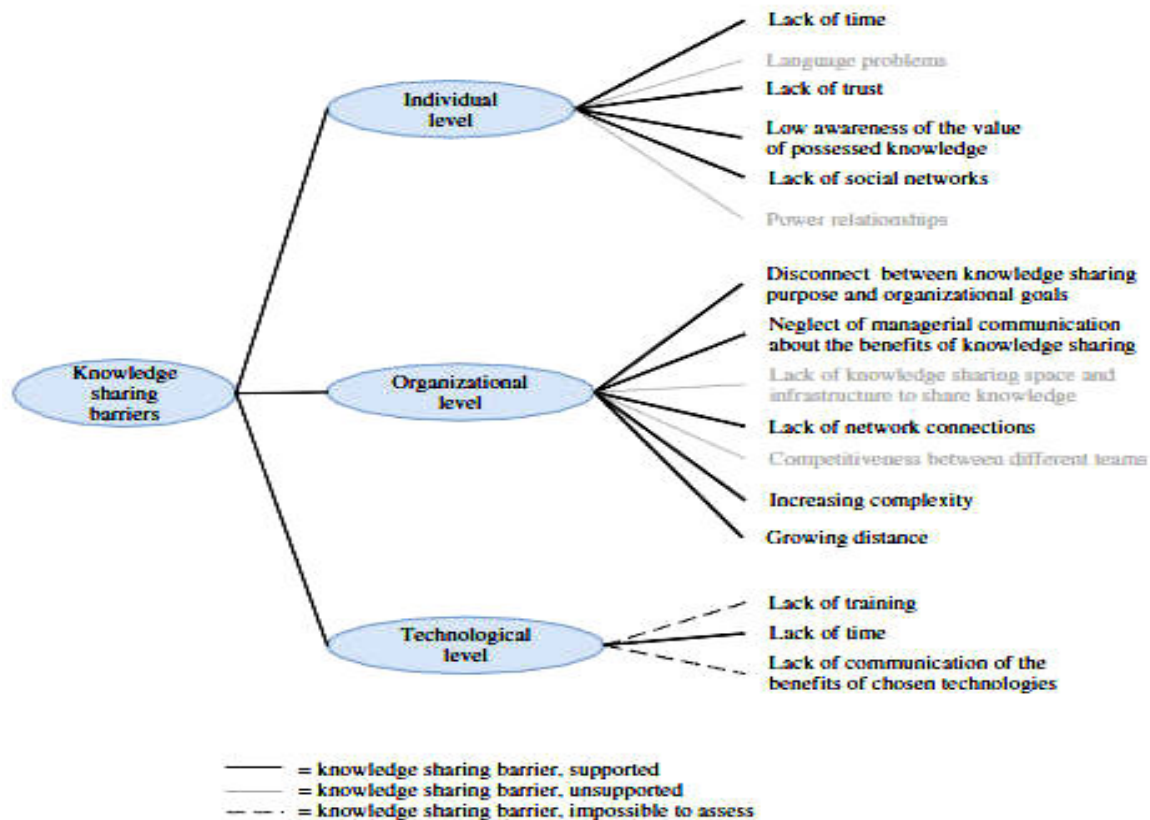
could represent a new direction for further study in similar topics in other organizations.

## KNOWLEDGE SHARING BARRIERS IN THE ORGANIZATION WITH ORGANIC GROWTH

Organic growth is typical of normal business growth, which specially included high-tech companies such as software companies. In high technology companies, such as software companies, there are many

attempts for organic growth. Effective Knowledge sharing with companies with organic growth is essential to enable them to maximize the utilization of their resources (Kukko2013). Kukko offers his findings about barriers to organic growth in accordance with the following schematic. As also indicated in the figure there are three general categories of barriers, personal obstacles, organizational obstacles and technical obstacles.

**Figure 1: The knowledge sharing barriers potentially affecting an organically growing software company.**



Based on the findings of the study, time is the greatest obstacle to knowledge sharing at the individual level. This is normal that an atmosphere of haste arises during growth, causing a negative impact on the time available for knowledge sharing. In terms of relationships between old and new employees, lack of trust, low awareness of the value of knowledge learned, and lack of social networks are potentially knowledge sharing obstacles. It seems lack of trust between employees is the origin of individual knowledge sharing barriers. High trust between employees increases knowledge sharing between them and makes them to have more knowledge about the value of the knowledge that they have. Contrary to previous findings, no language problems affect

knowledge sharing and specific professional jargon understood even by newcomers to the firm that would be due to employees' understanding of the terminology used in a union. Contrary to what is believed, power relationships did not appear to cause knowledge sharing. Which is thought to be due to the strong culture supporting knowledge sharing in organizations. In enterprise level, management role is important. Management should relate the process of knowledge sharing with organizational goals, If managers neglect to do it, Knowledge sharing culture in the organization will be at risk and knowledge sharing decrease. In small growing organizations, lack of basic structures for knowledge sharing and a lack of competition between

different organizational units in this organization will increase barriers. The increasing complexity of enterprise creates distance between people and the negative impact on knowledge sharing. On a technical level, incorporate technology is not detected as a knowledge sharing barrier. Since the case study had not applied the new information systems it was not possible assessing effect of training and enough time to familiarize employees with the system and its relationship to knowledge sharing. However, it seems essential evaluating of suffice and properness of existing systems. However, existing systems don't make the problem. Overall, the survey results showed that the time challenges, relationships between old and new employees, and the manager's role in knowledge sharing are basic factors hamper knowledge sharing in organizations with organically grown. And the management of the organization must identify the root causes and make their best efforts to prevent the mentioned factors (kukko 213).

## ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS AFFECTING KNOWLEDGE SHARING

A study conducted by Santos and colleagues show that the factors influencing knowledge sharing. These factors have a positive impact on the effectiveness of knowledge sharing between team members. Factors examined in this study include organizational strategy, communication flow and inter team communication channels. Based on the above results organizational strategy has a moderate impact on knowledge sharing among team members. Knowledge sharing and communication are similar by nature. Because in both processes, operations start from a single source and transmit a message and encrypt message (knowledge) then message or knowledge recipient decodes the message and finally recipient sends feedback that means perception of the message by the recipient. Furthermore, the knowledge sharing process is effective only when a recipient could learn and use the message (knowledge). Communication has a positive impact on the effectiveness of knowledge sharing within teams. Some of the channels of communication within the organization, such as wikis, e-mail lists, have an important relation to organizational experiences, this can indicate that mature and agile companies are using communication of these channels to share knowledge. Also, establishing constructive relations atmosphere in the organization has a positive impact on knowledge sharing (santos2014).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent years knowledge sharing has been considered by the managers. It seems that in today's world, organizations are always looking to maintain their existence by gaining a competitive advantage against their competitors and gain greater benefits. One of the things that probably can help organizations is using the knowledge and skills of their employees to maximize their potential. Therefore, managers should seek to provide the right conditions for their employees to share knowledge. This paper investigates several studies, which is done in the field of knowledge sharing in organization and multinational teams, to introduce Factors that are effective on knowledge sharing, and provide recommendations accordingly. Accordingly, Factors such as work experience, employee education, making intrinsic motivation by giving authority, Having job autonomy in a job doing, work place, And the level of management support of the knowledge sharing process in the organization are the factors affecting knowledge sharing in organizations. On the other hand factors such as time dedicated to knowledge sharing, Organizational structure and result oriented teamwork and the degree of openness of the team is effective in knowledge sharing. In organizations with geographically dispersed business units, manager is an important factor in knowledge sharing among employees with different culture and language. Management can reduce cultural barriers in heterogeneous work teams which leads to improve knowledge sharing among team members. Communication and communication channels are the other factors affecting on knowledge sharing in organizations that are important in the investigation of Santos and colleagues studied in agile organizations. In the organization with organic growth time challenges, relationships between new and old employees and managers support can be potential barriers to knowledge sharing.

Given the importance of knowledge sharing, it is suggested that studies on the factors affecting it, should be widened. Iranian organizations should assign specific units to knowledge sharing or if any of these units, they should be more supported. Providing adequate time for employees to share knowledge, management support as physically or spiritually could improve the knowledge sharing process. Providing more job autonomy and setting

reward policies, based on the extent of their participation in the knowledge sharing process can be effective in improving knowledge sharing process.

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