

Willingness to Knowledge Sharing; Intervention of work culture and organizational commitment

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Abstract

This study highlighted the willingness of knowledge sharing practices of university teachers. It also identified the intervening role of work culture and organizational commitment on the willingness of knowledge sharing of faculty. It was a quantitative study with survey research design. The sample of the study was selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected from 1130 faculty members of 13 public sector universities of Punjab. Tools of the study were two in numbers, i.e., open ended questionnaire and a five-point Likert scale. Data were collected about three variables: knowledge sharing, work culture and organizational commitment. Collected data were analyzed and presented in the form of different tables, graphs and charts. It was concluded from the analysis of data that university faculty involve themselves in knowledge sharing practices and their willingness for knowledge sharing was affected by work culture and organizational commitment. A friendly, cooperative and motivated environment may facilitate to boost the organizational commitment and the culture of knowledge sharing for the faculty members at university level.

Keywords: Knowledge Sharing, Work culture, Organizational commitment

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Introduction

Knowledge sharing is the process where individuals share their knowledge and experience with one another, within the organization and with other organizations. It involves the gathering of task information and knowledge which is used to help, to collaborate and to solve problems. It is also useful for the development of new ideas and the implementation of policies and procedures (Cummings, 2004; Pulakos, Dorsey & Borman, 2003; Wang & Noe, 2010). Wang and Noe (2010) has further described the concept of knowledge sharing as a task based information by adopting know-how techniques. This practice is done for the purpose of assistance, cooperation, problem solving, ideas' building, and to practice new policies and concepts. According to Jackson, Chang, Harden, Jiang & Joseph (2006), knowledge sharing is such an activity that essentially adds something to the knowledge by innovation and application.

To complete this study, university sector was selected because intensive knowledge is shared and generated here. University employs are always in the trot in flow ok knowledge. They realized the worth and importance of knowledge receiving and sharing with others. To survive in the community and to compete with international standards knowledge flow in necessary. Keeping in view the importance of knowledge sharing practices in the modern era, this study was designed to explore the willingness of university teachers to share their knowledge. It is also intended to identify the impact of work culture and organizational commitment on the willingness to knowledge sharing practices of university teachers. It also determined to identify the relationship between work culture and organizational commitment of teachers.

Literature Review

There are two types of knowledge which is shared by individuals; tacit/ implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge (Nonaka, 1991). The knowledge which is described in the form of numbers, figures and values, etc., is called explicit knowledge whereas knowledge, which is in the form of believes, values, experiences, and cannot be captured easily, is called tacit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is shareable in systematic way and in smooth order but tacit knowledge cannot be shared as systematically and smoothly as explicit knowledge. Knowledge sharing process involves two aspects; knowledge donating and knowledge absorbing (collecting). Knowledge donating means share ones' personal intellectual capital with others and knowledge absorbing means connect with others to support and increase one's personal

intellectual assets (Van den Hooff & Van Weenen, 2004). Ardichvili and Wentling (2003) considered the knowledge sharing as both activities i.e., supply of knowledge and demand for knowledge". In fact human beings are knowledge seekers and want to learn new things, competencies, skills and capabilities.

Knowledge sharing practices play an important role in the life of an organization. It enables an organization to transfer new ideas and solutions of problems to others. When employees of the organization interact with one another, they generate new ideas and thus promote knowledge sharing practices. That's why it is considered a social process. It is a process that permits knowledge flow between individuals, groups, and organizations. Employees of the organization involve in knowledge sharing practices to solve their problems (Islam, Ahmad & Mahtab, 2010).

Knowledge sharing (KS) behaviours and practices play an important role in every organization either it is business organization or academic organization i.e., school, college, university. Now a days, the term knowledge based economy has become very famous and it has made the knowledge a driven force to the success for the organization. Universities are key agents of economic growth and innovation. Policy makers view universities as knowledge factories, having potential of development (Wolfe & Bramwell, 2008). In universities, social and cultural capital is also built (Symonds, 2014). For knowledge sharing, role of universities have become impressive (Fullwood, Rowley & Delbrid, 2013). It has become the most important component of universities because all of its staff deal with knowledge (Trehan & Kushwaha, 2012). It is also considered as more critical issue in universities also because of academicians' perception and willingness is necessary to share the knowledge (Abdullah, Hamzah, Arshad, Isa, & Ghani, 2011).

Institutional culture/work culture can be defined as opportunities of sharing values, norms, accepted practices and perceptions of the workers within an organization (King, 2007). This sharing culture shifts the knowledge into organizational assets (Dawson, 2001). Commonly, organizational structure and culture has two components; formalization and decentralization (Fuchs, 2004). Formal organizations provide less opportunities to interact and communicate with each other. These types of organizations diminish new thoughts and innovations. On the other hand, less formal organizations provide better communication opportunities with other employees and heads. It also lowers the obstacles in communication flow and employees interact with each other,

to solve the problems. In a supportive environment, employees act as members of family and share their knowledge with each other to eradicate the issues at individual and institutional level as soon as possible. When an employee receives support from organization to fulfill his needs and feelings, s/he become motivated and supportive. Thus supportive environment of the organization creates cooperative and open environment for communication and teamwork (Islsm, Ahmad & Mahtab, 2010). That's why it is necessary to develop knowledge sharing culture in the organization by encouraging people to involve in knowledge sharing practices (Sirajuddin, Abu Bakar & Alias, 2006). The institutions that have KS culture, where people do not hesitate to share knowledge. They voluntarily create a platform where everyone willingly can share knowledge and information (Yu, Lu, & Liu, 2010).

Organizational commitment is referred as harmony between organization's and individual's goals. On the basis of harmony, individuals try to achieve the goals of the organization (Davoudi & Fartash, 2012). Employee's acceptance to organizational goals and their willingness to use their efforts for organizational welfare, is organizational commitment (Miller & Lee, 2001). Employees' level of commitment with organization influence attitude and behaviors of KS. When employees are highly committed with the organization, they willingly and effectively work for the productivity and progress of the organization (Hislop, 2002). Many studies approved that organizational commitment have an impact on knowledge sharing practices (Hoof & Ridder, 2004; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Sokha, 2013). It is also evident from the studies that organizational commitment is an indicator to enhance knowledge sharing practices and performance of the employees (Kim & Lee, 2006). Neyestani, Piran, Nasabi, Nosrati and Maidanipour (2013) identified that different aspects of organizational commitment have positive correlation with knowledge sharing practices. Findings of their study approved that different aspects of organizational commitment (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment) motivated towards knowledge sharing. According to Demirel and Goc (2013), organizational commitment is the willingness, efforts and the desire of employees to work for the welfare and progress of the organization. According to them, if employees have affective commitment with the organization, they willingly share information and knowledge with other employees.

Methodology

It was a quantitative study with survey research design. The sample of the study was taken from 13 public sector universities of Punjab. From these universities, 1150 faculty members were selected through simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire on five-point Likert scale and an open ended questionnaire were used as the tool of this study. Data were collected about three variables; willingness of teachers to involve in knowledge sharing practices, work culture of universities and organizational commitment. Scale of the study were included on following items; willingness to knowledge sharing =7, work culture= 5 and organizational commitment = 3.

Data were collected from both male and female teachers. Reliability and validity of the tool was measured before the collection of data. Validity was ensured through expert's opinion and factor analysis. CVI index was framed after getting responses from experts. Those items were selected having equal and more than 0.80 value. Factor analysis was also used for validity. Items having Eagan value 1 and coefficient more than .40 were selected in the tool of the study. Reliability of the scale was checked through pilot testing and Chronbach's Alpha.

A total of 1150 questionnaires were distributed among the faculty members of 13 public sector universities. The researcher distributed and collected the research questionnaires personally. From distributed questionnaires, 1130 usable questionnaires received back. Thus, the rate of return remained 98%.

Results and Discussion

To analyze the obtained data, SPSS was used. Data were assigned codes according to the responses. Strongly agree was coded as 1, disagree coded as 2, undecided coded as 3, agree coded as 4 and strongly agree coded as 5.

Data were obtained from 629 male teachers and 501 female teachers. These teachers have 1 to 20 years of teaching experience in their field.

Table 1

Demographic data related to faculty members

Gender	Male			Female	
	629 (55.7%)			501 (44.3%)	
Qualification	BS Hons/MA/MSC 64 (5.7%)		MS/M.Phil. 455 (40.3%)	PhD 565 (50%)	Post.Doc 46 (4.1%)
Nature of Job	Permanent 966(85.5%)	Visiting 25(2.2%)	Contract 22(1.9%)	Ad hoc/ temporary 17(1.5%)	Tenure Track/IPFP 100(8.8%)
Duration of Job	1-5 Y 162(14.3%)	5-10Y 378(33.5%)	10-15Y 301(26.6%)	15-20Y 168(14.8%)	20+ Y 121(10.7%)

Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of respondents of the study. There were 1130 respondents who participated in the study. From the respondents, 629 (55.7%) were males and 501 (44.3%) were females. Table also provided the information about the qualification of faculty members. Table shows that 64 (5.7%) faculty members were BS hons/MA/MSc degree holder, 455 (40.3%) were qualified at MS/M. Phil level, 565 (50%) were PhD,s and 46 (4.1%) have Post-Doc degrees. Data was collected almost from all categories of university faculty. Table also shows the nature of the job of teaching faculty. There were 966 (85.5%) permanent faculty members, 25 (2.2%) were visiting faculty, 22 (1.9%), were working on contract basis, 17(1.5%) were working on ad-hoc or temporary basis and 100 (8.8%) were working on tenure track system or interim placement of fresh PhDs. Table also provides information about the job duration of university faculty. Total of 162 (14.3%) have job experience of five years, 378 (33.5%) 10 to 15 years, 301 (26.6%) 16 to 20 years and 121 (10.7%) have more than 20 years job experience.

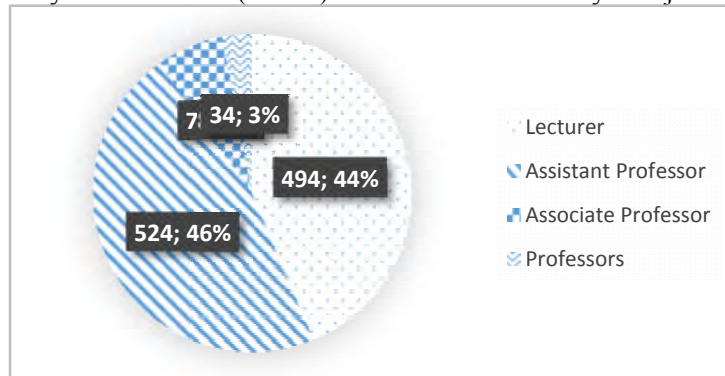


Figure 1: Graphical presentation of demographic data related to the designation of teachers

Above chart provided the demographic details of the sample of data regarding the designation of the sample. Data were collected from all the streams of university teachers, i.e., lecturer, assistant professors, associate professor and professors. It showed that there were 494 (43.7%) lecturers, 524 (46.4%) assistant professors, 78 (6.9%) associate professors and 34 (3%) professors who participated in this study.

Table 2
Pearson correlation matrix of willingness, work culture and organizational commitment

		Willingness	Work culture	Organizational commitment
Work culture	Pearson Correlation	.857**	1	.433**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	1130	1130	1130
Organizational commitment	Pearson Correlation	.425**	.433**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	1130	1130	1130

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 showed the correlation matrix of willingness of teachers, work culture of the institution and organizational commitment of the employees. It showed the strength of the relationship between three variables. Results ($r = .857$, $p < .001$) showed that there is high correlation between work culture and willingness of teachers to share the knowledge with other members of their community. It means work culture and willingness of sharing are associated with each other. The value of correlation ($r = .425$, $p < .001$) also explained the moderate correlation between organizational commitment and willingness of teachers to involve themselves in knowledge sharing practices. It was also evident from the value of correlation ($r = .433$, $p < .001$) that work culture and organizational commitment also have the relationship with each other.

Regression analysis was run to predict the effect of independent variables work culture and organizational commitment on dependent variable willingness. Regression analysis was applied after verifying the assumptions of regression analysis, i.e., normality, interdependence of observation, linear relationship among variables, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity.

Table 3

Model summary of the variables

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.859 ^a	.738	.738	.20111

a. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational commitment, work culture
 Table two presented the effect of organizational commitment and work culture on the willingness of university teachers to participate in knowledge sharing activities. Value of $r = .859$ which showed the multiple correlation coefficient of variables organizational commitment and work culture it also showed the strength of model and level of prediction. Value of $R^2 = .738$ explained the proportion of variance in dependent variable due to independent variables. It showed that 73.8% of variance in the willingness of teachers to knowledge sharing was explained by organizational commitment and work culture of the institution.

Table 4

Regression analysis

	β	T	Sig	F
(Constant)	.701	9.557	.000	1588.216*
Work culture	.756	48.978	.000	
Organizational commitment	.066	3.953	.000	

* Significant at the level of .001

The values $F = (1127, 2) = 1588.216$, $p < .001$ explained the fitness and appropriateness of the regression model. Furthermore $\beta = .756$ ($t = 48.978$, $p < .001$) showed that one unit increase in work culture would increase 75.6% willingness of teachers to knowledge sharing. Table also showed that one unit increase in organizational commitment would increase in 6.6% in the willingness of teachers, $\beta = 0.66$ ($t = 3.953$, $p < .001$).

It was asked from teachers through open ended questionnaire that what they mostly share their colleagues and students mostly? Their reponses showed that they share both implicit and explicit knowledge with their colleagues. In implicit knowledge category 989 (87.52%) share personal thoughts, 340 (30.08%) share their patents, 1039 (91.15%) share their personal skills, 1102 (97.52%) share know how about the field of education, 1056(93.45%) share with their colleagues about their new and innovative ideas and 989 (87.52%) faculty members suggest measures to improve teaching to others.

Results explained that 1019 (96.46%) faculty share education related theories, 996 (88.14%) respondents share conference reports with their fellows, 938 (83%) respondents share results of different research studies whether they presented in some conference, or they get know how about them from somewhere else. Results also provide evidence that 525 (46.46%) faculty share annual reports about education with their friends and 121 (10.70%) faculty members share training modules with others. On the other hand 832 (73.62%) faculty share project reports and 418 (36.99%) faculty members share different informative, research related and educational portals and websites.

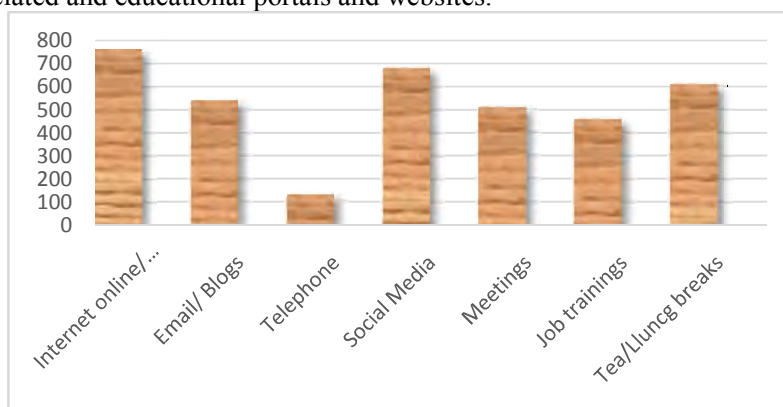


Figure 2: Channels of communication mostly used by university faculty

It was asked from faculty members that how and where they share their knowledge with others. Graph shows the channels of communication that faculty mostly used to share their knowledge. Results shows that fact to face communication dominant in Pakistani culture as compare to technological ways of communication. 760 (67.25%) respondent preferred internet based discussion, forums, and blogs for knowledge sharing process while 539 (47.70%) faculty members use E-mails and E- blogs for knowledge sharing purpose. 128 (11.32%) respondents responded that they share knowledge through telephone and 678 (60%) faculty preferred social media to share their knowledge. On the other hand a majority 1090 (96.40%) of faculty preferred seminars, workshops, conferences and other gatherings like this. According to 457 (40.44%) faculty they share knowledge through job training and 502 (44.42%) faculty share knowledge in departmental meetings and group works. According to 607 (53.71%) faculty they avail the chance of knowledge sharing with others at tea time or lunch time during the break.

It was asked from respondents that either they consider there are some obstacles in knowledge share process or not. Their responses are presented here in the form of pie chart.

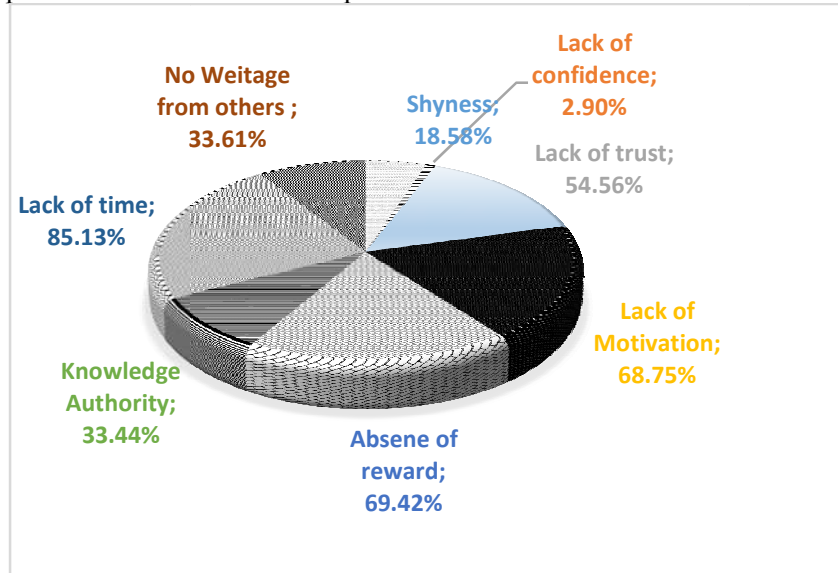


Figure 3: Obstacles in knowledge sharing process

According to responses 110 (18.58%), faculty members said that shyness is one of the factors that prevent to share the knowledge and according to 13 (2.19%) faculty members lack of confidence is also a hurdle in knowledge sharing process. 323 (54.56%) faculty supports lack of trust on ones to whom knowledge is shared. From them, 407 (68.75%) faculty thought lack of motivational measures serve as hurdle for knowledge sharing. 411 (69.42%) respondents consider absence of reward and 198 (33.44%) faculty gave opinion that considering ones 'knowledge as power for job or leadership serve as obstacle in knowledge sharing process. According to 464 (78.38%), faculty members major obstacle in knowledge sharing process is absence of knowledge sharing culture while 504 (85.13%) faculty members consider lack of time as a major obstacle in knowledge sharing process. 199 (33.61%) think when other do not give weightage to someone's shared knowledge it prove as obstacle and 538 (47.61%) there is no obstacle in knowledge sharing process it is smooth and continuously running.

Graph 4
Summary of open ended responses

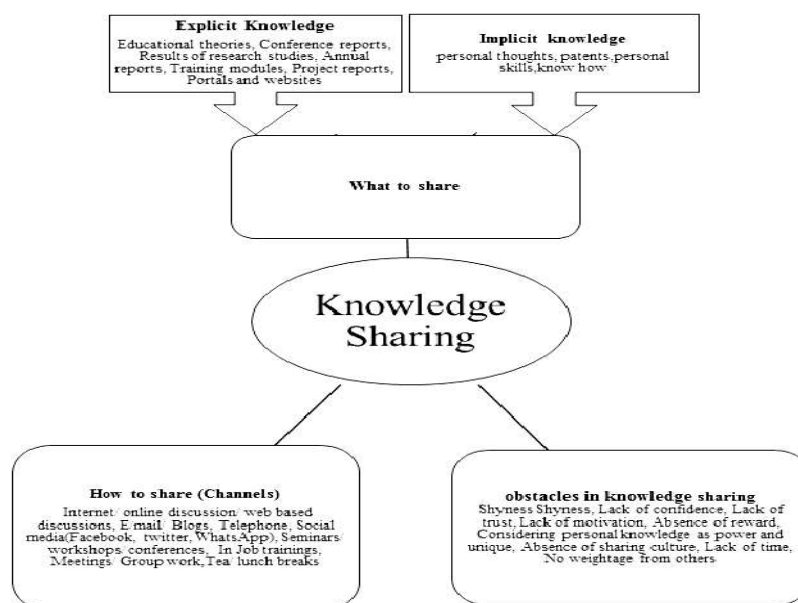


Figure 4: Summary of open ended responses

Conclusion

It was concluded from this study that teachers of higher education department share their knowledge with their colleagues, fellows and students. Being the members of knowledge following organizations they realized their responsibility by involving themselves in the cycle of knowledge transmission. They share both explicit and implicit knowledge. They wished to improve the system of teaching and learning by sharing their knowledge, experiences and expertise with other members of the community. They use different modern and traditional channels of communication to share their knowledge and skills.

It was also concluded from responses of the respondents that willingness play vital role in knowledge sharing process. Transmission and exchange of knowledge becomes easier and enjoyable when a person is ready and willing to participate in this process. Willingness brings readiness to share the best that one possess. It is also evident from the results that to enhance the level of willingness of teachers, to engage

them in knowledge sharing process, work culture of the institution contributes more. A friendly, cooperative, encouraging, democratic and motivating culture faster the knowledge sharing process by encouraging teachers to willingly participate in the knowledge sharing process. It is also observed from the data that organizational commitment of members of an organization also accelerate the willingness of employees to share the knowledge that they possess. Committed persons want to bring their organization at the top by putting their best efforts. Committed faculty members provided their best services to the institution by receiving and distributing the knowledge and skills.

Results showed the strong correlation between willingness to share, work culture and organizational commitment of teachers. It is also concluded from the data that work culture and organizational commitment have positive impact on the willingness of faculty to involve themselves in knowledge sharing process. So, it is concluded that to speed up the knowledge sharing practices work culture should be settled in positive and helpful way and organizational commitment should also be boosted.

This study also identified some hurdles which prevent to faculty to involve in knowledge sharing practices. Most of the hurdles belongs to work culture and their commitment. This showed that both the factors contribute more in the flow of knowledge sharing. The study recommended that universities' administration should provide friendly, cooperative and motivated environment to their faculty to boost the organizational commitment and the culture of knowledge sharing. It was also suggested that university faculty should develop a good commitment with their organizations to play their role effectively as the nation builders and knowledge predecessor.

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