

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL FACTORS AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG EMPLOYEES AT KARANGKRAF ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT, SHAH ALAM.

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**Abstract:** *Individual factors have been known of their significant impact on knowledge sharing in organizations. It is the aim of this study to examine the relationship between individual factors and knowledge sharing among employees at the Karang kraf Administrative Department, Shah Alam. Questionnaires were used to get information from the student such as attitudes and behavior, motivation and trust from the individual factors. The total respondents are 44 students were selected randomly. This study uses Descriptive Statistic, Pearson Correlation and Cronbach's Alpha in order to analyze the data gathered by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).*

**Keyword:** *Knowledge, Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Individual Factors*

### INTRODUCTION

Many organizations are developing knowledge management (KM) strategies to capitalize on knowledge and retain it in the workplace (Greiner, Böhmman, & Krcmar, 2007). According to Haggie and Kingston (2003), KM practices are applied to a broad range of activities, which are designed to manage, exchange, and create or enhance intellectual assets within an organization. In addition, KM focuses on the documentation of knowledge connections within an organization. Wiig (1999) promoted KM as the application of tacit, explicit, and embedded intellectual capital to achieve the goals of the organization. Whenever organizations capitalize on this intellectual foundation, it is essential that they understand the factors that contribute to the employees' beliefs towards their work and whether these beliefs hinder them from sharing or encourage them to share knowledge.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

One of the prerequisites of successful knowledge sharing is the determination by the individuals themselves. However, a worker at organization may not realize the importance of knowledge sharing in the working environment. Individual factors are the main influence in the knowledge sharing programs that are established in the organization. An employee is made known of a work problem faced by a colleague (Okyere-Kwakye and Khalid Md Nor, 2011). The employee may share or may not share the knowledge with the colleague. It is up to him or her to share the knowledge with the colleague. The decision to share the knowledge may be influenced by his or her personal attitudes and behavior on knowledge sharing.

Often, employees do not realize their motivation is contributing to knowledge sharing among other employees in the organization. The fear that others will use the knowledge learnt against them, have also influenced their motivation to share (Ford and Chan, 2003). There is is spent on understanding the influence of motivation has on knowledge sharing. Employee motivation towards their jobs may reflect how they will contribute to the knowledge of the organization. Van den Hooff and de Ridder (2004) reiterated that motivation positively influences information sharing. Employees lost their trust in sharing knowledge with another and this fear could act as obstacles to knowledge sharing. This alludes to the fact that when individuals perceive other partners untrustworthy, they will not exchange or cooperate with them since there is a certain level of uncertainty (Okyere-Kwakye and Khalid Md Nor, 2011).

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are:

- to identify attitudes and behavior that contribute towards employees knowledge sharing.
- to determine the motivation that contributes towards employees' knowledge sharing.
- to examine trust that contributes towards employees' knowledge sharing.

### *Research questions*

The research questions of the study are:

- How does attitude and behavior contribute towards employees' knowledge sharing?
- How does motivation contribute towards employees' knowledge sharing?
- How does trust contribute towards employees' knowledge sharing?

### *Significance of the study*

Organization could create awareness among employees about knowledge sharing within the organization itself. This study is regarded as significant in promoting a good work environment in the workplace for its employees. Furthermore, this study could add to the literature on content in individual factors to the body of knowledge in knowledge sharing. This research can further be used by researchers to further study this topic more specifically to include more variables.

### *The scope of the study*

This research was carried out to investigate the relationship between individual factors and knowledge sharing among employees at the Karangkraft Administrative Department, Shah Alam, Selangor. Employees of Karangkraft Administrative Department, Shah Alam, Selangor were

chosen as the respondents in order to evaluate and examine the result regarding to individual factors on knowledge sharing.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Individual Factors*

In order for knowledge management to be effective, it requires a fundamental change in the way companies run their business. This is particularly significant because, the heart of any effective change is the people themselves (Davis, 1998). The knowledge of the people is created and expanded through social interactions among people during their creative activities (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Changing people's behavior seems to be more difficult, especially promoting knowledge sharing among employees (Bock *et al.*, 2005). Hawamdeh (2002) identified a few additional individual factors that impacted the practice. These are an appreciation of the importance of knowledge, communication skills, motivation, absorptive capacity, reputation, incompatible personality, disciplinary ethnocentrism and technophobia.

In addition, Engstrom (2006) suggested other factors, such as career satisfaction, job satisfaction and career prospect also affect knowledge sharing behavior while Ryu *et al.* (2006) believed that individual factors, such as attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavior also have a significant role. Van den Brink (2003) identified motivations, trust and care that enable knowledge sharing. Bock and Kim (2002) indicated that an individual's behavior may lead to positive outcome, because individuals will behave with rational self-interest as asserted in the social economic exchange theory. Bartol and Srivastava (2002) reiterated that, outcome expectations that are related to reward systems are also important factors, influencing the decision to share knowledge. Yang and Wu (2008) explained that knowledge sharing should be considered as a personal behavior which is related to an individual's attitude towards knowledge sharing and may influence their behavior towards knowledge sharing. In any organization, a variety of employees' attitudes exist, especially those related to fulfilling their jobs.

### *Attitude and Behavior*

Recent articles on the scholarship of job satisfaction have revealed a strong connection between an employee's attitudes and behaviors (Al-Hawamdeh, 2005). In the field of organizational behavior, studies examined individual differences from outside influences, effectiveness, and cognitive reactions (Eraut, 2000). Maslow and Herzberg gave credit for the rise in understanding of the attitudes and behaviors workers have about their jobs (Eraut, 2000). Hislop (2002) argued that the relationship between attitudes and behavior of workers towards knowledge sharing and the workers who are willing to share their knowledge are a two-way reciprocal process between attitudes and behavior of the relationship between the workers' willingness to engage in the knowledge sharing. Therefore, the key factor of knowledge sharing behavior is the intention of the behavior. Bock, Zmud, Kim and Lee (2005) stated that attitude towards knowledge sharing positively affect knowledge sharing purposes while Ryu *et al.* (2003) considered attitudes towards knowledge sharing and an important factor. De Vries *et al.* (2006) stressed the willingness to share knowledge. Individuals' expectations of the usefulness of their knowledge and that, it is through sharing that they can improve relationships with others have been proven to be related to positive knowledge sharing attitudes which in turn were related to knowledge sharing intentions and behaviors (Bock & Kim, 2002). In addition, studies have found that

organizational attitudes, including job satisfaction and organizational commitment could also foster knowledge sharing (de Vries *et al.*, 2006). Rewards, too are considered a motivational influence that encourages knowledge sharing as Ipe (2003) put it as a real and perceived reward and penalties for individual who do not share knowledge also influenced that knowledge sharing process.

### *Motivation*

Motivation represents a collection of thoughts about what gives employees the strength, determination, and focus to achieve their goals and objectives (Lin, 2007). They acknowledged the strong influence of Herzberg's philosophy on employees' motivation, job satisfaction, and performance. Accordingly, their hypothesis stated that if employees are satisfied and motivated, then they are inclined to be dedicated to the organization. In fact, motivation is triggered by the desire to increase job opportunities. According to Senge (1998), motivation can influence attitudes and behaviors that encourage workers to interact, socialize, and share knowledge. Kim and Ju, (2008) revealed the effects of lack of motivation and commitment to job satisfaction. As Ipe (2003) put is, reciprocity as a motivator of knowledge sharing implies that individuals must be able to anticipate that knowledge sharing will prove worthwhile even if they are uncertain about exactly what the outcome will be. There is a relationship between knowledge sources with the recipients and rewards for sharing. Ipe (2003) divided factors that motivate individuals to share knowledge into internal and external factors. Internal factors which include previewed power, originating from knowledge and reciprocity as a result of sharing one's knowledge with other.

### *Trust*

Trust can be defined as the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the sections of another party, with the intention that the other will perform a specific action important to the trustier, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the other party (Liao, 2006). Trust refers to the identification-based trust (Molm, 2003) which consists of the emotional bonds between individuals. That is, people make emotional investments in trust relationships, express genuine care and concern for the welfare of partners, believe in the intrinsic virtue of such relationship, and believe that these sentiments are reciprocal (Gambetta, 2000). Moreover, Gambetta further pointed out two distinct types of trust that are instrumental in the process of sharing knowledge are benevolence-based trust and competence-based trust. Ipe (2003) regarded trust and the power and status of the recipient as defining the relationship between the two individuals sharing knowledge. Trust determines what knowledge a given individual will share and with whom.

Trust is the highest human communication and it is the blood of any organization. When someone has a high level of trust, he or she will work efficiently (Andriessen, 2006). Lin (2007) found out that trust has a significantly positive correlation with knowledge sharing and Liao (2006) reported a significant positive correlation between trust and colleagues and willingness to share knowledge. In the study by identification-based trust, which consists of emotional bonds between individuals, predicted knowledge sharing behavior and was also indirectly related to knowledge sharing behavior through self-efficacy. Bakker *et al.* (2006) found that within the

context of new product development teams, trust was a poor predictor of knowledge sharing, though they conceded that the absence of trust could very well impede knowledge sharing.

### *Knowledge*

According to Ford and Chan (2002), knowledge is present in ideas, judgments, talents, root causes, relationships, perspectives and concepts. It can be divided into tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is a form of qualified knowledge, residing in the human mind. Based on experts in this area, tacit knowledge is defined as an action-based, entrained in practice, and therefore cannot be easily explained or described, but is considered to be the fundamental type of knowledge on which organizational knowledge is built (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). While, explicit knowledge is something in the form of documents, such as printed resources which can be codified and therefore more easily communicated and shared (Greiner, Böhmman, and Krcmar, 2007). Stated that explicit knowledge as structured and conscious and therefore it can be stored on information technology. In order to manage all of the knowledge effectively, KM was introduced in term of its function in managing knowledge by creating, sustaining, applying, sharing and renewing knowledge to enhance organizational performance and create value. (Narenda and Pradeep, 2012)

### *Knowledge Management (KM)*

KM is the means and method employed to organize and make available important knowledge, documents along with know-how wherever and whenever it is needed. Based on previous studies, there are several listed definitions of KM. According to Engstrom (2003) KM is the three perspectives that divided into human, technology and integrally oriented view. It is the deliberate and systematic coordination of the organization's people, technology, process and organizational structure in order to add value through reuse and innovation. Davis (1998). KM tries to organize and make available important know-how, whatever and whenever is needed which includes processes, procedures, patents, reference works, formulas, "best practices," forecast and fixes (Greiner, Böhmman, and Krcmar, 2007).

Farida Hasanali, (2002) in her study stated that KM, as an emerging set of strategies and approaches to create, safeguards, and use knowledge assets, including people and information, which allow knowledge to flow to the right people at the right time so they can apply these assets to create more value for the enterprise. It focuses on organizing and making available important knowledge wherever and whenever it is needed (Davis, 1998). Consequently, Hislop (2002) said KM as deliberate, systematic business optimization strategy that selects, distills, store, organizes, packages and communicates information essential to the business of a company in a manner that improves employee performance and corporate competitiveness thus lead to knowledge sharing.

### *Knowledge Sharing*

Switzer (2008) argued that the relationship between attitudes and behaviors of workers to knowledge sharing and the workers who are willing to share their knowledge are a two way reciprocal process between attitudes and behavior of the relationship between the workers' willingness to engage in the knowledge sharing. This is a crucial process for an organization to become successful. In today's knowledge-based economy where an organization as a valuable

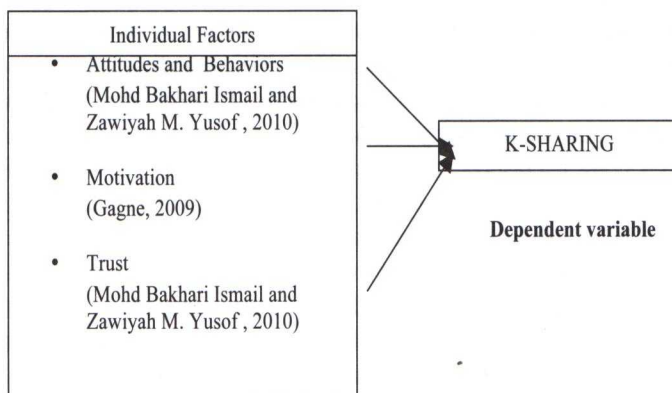
asset has shifted from physical capital to knowledge capital, organization needs to develop systematic processes to create and leverage knowledge but not all employees are ready to share their knowledge under all circumstances. They may think that knowledge becomes less valuable when they share it and they lose their intellectual property which gives them a personal advantage.

Written contributions include behaviors on employees' contributing their ideas, information, and expertise through written documentation rather than dialogs, such as by posting ideas to organizational database and submitting reports which can benefit other employees and the organization. In that dimension, knowledge is shared through a person-to-document channel (Yi, 2009) Personal interactions include behaviors of sharing knowledge in informal interactions among people, such as chatting over lunch and helping other employees who come near them. Knowledge is shared through the informal social interactions of a person-to-person channel (Yi, 2009). Organizational communications include behaviors of sharing knowledge in formal interactions within or across teams or work units. For example, working teams or project groups may have regular meetings for brainstorming or problem solving by seeking ideas from employees. Knowledge is shared through formal social interactions of a person-to-group channel (Yi, 2009). Bontis, et al. (2011) designed a model to investigate the impact of job characteristics, job satisfaction, and information sharing on quality service delivery. Van den Hooff and de Ridder (2004) suggested that job satisfaction in the form of commitment to an organization positively influences information sharing.

In summary, knowledge sharing is the process in which individuals mutually exchange their implicit and explicit knowledge and jointly create new knowledge. Thus, without the capacity for sharing knowledge, no business network can utilize the specialized resources and capabilities of its members, nor can it coproduce new knowledge (Bhagat, Kedia, Harveston, & Triandis, 2002)

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework, as shown in Figure 1 supports the objectives of this study which aimed at examining the relationship between individual factors and knowledge sharing among employee at Karangkraf Administrative Department, Shah Alam, Selangor. Individual factors among knowledge workers is the independent variable that refers to the attitudes employees towards their jobs while knowledge sharing among knowledge workers is the dependent variable that refers to the process of mutual exchange of knowledge which could create new knowledge in the organization. The conceptual framework refers to individual factors as the attitudes and behavior, motivation and trust of employees. Knowledge sharing is the socialization aspects of the organizational knowledge and creation theory through which knowledge sharing experiences occur between individuals.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework

## METHODOLOGY

### *Population and Sampling*

The population of this research are among employees at the Karangkraft Administrative Department, Shah Alam, Selangor. Accordingly, the researcher has adopted the survey type of research in which a sample of the target population will be used for the study. The total of employee is 53 employees. The researcher decided that the sample size for this study is the staff from Karangkraft Administrative. This study adopted the probability sampling, which is the simple random sampling method to obtain the number of respondents of the study. Based on Sakaran (2010), on the number of people to be chosen in the sampling frame, about 44 staff was suggested in the Karangkraft Administrative Department need to be found in order to answer the questionnaire.

### *Instrumentation*

This research uses Likert Scale to examine how strongly the subject agree or disagree with the statement. Normally, Likert scale has five points with following guide are "1 = Strongly Disagree", "2 = Disagree", "3 = Neutral", "4 = Agree" and "5 = Strongly Agree".

### *Data Collection*

The research instrument of this study is the questionnaire. It was accompanied by a cover letter, designed to explain the aim and objectives of the study as well as the respondent's confidentiality. The researchers distributed the questionnaires to the administrative staff of Karangkraft. A total of 103 questionnaires were distributed to the staff in Karangkraft Administrative Department.

### *Data Analysis*

The responses to the structured close-ended questions was rated in percentages. The percentage of respondents for each alternative was analyzed. The data collected was analyzed, using the computer software known as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. In this study, SPSS was used in order to analyze the responses from the survey done and also to

determine the relationships among variables observed. To ensure reliability, factor analysis and the reliability analysis for independent variable were conducted to test the instrument reliability. This was done by using reliability test, where the cronbach alpha value was applied in ensuring the questionnaire item were capable of measuring the variables. This could ensure all the items used can answer the variables being measured and therefore ensure that the instrument was reliable for this study. If a test result value is greater than 0.7, the instrument used were reliable. In addition, the questionnaire was constructed from previous research for better reliability, where the researcher needs to adapted related item used by previous study and also created a new item based on the understanding of the variables. This could ensure the items used were valid and reliable to apply in this study. Further, the study conducted a pilot study, with the goal of giving a better view on how the potential respondents would perceive and view the research instrument and assess their understanding of the research instrument.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

*Descriptive Analysis*

44 questionnaires were distributed to the staff at Karangkraft Administrative Department, Shah Alam. Among them are 18 male students and 26 are female students. The age group between 20-29 years old is 6.8 percent and 30-39 years old is 93.2 percent. Moreover the level of education between diplomas is 22.7 percent and degree is 77.3 percent. For the year of services, 1-5 years is 86.4 percent and 6-5 years are 13.6 percent.

*Data Analysis*

KMO & Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity (table 1 to table 3)are a measure of sampling adequacy that is recommended to check the case to variable ratio for the analysis being conducted. In his study, KMO & Bartlett’s test play an important role in accepting the sample adequacy.

*Table 1: KMO and Barlet’s Test of Attitudes and Behavior*

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.582
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	181.066
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

*Table 2: KMO and Barlet’s Test of Motivation*

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.404
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	46.088
	df	28
	Sig.	.017



**Table 3: KMO and Barlett's Test of Trust**

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.502
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	310.778
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

A value of .6 was suggested as minimum to test the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix. An identity matrix is the matrix in which all of the diagonal elements are 1 and all off diagonal elements are 0. From table 1, 2 and 3, it can conclude that those attitudes and behavior, motivation and trust are valid to support factor analysis to independent variable.

### Reliability Analysis

The following Table 4 is the outcome of the factor analysis, where the reliability analyses were conducted to measure the reliability of the instrument employed in this esearch. The reliability analysis that was utilized was known as Cronbach's alpha.

**Table 4: Reliability of instrument measures**

Individual Factors	Measures	No. of Item	Cronbach's alpha.
	Attitudes and Behaviour	9	.614
	Motivation	8	.736
	Trust	9	.699

### CONCLUSION

Individual factors consist of three variables, attitudes and behavior, motivation and trust that communicate closely with each other in order to tap into the respondents' knowledge sharing. As a result, the measurement would enable knowledge sharing status to be examined in relation to knowledge sharing in a working environment. Consequently, the data analysis had generated that the individual factors and knowledge sharing have had a relationship, thus the measure is effective and the study has resulted in an understanding that individual factors, along with knowledge sharing are favorable factors to be investigated into the knowledge sharing in a working environment.

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