An Exploratory Study on Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivational Values for Participating in Knowledge Sharing Activities

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Abstract: The flow of knowledge in an organization can be depending on the attitude and behaviour of the individual. Knowledge sharing is a social interaction culture, involving the exchange of employee knowledge, experiences and skills through the whole department or organization (Lin). The types of organizations also give impact to the sources of motivation. In public institutions, workers realized that their organizations have a standard system, a flat hierarchy structure even the salary and promotion opportunities cannot compete with business organizations. This study aims to explore the knowledge-sharing to identify the intrinsic motivational elements for KS activity in a public higher education institution using the qualitative approach.

Key words: Knowldege sharing, motivational factors, public higher education institution, exploratory, qualitative approach

INTRODUCTION

According to knowledge based view of the firm, knowledge is the foundation of a firm's competitive advantage and ultimately the primary driver of a firm's value (Spender and Grant, 1996). This knowledge however resides within the individuals (Davenport and Prusak, 1998) or specifically within the employees who create, archive, share and transfer and apply while carrying their job. Meanwhile according to Gagne (2009), Knowledge Sharing (KS) involves the process of mutually exchanging knowledge and jointly creating new knowledge, it also implies synergistic collaboration of individuals who work toward a common goal.

Knowledge sharing can be influenced by several factors. Lin (2007) has suggested two classes of motivation which are extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Extrinsic motivation focuses on the goal-driven reasons such as benefits earned when performing an activity (Deci and Ryan, 2000) while intrinsic motivation defines the pleasure and inherent satisfaction derived from a specific activity (Deci and Rayn, 2008). Lin (2007) further gave examples of motivators such as reciprocal benefits, self-efficacy and enjoyment in helping others to significantly relevant to knowledge sharing activities.

In addition according to Poortvliet et al. (2007) they have suggested that people who hold performance goals (similar to extrinsic motivation) may prefer to hoard from exchanging information with partners than people who hold mastery goals (similar to intrinsic motivation).

They argue that mastery goals trigger a reciprocity orientation while performance goals trigger an exploitation orientation that hinders sharing but facilitates efficient information use.

People also most likely to share when there is a push and pull factors and the process can be done with fewer obstacles. As suggested by Susantri and Wood employees need to be motivated in order to increase their involvement in knowledge sharing activity because in many situations they are generally quite dependent on the benefits from their contributions (extrinsic value of motivation). Based on the literature we can classify the motivation into internal (intrinsic value) or external (extrinsic value) motivation. Internal motivation represents an internal value of an individual toward the work itself (Deci and Ryan, 2000). External motivation represents an external value that is not directly related to work itself, but is primarily based on personal values and expectations (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

Objectives of the study: Knowledge Sharing (KS) is an activity that involves exchange of information or knowledge to help others in related jobs. This study aims to study the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors for academics in a public university in involving with the KS activities.

Knowledge sharing in the higher educations institutions: Higher education institutions or universities are well known to be the center for knowledge or knowledge hub.

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Thus, it should be where knowledge is created and grow. It is also the place to practice knowledge management. Therefore, it is assumed that people within this organization will actively involve in KS activity. However, in reality researches have shown that knowledge sharing is very limited among the academician even from the same universities (Ridzuan *et al.*, 2008; Ramayah *et al.*, 2013). The low desire or willingness to share knowledge appears to be a prevailing problem in academia. Seonghee and Boryung (2008) expressed that academician mostly focused on individual scholarly achievement and teaching rather than sharing common visions in supporting the university goals and objectives and this has created a culture where they become an individual that is independent, individualistic and autonomous while maintaining an objective distance from the work of their peers. The tendency for academicians to actively limit their knowledge sharing is especially more prevalent when these individuals have specialized, unique and important knowledge that others do not possess (Ramayah *et al.*, 2013).

Generally, knowledge sharing behavior among academicians includes contributing knowledge through written documentation such as publishing books or scholarly articles, sharing knowledge through formal interactions within or across teams or work units during meetings and workshops, sharing knowledge in informal interactions and sharing knowledge within communities of practice (Bartol and Srivastava, 2002). In addition, Sohail and Daud (2009) noted that organizations need to provide an environment that promotes a sharing culture among teaching staff is very important in order to help increase productivity and improve work processes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

According to Lin (2007), studies that were conducted using qualitative approaches are still limited especially within the educational sectors. Earlier researches in KS generally used quantitative methods and few qualitative

approaches. This research is conducted using in depth interviews with selected respondents from a public university in Selangor, Malaysia. According to Mc Namara interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences.

The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic and there is opportunity to follow-up. Respondents were identified and selected from five different faculties in a public university which include all levels: professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, young tutors. They were accessed based on personal contacts and referrals from friends and associates. Academics with different status and level were used to ensure the respondents were selected strategically, other than gender distribution. By categorizing the level from Professor to young tutor, it was assumed that the working lives of them are spread from long to shorter period of time.

Overall, we have 3 professors, 2 associate professors, 4 senior lecturers and 1 young tutor involved in the study. All respondents were interviewed face to face and were voice recorded. Data was transcribed for the purpose of coding and analysis and finally they were used to discuss the findings.

To ensure the process of getting the data well organized and structured, we have used a consistent set of questions to all of respondents. We began the interview by asking some background information especially in terms of their expertise and then their willingness to share their knowledge with people.

Data was analyzed based on the narrative analysis. Labov and Waletzky (1997) defined narrative as one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events that actually occurred. The researcher are concerned with the relationship of motivation to share the knowledge and personal intention of the respondents, thus the story of their experience is assessed according to the theme of this research (Table 1).

Table 1: Respondents profile

Respondents code	Status	Faculty/Department	Years of services at UPM
R1	Senior lecturer	Dept. of Economics,Faculty of Economics and Management	12
R2	Associate professor	Dept. of Management, Faculty of Economics and Management	10
R3	Tutor	Dept. of Management, Faculty of Economics and Management	6
R4	Senior lecturer	Dept. of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Management	10
R5	Associate professor	Dept. of Accounting, Faculty of Economics and Management	15
R6	Senior lecturer	Dept. of Accounting,Faculty of Economics and Management	9
R7	Senior lecturer	Faculty of Ecology and Human Science	10
R8	Professor	Dept. of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Management	32
R9	Professor	Faculty Science	20
R10	Professor	Faculty of Computer Science	15

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results from the analysis will be discussed using general description and direct quotes. First, the study discusses what have motivated our respondents in participating in the KS activities. As described earlier, motivation values can be categorized into internal and external factors. We began the session by questioning the background of the respondents. With focus to the objectives of the research, we have aimed: to ask the motivations that make them want to share their knowledge to identify what expectations that respondents are hoping more from the KS activities especially between extrinsic and intrinsic outcomes.

One of the questions that was asked to respondents was question "What have motivated yourself to participate in the KS activities", majority of the respondents (R1-R10) have related their willingness to share knowledge with others as due to reason it will contribute towards the achievement of yearly performance (KPI) (this is extrinsic factor) as well as for building networking (extrinsic factor) and recognition and rewards that are promised for having external recognition. (extrinsic factor).

Another question that we asked was "What were your expectations from the KS activities", the respondents were probe between the selection of intrinsic and extrinsic expectations such as for social needs, for networking, for meeting the performance requirement, for awards as well as for career progression. The answers also varies, respondents mostly chose the intrinsic factors to be the first reason to share the knowledge such as they expect the outcome will be relevant to building and strengthening the relationship and of course to help other people. However, being in the research university, the needs to meet the yearly Performance Indexes (KPI), forming external networking and achieving grant awards and recognition have made them have no choice but to share their knowledge in a broader perspective and sometimes become the initiative to be involved in the KS activities. This is because, they believed when you met the yearly KPI, then it will support the promotion, expanding the networking, increase in rewards and so on. R5 and R6 added another reasons for sharing that was related to feeling happy to see another person happy and she/he able to solve the problem (intrinsic factor):

> "I share my knowledge because I myself are willing to do it and happy to do it. I like to see people solved their problem from the knowledge that i shared with them" (R6)

Additionally, according to R5, "If I share I get satisfaction. For me, what is the point of having knowledge but you don't share" (R5)

From these responses, we noted that almost all academics were also motivated if the activities are related to making people happy, helping other or it can build and tighten the relationship with the peers (Intrinsic values). The academics also are willing to share more when they have closer relationship with the receiver and know the knowledge receiver in person, such as their close friend, peer group and work colleagues:

> "I would share with people who are closer to me more because they are the one whom I can't say "no" (R2, R4, R5, R6)

> "Between senior and junior there are always a gap but between peers it is different, for example, me and my colleague, we are quite open, we share similar interest thus we are more happy to share because we can always work together for a paper and publication" (R2)

In another situation, the results have shown that academics share more when they have self-efficacy or confident that they possess better knowledge than others (R6-R10). The quotes below shows example of their responds:

> "When anybody approach me for some knowledge, if I know something about it I will share with them but if I am not really confident cause I have not explore or expert to the extend I am satisfied with it, then I will not share" (R6)

> "When we are referred by any agencies to perform a research or to do innovation based on our knowledge, we will form a group involving young researchers, this is also how we expand and share the knowledge" (R9, R10)

In sum, it can be suggested in general, academics are naturally motivated and willing to share their knowledge. The motivation to share not necessarily be monetary rewards but can also be non-monetary incentives. The intrinsic motivation normally is something related to self-satisfaction, feeling belonginess and happy to help people. The motivation and willingness to share would be highly motivated when they have developed their self-efficacy and competent about their areas before they share because it is important in building confident and ease the knowledge transfer process (R1-R7). According to Bandura (1977), the 'guru' for the theory of self-efficacy, "people who are socially persuaded that they possess the capabilities to master difficult situations and are provided with provisional aids for effective action they will be likely to mobilize greater effort than those who

receive only the performance aids". The responds from R8-R10 have proven that, they were not only feeling self-satisfaction but perhaps motivated with self-esteem and self-actualization needs (if we referred to the theory of needs by Maslow). The self-esteem needs are something like status, dominance, prestige, self-respect, respect from others, while self-actualization needs require higher level of recognition such as realizing personal potential, self-fulfillment and personal growth. Both of these higher levels needs can be enhanced and supported through organization culture and commitment (extrinsic value/motivation). This suggest the organization has to provide more in terms of traditional extrinsic motivations such as meeting the organizational/institutions KPI, social and work networking and career promotion.

CONCLUSION

Now a days, university environment has turned into a competitive ground where lecturers are looking for ways of how they can get promotions, higher positions and recognition for their self-esteem as well as self-actualization. Extrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from outside of the individual and most of the time from the organization and the workplace environment. The rewards come in the form of monetary and non-monetary rewards such as recognition, awards and career promotion. These extrinsic motivations can be driven by the individual perceived values and benefits of the action and outcome of the actions. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation which individual are motivated and driven by interest or satisfaction derived from an activity and does not rely on external pressure. Some forms of intrinsic motivation include building competence and prospering self-efficacy.

Based on the findings, we can conclude that academicians are prompted to share their knowledge because it will contribute towards the achievement of yearly performance (KPI) as well as for building networking and relationship. Given these findings, it can be suggested that the extrinsic and intrinsic factors both are important in supporting their actions whether to share and not to share their knowledge. Thus, we would recommend the university to cultivate organizational citizenship behavior among the academicians. High levels of organizational citizenship can foster mutual social exchange relationships among fellow colleagues within the faculty as well as outside of the faculty. We believe close relationships motivate and facilitate the sharing of knowledge.

Earlier research has suggested that some people for some reasons try to hoard or avoid from being actively involved in the knowledge sharing activities but within this research we found that academics are not trying to hoard but they are not sharing because they were not confident in doing so.

We would also like to propose that management to activate the feedback forum among the academicians and higher management. This would help us in getting the opinions and feedback from the academician's referent groups (e.g., peers, department head, dean, vice chancellor) and hopefully by doing this can exert the necessary pressure on academicians to engage in knowledge sharing as well as enhance their individual sense of self-worth. The University administrators such as faculty deans and the heads of departments should also encourage an open and conducive environment that welcomes new ideas, listening to criticism and constantly strive for unity among the staff. This would encourage knowledge sharing regardless of the status or relationship a person may have with another.

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