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PROBING DETERMINANTS OF UNIVERSITY ACADEMICIANS' KNOWLEDGE SHARING INTENTION

Tay Lee Chin[1*], Tan Fee Yean[2], Hon-Wei Leow[3]

[1]Faculty of Accountancy, Finance and Business, Tunku Abdul Rahman University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
[2]School of Business Management, University Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah, Malaysia
[3] School of Accounting and Finance, Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

[*]*Email: lctay@tarc.edu.my*

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ABSTRACT

The determinants of information sharing intention are identified in this paper (i.e., managerial support, interpersonal trust, and reciprocity). Data were collected from questionnaires from academicians in the Malaysian private universities. Multiple regression analysis was performed to test the analysis. Management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity positively influence knowledge sharing intention. The results revealed management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity play significant roles in determining academicians' knowledge sharing intentions. Based on the insights of social exchange theory, this study discovered that strong effects of managerial support, interpersonal trust, and reciprocity on information sharing intention. Hence, social exchange theory is extended to the knowledge sharing intention among academicians' universities. For the university to encourage knowledge sharing intention, they may improve their current management style and maintain a work environment that encourages employees to trust each other.

Keywords: *Knowledge sharing intention, Management support, Interpersonal trust, Reciprocity.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Natural (e.g., land, rivers, grassland) and physical resources (e.g., capital, personnel and equipment) are necessary for organizations' competitive advantage [1] Nisula and Kianto [2]. However, both resources are insufficient for organizations' competitive advantage in the generation of the knowledge economy Malik et al. [3]. Knowledge and ideas sharing are the main factors to ensure the organizations' competitive advantage (Wang et al. [4]; Yasir and Majid [5], Lee and Wong [6]. Organizations solely dependent on knowledge sharing enable organizations to respond immediately to crises, create innovative ideas, gain insights and prevent repeat mistakes [7], Nguyen, et al. [8]. In turn, knowledge sharing cuts costs and improves performance.

Knowledge sharing imperative for today's competitive business environment [9], Stephen, et al. [10]. The organizations must create practices and processes to improve employees' knowledge sharing intention (Junior et al. [11], Centobelli et al. [12]. The mental state of an information professional that indicates his or her commitment to share knowledge with a colleague in the future is known as knowledge sharing intention. For instance, organizations introduce Microsoft OneDrive to ensure the employees access, share and collaborate the files and documents. Despite this, it is found that employees resist sharing the knowledge although the organizations provide the knowledge sharing systems and processes [4], Lee et al. [13]. Organizations face challenges in achieving the highest levels of knowledge sharing. As a result, the above shows that the purpose to share information should be investigated further.

A lot of factors influence knowledge sharing intention Lombardi, et al. [14]. The importance of management support cannot be ignored when supporting knowledge sharing intention Ali et al. [15]. The purpose of information sharing is facilitated by management support, which divides resources to facilitate it (Han and Anantatmula [16], Saifi et al. [17]. To our knowledge, existing literature has significantly neglected the investigation of management support's specific actions that can be implemented to encourage employees' intention to share the knowledge. This study examines the relationship between managerial support and information sharing intention, despite the fact that there are little empirical studies on the subject. Furthermore, one of the characteristics that has a key influence in boosting knowledge sharing intention is interpersonal trust. Javaid, et al. [18]. Interpersonal trust enables knowledge exchange, leading knowledge exchange inexpensively. However, empirical researches paid little attention to the connection between interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing intention Mooradian et al. [19]. How far interpersonal trust influences knowledge sharing intention is unclear? For this reason, this study must reveal the connection between interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing intention.

In addition to that, reciprocity is crucial in various employee relationships including knowledge sharing intention Lin and Lo [20], [21]. When one person obtains preferential treatment from another, reciprocity generates particular obligations to repay the favour Serenko and Bontis [22]. When an employee participates in the knowledge exchange process, he or she expects that if he or she shares his or her knowledge with others, others would share their information with him or her in return. On the other hand, there is insufficient interest in the potential link between reciprocity and knowledge sharing intention. As such, the impact of reciprocity on knowledge sharing intention remains mostly unknown. For instance, is reciprocity conducive to knowledge sharing intention? Does reciprocity foster desirable knowledge share intention? The goal of this study is to see if there is a link between reciprocity and the desire to share knowledge. The findings of this study add to the body of knowledge by illustrating how academicians' perceptions of managerial support, interpersonal trust, and reciprocity relate to their willingness to share knowledge. Meanwhile, valuable insights obtained from observing the connection between management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity are useful to universities' management to restore knowledge sharing intention for present and future use. The next part contains a literature review. The research methods and findings are then presented. The final section contains discussions, research implications, and research directions for the future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Management Support and Knowledge Sharing Intention

The support of top and middle management to improve the information sharing process throughout the company is referred to as management support Ali, et al. [15]. Management support influences knowledge sharing intention based on social exchange theory. Individuals engage in social relationships based on incentives and benefits, according to social exchange theory. Management support can be classified as one of the motivations that provide for voluntary behaviors including knowledge sharing intention Osterloh and Frey [23]; Deci and Ryan [24]. Management support is essential for knowledge sharing in several ways Ali, et al. [15], Lee et al. [25]. The best way is adequate resources to support Na-Nan et al. [26]. Management ensures the availability of various resources including budgets, technologies, equipment, facilities to achieve knowledge management objectives Yaakobi and Weisberg [27]. For instance, knowledge management technologies such as artificial intelligence give

employees immediate access to the knowledge employees need, it promotes the knowledge sharing intention between subject experts and employees.

Besides that, management could provide support in the form of opinions, advice, recommendations and sharing experiences Thomson and Bolino [28]. Employees become much more comfortable sharing knowledge and experiences. As such, knowledge and experiences are being shared. Further, another role of management is having more formal (e.g., meetings, training programs, seminars) and informal knowledge sharing sessions (e.g., exchange of ideas at the coffee machines, commuting together to work or meet clients) Saifi et al. [17]. Formal and informal knowledge sharing sessions are the means of knowledge sharing when employees interact with each other [29]. In the process, employees express their expertise in specific topics and employees learn the skills or procedures for particular jobs [29]. It enhances the knowledge of other employees and results in knowledge sharing intention. In addition to that, it is noted that management facilitates knowledge sharing intention by creating a culture for knowledge sharing intention Saifi et al. [17]. It influences employees to exchange knowledge, create new knowledge and leads to sharing intention culture. Based on the above, we propose:
H1: Management support positively influence knowledge sharing intention

Interpersonal Trust and Knowledge Sharing Intention

Interpersonal trust can be defined as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to another party based on the expectation that the other party will act important to the trustor" Mayer et al. [30]. Empirical studies Lei, et al. [31], Le and Lei [32], Koohang, et al. [33] suggest the relationship between interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing intention. Based on the social exchange theory, trust creates employees' greater confidence to be involved in the knowledge transfer process Koohang, et al. [33], Pee and Min [34], Jain et al. [35]. Employees are driven to share more beneficial knowledge with others and acquire information more easily when there is interpersonal trust. In addition to that, the interpersonal trust allows clarifying queries in-depth without fear of ruining reputation, leading to knowledge sharing among employees [36], Nonaka and Takeuchi [37]. Furthermore, interpersonal trust found effective on an individual or organizational level of analysis in diverse organizational settings. In Curado and Vieira [38] study of exporting Portuguese Small-and Medium- size Enterprises (SMEs), trust is positively related to the knowledge sharing intention. Interpersonal trust establishes a sense of security and foster employees of exporting Portuguese SMEs sharing their knowledge.

Besides that, interpersonal trust is also applicable to the knowledge sharing intention in the groups within the organizations Alsharo et al. [39]. One way to achieve is by sharing knowledge based on transparency. Transparency refers to the accessibility of information to organizations stakeholders [40]. Interpersonal trust tends to build, especially group members sharing their knowledge freely and communicating openly Anderson and Weitz [41]. Based on the above, we propose:
H2: Interpersonal trust positively influence knowledge sharing intention

Reciprocity and Knowledge Sharing Intention

The concept of information sharing leads to future knowledge demands is known as reciprocity. Kankanhalli et al. [42]. Several studies Chang, et al. [43], Hsu and Lin [44] applied the social exchange theory to interpret the relationship between reciprocity and knowledge sharing intention. Based on the theory, Employees want to share their knowledge

because they expect others to benefit them in the future. [45]. Fulk et al. [46] state that people who share knowledge in the online community (e.g., online chat room) have confidence in reciprocity. Further, people who regularly share knowledge in the online community seemed to receive immediate help when they asked for it [45]. Tohidinia and Mosakhani [47], Liou et al. [48] studies demonstrate that reciprocity influences knowledge sharing intention. When employees build close relationships and interactions with one another, employees prefer to be involved in cooperative behaviors (e.g., knowledge sharing, problems sharing). Reciprocity emerges when employees interact for long times Tohidinia and Mosakhani [47]. Based on the above, we propose:
H3: Reciprocity positively influence knowledge sharing intention

Research Framework

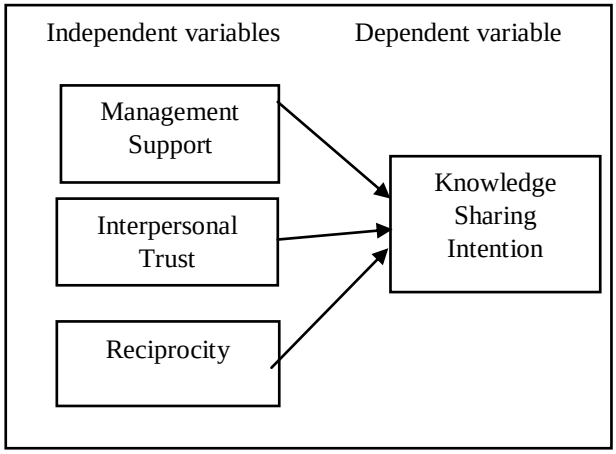


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedure

The sample of the present study consists of academicians in Malaysian private universities. The reason underlying the preference of academicians is the job nature of academicians requiring extensive information and experiences exchanges. Besides that, stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample. The stratified random sampling technique allows university faculties to be organised according to comparable features, and then a sample is collected from each university faculty. A sum of 200 questionnaires was disseminated to the faculties in the university. From the total 200, 173 eligible questionnaires were obtained. 173 questionnaires were screened to check for errors. The result showed 173 questionnaires have no missing values and outliers. This yields an 87% response rate. The 87% response rate was better than previous studies. For example, Bibib and Ali [49] have 61% response rate whereas Ogunmokun et al. [50] have 84%. The sample had 44 males (32.9%) and 129 females (74.6%). The respondents' age was within 25-34 years old (61.8%). In terms of education, 67 respondents had Degree (38.7%), 53 participants (30.6%) had Master or PhD and 45 participants (26%) had Diploma.

Measurement

The measurement of interpersonal trust and knowledge sharing intention has six items adapted from Mohammed et al. [51]. Whereas, management support was accessed based on 8 items adapted from Mohammed et al. [51]. Further, reciprocity is measured using Kankanhalli et al. [42] four items scale. This study used five points Likert scale from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree as to the response scale.

4. FINDINGS

This study performed a few analyses. The internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) of the independent variables (management support, interpersonal trust, reciprocity, and knowledge sharing purpose) were investigated first. The results demonstrate that the reliability values for both variables were good (i.e., management support = 0.795, interpersonal trust = 0.701, reciprocity = 0.708 and knowledge sharing intention = 0.712 respectively). Referring to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), the reliability values are larger than the threshold values of 0.6. In addition to that, to examine the relationship between management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24 was used to do multiple regression analysis. Several assumptions such as missing values, outliers, normality, linearity, and multicollinearity have been met before performing multiple regression analyses. Table 1 depicts the multiple regression analysis results. The results reveal a significant relationship between management support ($b = 0.217$, $p < 0.01$), interpersonal trust ($b = 0.203$, $p < 0.01$), reciprocity ($b = 0.250$, $p < 0.01$) and knowledge sharing intention. H1, H2 and H3 are supported.

Table 1. Multiple Regression Result

	Unstandardized coefficient		***Standardized coefficient***	***t***	***Sig***
	B	***Std. Error***	***B***	-	-
(Constant)	0.897	0.261	-	-	-
Interpersonal Trust	0.210	0.081	0.203	2.599	0.00
Management Support	0.207	0.077	0.217	2.684	0.00
Reciprocity	0.203	0.056	0.250	3.628	0.00

5. DISCUSSIONS

This study investigates the knowledge sharing intention of academicians in Malaysian private universities. The results show that management support has a favourable impact on knowledge sharing intentions. Some similar findings were reported by Ali et al. [15], Lee et al. [13] reveal a significant relationship between management support and knowledge sharing intention. Employees perceive management support and resources as valuable for knowledge sharing intention. Moreover, the findings reveal interpersonal trust positively influence knowledge sharing intention. The findings were found to be similar to [52], Buvik and Tvedt [53], Elianto and Nury [54]. Academicians are more inclined to participate in knowledge sharing with the purpose of increasing communication frequency and availability to share information and knowledge, owing to employees' trust in one another. Further, findings also show that reciprocity positively influences knowledge sharing intention. This study is similar to prior literature Tohidinia and Mosakhani [47], Liou et al. [48]. It means employees assume mutual knowledge and help are effective for employees' intention towards knowledge sharing.

6. CLOSING

Research Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study makes several theory implications. To begin, this research applies social exchange theory to the goal of academicians to share their expertise. The social exchange theory is applied to a new research setting in this study. Furthermore, social exchange theory may be used to explain the relationship between determinants and the intention to share knowledge. Besides that, this study empirically confirms management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity are the determinants influencing academicians' knowledge sharing intention. It means academicians' knowledge sharing intention highly depends on management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity. Hence, the findings enable future theory development that conceptualizes the critical roles of management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity play in facilitating knowledge sharing intention.

Practical Implications

This emphasizes the need of managerial assistance in promoting knowledge sharing intentions. Management has the ability to improve their existing management style and practices, contribute to the growth of organisational structure, and drive the goal of information sharing. Aside from that, management is expected to have a thorough understanding of the university's knowledge sharing culture and the various elements that influence it. Therefore, the management could change the culture towards knowledge sharing. The role of interpersonal trust in encouraging knowledge sharing intention is highlighted in this study. The university should create an open and trusting working environment. The best way is to execute an open-door policy. This is to remove employees' barriers and bring them closer to one another. When the employees can obtain information easily, the employees develop a sense of trust and might be willing to share their knowledge in return. In addition to that, the university could organize team-building activities consistently to support continuous and close relationships between the employees. Such frequent interaction develops the interpersonal trust of the employees. Further, reciprocity is the key to knowledge sharing intention. Thus, the university can improve the reciprocity of academicians by developing a reciprocal atmosphere in the workplace. For instance, the university may request help from academicians to return the favor to other academics. As such, it motivates the employees to have a better relationship when helping each other.

Limitations of the Study, Future Research Direction, and Conclusion

Limitations exist in this study and further verifications are required in the future study. One limitation is this study solely examines three determinants i.e., management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity influence knowledge sharing intention. There might be other determinants that could influence knowledge sharing intention. The other determinants include gender, qualification background, age, time Tohidinia and Mosakhani [47], workplace spirituality and organizational climate Khari and Sinha, [55]. Future researchers may consider these determinants to delve deeper into knowledge sharing intention. Moreover, this study comprises employees in the university. Therefore, the generalization of the research findings to other industries must be made with extra caution. Furthermore, because

the current study is cross-sectional, the causal relationship between managerial support, interpersonal trust, and reciprocity influence information sharing intention is limited. Longitudinal design can be used for future studies. This is to gain a dynamic relationship between management support, interpersonal trust and reciprocity influence knowledge sharing intention.

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