Significance of Knowledge Sharing Behaviour among Academic Community on the Basis of Theory of Reasoned Action

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Abstract-The knowledge supply is the greatest challenge that has to be faced while fostering academic community. The study has utilized Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) for evaluating the factor of motivation in terms of sharing knowledge. The study has revealed that certain factors and situations limit the impact of individual's attitude on the behaviour. It has successfully predicted behavioural intentions that compromise between actual predicting behaviour and attitude predictions. The knowledge sharing in academic communities is endangered on the basis of personal outcome expectations and community related outcome expectations. A total of 30 academicians were recruited to know their perception regarding the knowledge sharing behaviour. The results helped to identify motivation in individual's knowledge regarding sharing behaviour within the professional academic communities.

Index Terms: Academic Community, Knowledge Sharing, Role of Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

The interest in examining the factors supporting knowledge sharing behaviour has grown in the academic communities. Knowledge sharing helps in adequate understanding of different concepts and facts, which form basis of a person's need to perform a task. Individuals tend to share relevant information, suggestions, and ideas through verbal communication. However, the knowledge shared by people may be implicit or explicit. Tacit knowledge is embedded in brain that is not articulated and codified. On the contrary, explicit knowledge is expressed through reports and manuals, which is easily expressed and communicated through written documents. It reveals that tacit knowledge is much harder to share with other employees as compared to explicit knowledge. This is because sharing requires much effort and time [1].

Knowledge sharing behaviour allows the people to learn by sharing ideas, experiences, and interacting socially (Ma & Chan, 2014). Social interaction promotes cognitive changes within the individuals; therefore, knowledge sharing plays a significant role in converting social knowledge to individual knowledge. The dynamic conversion of tacit-explicit knowledge characterizes successful modes of knowledge creation and sharing. Knowledge is shared from a source in such a way, which is firstly learned and then applied by the recipient [2].

In today's highly competitive environment, knowledge sharing has been considered as critical for the success of the firm. The competitive advantage of a firm can increase and sustain by encouraging the employees to share useful knowledge with their fellows [3]. Knowledge sharing among the employees within an organization enhances its performance, innovative capability, and absorptive capacity. Moreover, it helps to maintain high levels of group as well as organizational productivity. The knowledge sharing intentions of the employees assists in predicting actual knowledge sharing behaviour.

1.1 Problem Statement

Academic communities comprise of people with common goals, interests, and practices, who interact with each other to share information. The network sustaining academic communities is associated with a set of resources and nature of social interactions. Therefore, academic communities need to be studied for addressing issues that relate with social network and personal cognition. However, the present study has introduced Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to investigate the significance of knowledge sharing within the academic communities.

1.2 Aim of the Study

The study aims to assess the role and significance of knowledge sharing behaviour among the academic community based on TRA.

1.3 Contribution of the Study

The study has extended the concept of outcome expectation to associate personal as well as community related outcome expectations. The knowledge sharing in an academic community is stimulated on the basis of expectation of personal benefits and expectation of benefits to professional academic communities. Knowledge sharing in an academic community reflect the significant facets of TRA; therefore, the study has examined the impact of TRA on sharing knowledge in an academic community. The study has contributed towards better understanding of development and success of academic communities in general.

2. Theoretical Background

The employees get associated with academic communities to seek knowledge for resolving problems prevailing at workplace. Knowledge is regarded as valuable intangible resource that is associated with various competitive advantages [4]. Knowledge supply is the biggest challenge faced by individuals in fostering an academic community. However, when people have choice, it clarifies the reason, why people elect to share or not to share knowledge with other members of community. The practitioners and academics gain insight regarding stimulation of knowledge sharing after identifying motivations that initiated knowledge sharing behaviour among individuals [4].

For the last few decades, the theory of reasoned action (TRA) is considered as a leading theory in social psychology. The theory is capable of making risky predictions, and is falsifiable under reasonable standards. The main aim of this theory is to describe the volitional behaviours. The explanatory scope of TRA excludes wide range of impulsive, spontaneous, and habitual behaviours. The performance of such behaviours is not voluntary; therefore, they are excluded accordingly. Moreover, engaging in such behaviours does not involve a conscious decision on part of the performer. TRA tends to exclude behaviours that need unique and special skills or assistance of other individuals [5]. Lack of opportunity, skill deficit, and lack of cooperation prevent an individual from performing such behaviours. TRA suggests that behaviour intention is the proximal and strongest predictor of volitional behavior.

2.1 Knowledge Sharing

The individuals, getting associated with academic community, try to seek knowledge and information to solve their problems. Moreover, these individuals treat the academic community as a place to meet other individuals and socialize [6]. Majority of the individuals believe that community is a social group that helps in developing social relationship with different people living within that particular community. The influence of social network shapes and controls the behaviour of an individual. The significant environmental conditions for exchange of knowledge is provided on the basis of strong community ties.

The participation of member is affected positively through satisfied organizer, member interactions, and member-member interactions [7]. The level of participation or sharing knowledge within academic communities is fostered on basis of a key element; that is trust. The group norms have a strong influence on the intention of group members to participate in academic communities. The attitude towards knowledge sharing is affected positively through anticipated reciprocal associations. The contribution and participation of individual in an academic community enhances as a result of development of community sense and social identity. The perception of beliefs is influenced by subjective norms and personal intentions of individuals for decision making. The interventions can be designed to affect the desired action on the basis of norms and attitudes that affect an individual's intention.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative research design has been utilised for assessing the significance of knowledge sharing behaviour among academic community.

3.2 Sample Size and Participants

Academicians from different departments of the universities were recruited as the study participants. Hard copies of questionnaire were randomly distributed with the consent of management. Different departments were visited to conduct the pilot study. Similarly, the questionnaires were sent randomly via email to the academicians that were approached easily from different universities. A total of 45 questionnaires were distributed among the academicians in hardcopy, from which 30 were obtained with complete information.

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Literature was used to adopt the items for the study. New items were proposed based on the provided definition by literature. A questionnaire was structured on the basis of TRA. The questionnaire was designed carefully and structured in three different sections. The first and second sections included the variables associated with TRA that have been studied to signify knowledge sharing behaviour among academicians. The third part included the demographics of the enrolled academicians. The next section was comprised of knowledge sharing behaviour scale. The variables were tested through reliability test of Cronbach alpha through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The factors regarding the significance of theories according to the perception of academics have been included.

4. Data Analysis

Table 1 represented the results of questionnaire's reliability through Cronbach's Alpha. It has been observed that questionnaire is highly reliable to conduct the study as the value obtained is 0.959, which is approximately equal to 1.

TABLE 1
RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	**N of Items**

.959	108

TABLE 2
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Female	26	86.7	86.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Race					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Malay	20	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Iban	4	13.3	13.3	80.0
	Bidayuh	1	3.3	3.3	83.3
	Chinese	3	10.0	10.0	93.3
	Others	2	6.6	6.6	93.7
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Marital status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Married	25	83.3	83.3	96.7
	Others	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Age years old					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	31 - 35 years	12	40.0	40.0	40.0
	36 - 40 years	11	36.7	36.7	76.7
	41 - 45 years	5	16.7	16.7	93.3
	46 - 50 years	1	3.3	3.3	96.7
	51 years and above	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Designation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lecturer	18	60.0	60.0	60.0
	Senior Lecturer	12	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Highest academic qualification					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Master's Degree	23	76.7	76.7	76.7
	Doctoral's Degree	7	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Name of current institution					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	27	90.0	90.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	
Number years in present institution					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 - 5 years	9	30.0	30.0	30.0
	6 - 10 years	9	30.0	30.0	60.0
	11 - 15 years	11	36.7	36.7	96.7
	16 - 20 years	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 represents the demographic profile of participants, involved in the study. 13.3% males and 86.7% females responded to the questionnaires distributed among them. Mostly the participants were Malaysian (66.7%) and second highest were Bidayuh (10.0%). Whereas, the participants responded to the questionnaire belonged to other races as well, including Iban (13.3%), Chinese (13.3%), and others (3.3%). Table 2 further showed the marital status of the participants, which indicated that there were 83.3% married participants and 13.3% were single. Furthermore, the table showed the participants, lying in different age groups coded for the study. 40% participants were 31 to 35 years old and 36.7% were 36 to 40 years old. Very few participants were above 40 years of age. Majority of the participants were lecturer (60%) and 40% were senior lecturers. Master's degree was the highest academic qualification of majority of the participants (76.7%). 90% participants belonged to Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) as their current institution. 36.7% participants were in the institution from 11-15 years and 30% participants were from 1-10 years in the institution.

4.2 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) Elements

TABLE 3
CORRELATION ANALYSIS: ATTITUDE TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE-SHARING BEHAVIOUR

Correlations						
		To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is very good	To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is beneficial	To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is an enjoyable experience	To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is a wise move	To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is personally valuable
To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is very good	Pearson Correlation	1	.954**	.801**	.975**	.975**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30
To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is beneficial	Pearson Correlation	.954**	1	.755**	.927**	.927**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30
To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is an enjoyable experience	Pearson Correlation	.801**	.755**	1	.776**	.776**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30
To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is a wise move	Pearson Correlation	.975**	.927**	.776**	1	.948**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30
To me, my knowledge sharing with my colleague is personally valuable	Pearson Correlation	.975**	.927**	.776**	.948**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	30	30	30	30	30

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

Table 3 has shown the correlation analysis of the factors involved in the attitude towards knowledge-sharing behaviour. It has been observed that there is a strong and positive association between the factors. There is also a strong and positive correlation between knowledge sharing with the colleague and knowledge experience is an enjoyable experience (r=0.975). The results have shown that participants were significantly associated towards these indicators. Furthermore, the correlation between the factors of attitude towards knowledge-sharing behaviour, were significant at 5% level of significance.

TABLE 4
CORRELATION ANALYSIS: INTENTION TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE-SHARING BEHAVIOUR

Correlations						
		I will share my work	I will always	If given the opportunity, I	If given the opportunity, I	If given the opportunity, I

		reports and officials documents with my colleagues	provide my know-when or how-when at the request of my colleagues	intend to share my experience or know-how from work with my colleagues	intend to share my expertise from my education or training with my colleagues	will make an effort to share knowledge with my colleagues
I will share my work reports and officials documents with my colleagues	Pearson Correlation	1	.475**	.535**	.757**	.709**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.002	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30
I will always provide my know-when or how-when at the request of my colleagues	Pearson Correlation	.475**	1	.585**	.666**	.393*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008		.001	.000	.032
	N	30	30	30	30	30
If given the opportunity, I intend to share my experience or know-how from work with my colleagues	Pearson Correlation	.535**	.585**	1	.669**	.476**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.001		.000	.008
	N	30	30	30	30	30
If given the opportunity, I intend to share my expertise from my education or training with my colleagues	Pearson Correlation	.757**	.666**	.669**	1	.742**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30
If given the opportunity, I will make an effort to share knowledge with my colleagues	Pearson Correlation	.709**	.393*	.476**	.742**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.032	.008	.000	
	N	30	30	30	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Table 4 has represented the factors, concerning intention towards knowledge-sharing behaviour. A strong and positive association has been observed among the factors of intention towards knowledge-sharing behaviour. Sharing the work reports and official documents with colleagues has a positive and strong correlation with the intention to share expertise from education or training with colleagues (r=0.757). It has been examined that intention towards knowledge-sharing behaviour has a positive impact as a mediator variable on other variables. Furthermore, the correlation between the factors of intention towards knowledge-sharing behaviour were significant at the 5 % level of significance.

4.3 Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour Scale

Bivariate analysis has included correlation analysis, which has been applied on the data collected from the pilot study. Table 5 shows the correlation analysis of written contribution. It has been observed that strong and positive correlation exists between the variables of written contribution. Publish articles in institution journals and newsletters have strong association with the submission of documents and reports. "Share documentation from personal files related to current work" has very strong and positive correlation with "Contribute ideas and thoughts to institution online databases" (r=0.94).

TABLE 5
CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN CONTRIBUTIONS

Correlations						
	Submit documents and reports	Publish articles in institution journals	Publish articles in institution magazines	Publish articles in institution newsletters	Share documentation from personal files related to	Contribute ideas and thoughts to institution

						current work	online databases
Submit documents and reports	Pearson Correlation	1	.501**	.207	.148	.171	.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005	.272	.434	.365	.453
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Publish articles in institution journals	Pearson Correlation	.501**	1	.679**	.663**	.542**	.433*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005		.000	.000	.002	.017
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Publish articles in institution magazines	Pearson Correlation	.207	.679**	1	.794**	.704**	.706**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.272	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Publish articles in institution newsletters	Pearson Correlation	.148	.663**	.794**	1	.849**	.803**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.434	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Share documentation from personal files related to current work	Pearson Correlation	.171	.542**	.704**	.849**	1	.944**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.365	.002	.000	.000		.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Contribute ideas and thoughts to institution online databases	Pearson Correlation	.142	.433*	.706**	.803**	.944**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.453	.017	.000	.000	.000	
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

Table 6 has shown the correlation analysis of personal interactions. The correlation test has shown moderate and positive association between the variables. Strong and positive association has also been observed. "Share passion and excitement on some specific subjects with others through personal conversation" has a strong and positive association with "Share experiences that may help others avoid risks and trouble through personal conversation" (r=0.9). "Keep others updated with important institutional information through personal conversation" has positive and strong correlation with "Keep others updated with important institutional information through personal conversation" (r=0.799).

TABLE 6
CORRELATION ANALYSIS ON PERSONAL INTERACTIONS

Correlations							
		Support less-experienced colleagues when time permits	Engage in coaching relationships with junior academicians	Spend time in personal conversation	Keep others updated with important institutional information through personal conversation	Share passion and excitement on some specific subjects with others through personal conversation	Share experiences that may help others avoid risks and trouble through personal conversation
Support less-experienced colleagues	Pearson Correlation	1	.036	.581**	.580**	.533**	.538**
	Sig. (2-		.852	.001	.001	.002	.002

when time permits	tailed)						
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Engage in coaching relationships with junior academicians	Pearson Correlation	.036	1	.571**	.634**	.404*	.352
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.852		.001	.000	.027	.057
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Spend time in personal conversation (e.g. discussion in hallways	Pearson Correlation	.581**	.571**	1	.843**	.731**	.714**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.001		.000	.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Keep others updated with important institutional information through personal conversation	Pearson Correlation	.580**	.634**	.843**	1	.799**	.731**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Share passion and excitement on some specific subjects with others through personal conversation	Pearson Correlation	.533**	.404*	.731**	.799**	1	.900**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.027	.000	.000		.000
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Share experiences that may help others avoid risks and trouble through personal conversation	Pearson Correlation	.538**	.352	.714**	.731**	.900**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.057	.000	.000	.000	
	N	30	30	30	30	30	30
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

5. Discussion

The proposed model has been confirmed empirically through confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling. Few of the studies have reviewed the literature to measure the sharing and seeking dimensions associated with the knowledge sharing behaviour [2, 8, 9]. The complexity, characteristics of flexibility and high uncertainty has been replaced by the knowledge based work in the present era of knowledge economy [10, 11]. It is well-known that knowledge is a competitive resource for an effective business environment globally [12]. It has been explained by Jessica Sze-Yin et al. [13] that a unique characteristic, which has made the novel economy unique is the management with the resource called 'knowledge'.

The Theory of Reasoned Action [14] have been used by various studies to measure the intention and attitudes for sharing knowledge. The assumptions of the studies are positive and favourable in terms of attitude towards knowledge sharing that will result with greater intention. The intention cannot be considered as the only variable to share knowledge [15]. Knowledge has an efficacy of becoming one of the public goods unlike other conventional resources, including land, capital and labour [16]. However, this model has been collapsed under the reasoned action approach in recent years [17].

Receiving and providing knowledge must be at the heart of the academic world. All the associated documents that are contributed by in-house resources must be stored in almost all the higher educational institutions. The storage of such data is not novel in educational settings of the institutions, but what is novel is to share the existing knowledge and to permit the members to use the information originated within the community settings. Additionally, the universities are allowed to map their diagnostic skills by using knowledge repository

and experience the existing needs to cover the gaps and deficiencies within a knowledge based institution.

Various perspectives have been approached for the knowledge sharing from the intention and willingness to approach knowledge [18, 19, 20, 21]. In comparison with the present study, many studies have emphasized on recognising the factors that are probable to effect knowledge sharing [22, 23]; whereas, willingness or intention to share the knowledge is approached, which can be mainly considered as an outcome of the employee's perception regarding different issues. There are no proper researches conducted that highlights different outcomes of the particular individual regarding knowledge sharing behaviour. However, there are several investigations based on knowledge sharing behaviour, from which only few have examined the emotions as essential outcome of knowledge sharing [24].

6. CONCLUSION

The study has shown the effectiveness of knowledge sharing behaviour among academicians, which were recruited from the universities. It was observed that there is a requirement of promoting training to academicians for enhancing their knowledge sharing behaviour. Additionally, the group's activities must be collaborated and encouraged with teaching and studies must be focused. This can assist to enhance the intentions of academicians to share knowledge and promote knowledge sharing among academicians. Future studies must recruit the teachers and other professionals to understand their perception regarding knowledge sharing behaviour and its significance.

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Conflict of Interest

This research holds no conflict of interest and is not funded through any source.

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