THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING ACTIVITIES IN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract: *Knowledge production is part of universities and knowledge sharing is tremendously vital in this regard. As the universities becoming intercontinental and diversified, knowledge is the core competitiveness, and it also the fundamental resources to create value which is to improve the educational quality. Knowledge sharing in universities is followed by numerous researches, however, literature has not been providing an infinite picture or plentiful analysis related to process of knowledge sharing activities in university. The main purpose of the paper is to provide a systematic theoretical framework for the process of knowledge sharing activities in university in term of subjects, channels, motivations, barriers and conditions.*

Keywords: *knowledge sharing, universities, theoretical framework.*

I. Introduction

Numerous researchers believed that knowledge is the valuable asset that can make organizations success and competitive (Drucker, 1993; Grant,1996). Davenport and Prusak (1998) argued that knowledge can provide a sustainable advantage, as it generates ever-increasing profits and continued advantage. Unlike physical assets that decrease in value over time, knowledge is an asset that increases in value when used: ideas spawn new ideas and shared knowledge stays with the giver while it enriches the receiver. The potential for new ideas to spring from the knowledge base in any company is limitless, especially if the members of the company have the opportunity to think, learn, and talk to each other. It is clear that knowledge-based activities for the development of company products and processes are becoming the main internal function of companies and the potential to provide the greatest competitive advantage. Therefore, organizations need to develop effective knowledge management strategies to optimize their knowledge assets, especially in the era of modern technology.

Knowledge sharing (KS) has been considered as the most significant component of knowledge management (Alavi và Leidner, 2001), as knowledge sharing is the process of transforming personal knowledge into organizational

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knowledge, from which knowledge sharing can lead to improved absorptive capacity, improved innovation capacity, and thus can maintain competitive advantage (Foss et al., 2010). Furthermore, Research by Obrenovic et al. (2015) shows that the free and open sharing of knowledge tends to have a positive impact on team performance such as building a strong team identity and leading to better team performance. superior performance.

Academic staff in universities have lots of theoretical and practical knowledge, which is one form of knowledge sharing that contributes to high quality education. Furthermore, the duty of academic staff in universities is primarily embedded in teaching, conducting researches and supervising students. As a result, superior knowledge sharing activities in the environment may assist them in the process of developing quality education (Gebreyohans et al., 2022).

II. Literature about knowledge, knowledge management and knowledge sharing

2.1. Knowledge

Alavi and Leidner (2001) argued that knowledge is information in the mind of an individual, it is personalized information (whether new or not, unique, accurate, useful) related to reasoning, interpretation and evaluation of that individual. The information is converted into knowledge when processed in the minds of individuals, therefore knowledge is the result of cognitive processing triggered by a new stream of stimuli.

According to Tiwana (2022), knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, expert insight and grounded intuition that provides an environment and framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms.

2.2. Knowledge management

Gates (2000) defined knowledge management as a clever term to describe a simple topic, that is, how to manage data, documents and employee efforts. The goal is to enrich the ability to work together, including exchanging thoughts, using successful ideas, and coordinating actions towards a common goal. Knowledge management must ensure that the necessary knowledge reaches certain people at a certain time, so that people can perform certain actions.

Numerous universities worldwide have successfully applied the knowledge management model to training and scientific research activities in order to optimize resources including human, financial and infrastructure systems. Some studies have defined knowledge management in universities in particular as well as in educational sector in general as follows:

In the field of education, knowledge management is a collection of all kinds of knowledge, converted from different sources of documents and instructions and connected in the form of a system structure. At the same time, knowledge management in the education sector

provides open management for knowledge to realize production, use and sharing (Yang, 2013).

Ramanujan and Kesh (2004) described knowledge management as the ability to gather, organize, share, and analyze the knowledge of individuals and groups within the universities in ways that directly impact performance. It is a process by which institutions can create value based on their intellectual capital.

Biloslavo and Trnavcevic (2007) show that knowledge management is especially important in higher education institutions, including professionals where success depends on the creation, use and uniqueness of the knowledge. Especially in the context of globalization, lifelong learning and transformation of teaching models according to new technologies are key factors in knowledge development and management.

Knowledge management helps universities improve their capacity to gather and share knowledge, and to apply this knowledge to problem solving and to support research to improve their work (Dhamdhere, 2015).

2.3. Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is considered as an important process of knowledge management (Alavi and Leidner, 2001). Yeşil and Hatunoğlu (2019) describe knowledge sharing as a culture of social interaction that includes the exchange of knowledge, experience and skills of individuals within departments or organizations. Typical of knowledge sharing involves employees' willingness to communicate effectively with colleagues

to demonstrate the knowledge contributed, and to take advice from colleagues to learn from them. At the individual level, knowledge sharing is communicating with colleagues to help them get their work done better, faster and more efficiently. For the organization level, knowledge sharing is about capturing, modifying, reusing, and transferring experience based on existing knowledge within the organization and making knowledge available and accessible to others. within the organization (Yeşil and Hatunoğlu, 2019).

Knowledge sharing is the process of transforming personal knowledge into organizational knowledge, from which knowledge sharing can lead to improved absorptive capacity, improved innovation capacity, and thus can maintain competitive advantage (Foss et al., 2010). Research by Obrenovic et al (2015) shows that the free and open sharing of knowledge tends to have a positive impact on team performance such as building a strong team identity and leading to better team performance.

In the field of edcuation, the knowledge shared is diversified, it includes pedagogic programs and reforms as well as factual, interpersonal and conceptual knowledge (Becheikh et al. 2010).

III. Knowledge sharing activities in universities

Kashari and Taheri (2019) revealed that knowledge sharing activities have four main characteristics: (1) knowledge sharing is an individual activity, (2) Knowledge sharing is voluntary, proactive, perceived behavior, (3)

Knowledge sharing is governed by a number of standards and regulations related to ethics and codes of conduct, (4) the outcome of knowledge sharing involves two or more parties.

Subjects of knowledge sharing process

Some researchers pointed out that knowledge sharing is a mutual exchange between parties, which means that both sides share and collect knowledge, this mechanism signifies cooperative learning between two parties. Boer et al. (2002) share the view that knowledge sharing is a process involving at least two agents, with no identifiable beginning or ending. Similarity, Yang (2013) argues that knowledge sharing should have a relationship between at least two parties, one that owns the knowledge and the other that absorbs it. The first party shares and communicates its knowledge consciously and voluntarily or not and in a number of different forms (behavior, verbal, written...). The other party will be able to perceive these manifestations of knowledge and understand them (by imitating behaviors, listening or reading, etc.).

Janus (2016) argues that knowledge sharing (information, skills, experience or expertise) can be one-way, however, in most cases, it is a two-way or multilateral exchange, in which the parties learn from each other. Knowledge sharing is more than communication, because a lot of knowledge within an organization is difficult to articulate, it needs to be interactive.

Channels of knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing can occur via written correspondence or face to face communications through networking with other experts or documenting, organizing and capturing knowledge for others (Pulakos et al., 2003).

Knowledge sharing channels are categorized by Tsui et al. (2006) based on delivery method, and fall into three categories: writing, speaking, and information technologies. Written knowledge sharing makes enduring knowledge sharing products. The major advantage of written documents is durability: a well-written article or book chapter can be useful for years after it is written. Access to written documents is usually available to all interested parties, regardless of proximity to the author. Categories of written resources are plentiful such as research publications and technical reports, books and book chapters, newsletters, media advisories, e-learning materials. Effective spoken knowledge sharing means can be named as conferences, lectures and presentations, workshops, conversation sessions, and meetings. As the face-to-face interaction makes knowledge sharing effective, the use of online communication tools becoming useful in the case if community has been established previously, online knowledge sharing strategies can provide space for a group to maintain contact even when large distances and other barriers limit face-to-face interaction, especially in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Motivations of knowledge sharing

Previous research showed that studies on motivations for knowledge sharing is necessary in different countries (Hung et al. 2011). The concept of

motivations of knowledge sharing among employees has frequently been discoursed using self-determination theory (Deci and Ryan 2000). According to Deci and Ryan, there are two distinguish types of motivation, based on different goals and reasons of action: extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that is determined by an interest or enjoyment of the task itself or enjoying helping others, and be present within the individual. Extrinsic motivation mentions to the performance of an activity that leads to a needed result. It focuses on goal-driven reasons, such as monetary rewards and career development (Deci and Ryan 2000).

Barriers of knowledge sharing

There are various examples where knowledge sharing fail to meet the goals due to the variety of sharing barriers. The researches on knowledge sharing barriers primarily focused on organizational culture (De Long and Fahey, 2000; Gurteen, 1999; Razmerita et al., 2016). Some researchers also positioned their studies about the issue of trust among employees (Yang, 2013; Razmerita et al., 2016) and the overall level of collaboration within companies concentrating on employee's attitudes, age, level of education and experience, supervisor and team support (De Long and Fahey, 2000).
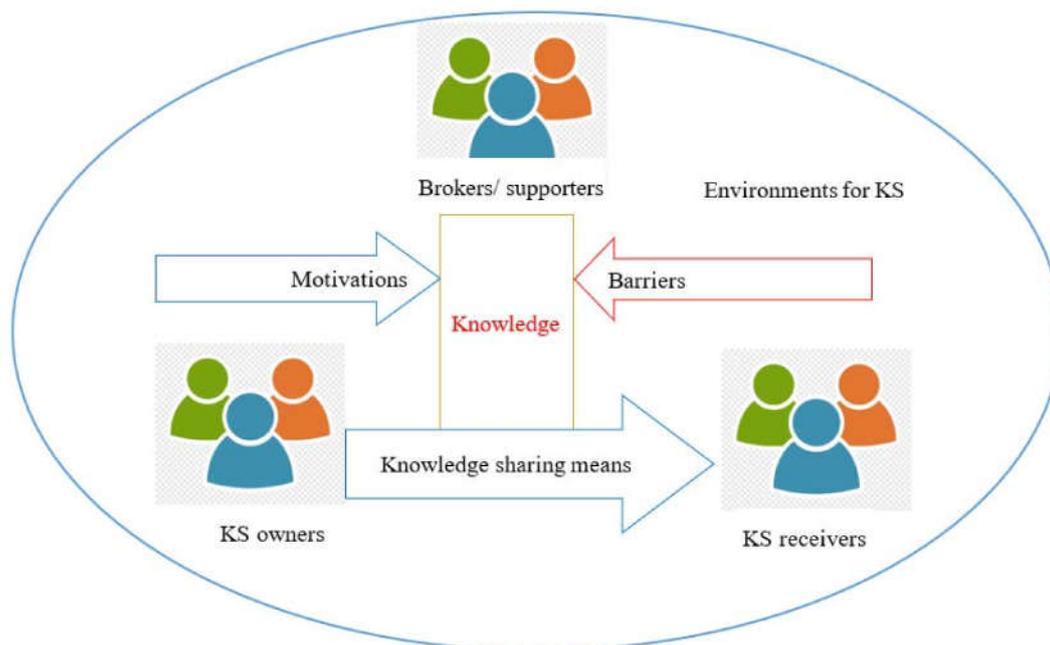

Figure 1: Process of knowledge sharing

Source: Authors' research.

Zainuddin et al. (2004) believed that one of the challenges for knowledge sharing within university is struggle which arises due to lack of time, facilities and infrastructure (academic staff were overburden with teaching load).

Yang (2013) highlighted that several barriers make it difficult for knowledge management to achieve the goals and deliver a positive result are: the reign of the principle "knowledge is power", not realizing how useful particular knowledge

is to others, individualism, poor means of knowledge capture, inadequate technology, internal competition and top-down decision making and others.

Based on theoretical framework above, the study synthesizes the previous researches result in the Figure 1: Process of knowledge sharing.

Conditions for successful knowledge sharing

According to Yang (2013), in order to implement effective knowledge sharing in universities, it is necessary to meet the following three conditions: (1) having sufficient and valuable knowledge that can be shared, which means is a lecturer who contributes his knowledge (implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge) to others need to have higher professional qualifications, good communication skills and willingness to share knowledge, (2) recipients of knowledge sharing is willing to receive knowledge from other members and has the capacity to absorb it, (3) an appropriate sharing method and environment in universities. Only when the above three basic factors are completed, the sharing of knowledge by university lecturers can be possible done.

Evan (2012) supposed that there are three important conditions for effective knowledge sharing, including: (1) sharers must be willing to share the knowledge they possess; (2) knowledge recipients must be willing to receive and use shared knowledge; (3) knowledge recipients must be aware that shared knowledge is useful for their own work or the work of the organization as a whole. These are important conditions because any

shared knowledge requires willingness to participate in the knowledge sharing process from both sides. Because when a person shares their knowledge, they lose precious time and often there is no recognition or even gratitude from the recipients of the knowledge (Evan, 2012).

IV. Conclusions

Knowledge sharing is vital to improve education quality (Becheikh et al., 2010). The knowledge sharing amongst universities is the flowing and commutative process of knowledge, which is a kind of exploratory exchange activities. Mahamed Ismail (2012) believes that empirical studies on knowledge sharing activities should be carried out in a specific context, that is, depending on the context of each university, there should be in-depth studies to explore the different aspects, factors, barriers affecting knowledge sharing activities, thereby proposing solutions to optimize its' effectiveness. Therefore, an empirical study on this activity at each university is necessary.

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