

Knowledge Sharing Among Employees at WXY Automotive Sdn. Bhd. Kuala Lumpur

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30880/ahcs.2025.06.01.002>

Article Info

Received: 09 January 2025

Accepted: 11 May 2025

Available online: 10 June 2025

Keywords

knowledge sharing, employees,
competitive edge, willingness

Abstract

In today's competitive global market, effective knowledge management is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge. Many studies have explored the relationship between factors influencing knowledge sharing and employees' willingness to share knowledge in foreign countries. However, there is limited research on this topic within Malaysian companies. This study aims to determine the relationship between organizational support, rewards, and perceived loss of authority on employees' willingness to share knowledge at WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected via questionnaires distributed to the company's employees. The results indicate that organizational support and rewards significantly influence employees' willingness to share knowledge. Therefore, WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd should create a supportive environment that encourages knowledge sharing. This can be achieved by organizing regular training sessions, workshops, and forums where employees can share their insights and experiences. To motivate employees to share knowledge, WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd should develop a comprehensive reward system. This should include both monetary and non-monetary incentives, such as bonuses, recognition programs, career advancement opportunities, and public acknowledgment of employees' contributions. Clearly communicating these incentives and applying them consistently will encourage more employees to engage in knowledge-sharing activities.

1. Introduction

With the rising competition and market expansion, organizations continually seek ways to maintain a competitive edge (Zhang & Sharifi, 2000). Traditionally, companies have relied on resources such as financial, human, social, and entrepreneurial capital to compete (Jain, Sandhu, & Goh, 2015). However, knowledge has emerged as a crucial asset that cannot be easily purchased. Effective management of both tangible and intangible resources is essential in today's global marketplace (De Leo, 2009). To remain competitive, organizations must manage their valuable knowledge, including both tacit and explicit knowledge. According to Corral de Zubielqui et al. (2019), tacit knowledge is the fundamental basis of a company's competitive advantage, and it has the potential to greatly influence its ability to expand. Tacit knowledge, held by employees, is particularly challenging to manage as it cannot be easily expressed in words or numbers. This type of knowledge is prone to

being lost, especially when employees leave the organization. Studies have shown that tacit knowledge plays a crucial role in fostering innovative capacities by enhancing individuals' and organization's creativity, flexibility, and adaptability in the face of evolving conditions (Ganguly et al., 2019). Organizations that recognize the importance of tacit knowledge are better equipped to implement strategies for capturing and disseminating this valuable asset (Khatun, A., 2018). By acknowledging the challenges associated with tacit knowledge, such as its vulnerability when employees depart, businesses can develop processes and systems to preserve and transfer this invaluable intellectual capital. Knowledge-sharing systems within knowledge management help transfer tacit knowledge from one employee to others, ensuring that the organization retains critical information (Jolae, Md Nor, Khani, & Md Yusoff, 2014). Effective knowledge sharing is vital for sustaining organizational competitiveness.

Sharing knowledge, especially tacit knowledge, is difficult, particularly when employees are reluctant (Jolae, Md Nor, Khani, & Md Yusoff, 2014). Despite the importance of knowledge sharing for maintaining competitiveness, the factors that encourage employees to share their knowledge are not well understood. According to Ganguly et al. (2019), the knowledge process includes information collection and exchange as well as supportive components including organizational structure and technology, which are essential for knowledge management functionalities. Organizational leaders must focus on these factors to ensure that knowledge-sharing activities are effective and impactful. Without employee participation, these activities are futile and waste organizational resources. Research in this area has shown that various factors influence knowledge sharing behavior within organizations (Islam et al., 2018). In order to fully understand the dynamics at play, it is essential to explore both individual and organizational factors that impact knowledge sharing. Individual factors such as attitude, motivation, and perceived benefits play a crucial role, while organizational factors including culture, leadership, and reward systems also significantly affect employees' willingness to share their knowledge (Todorova & Mills, 2018). Understanding these factors can help organizations create a conducive environment for knowledge sharing and ultimately improve their overall performance and innovation.

This study aims to analyze employees' responses to factors influencing knowledge sharing, such as organizational support, types of rewards, and perceptions of authority loss. Previous research by Smoyer (2009) in the telecommunication industry identified that organizational support and climate positively impact knowledge sharing, while incentives showed no significant relationship. The study also found that the loss of power negatively affects employees' willingness to share knowledge. However, there is a lack of research on these factors in Malaysia's manufacturing industry. Although there has been a significant increase in knowledge sharing research, much of this literature is scattered in numerous areas and directions (Bahoo, S. et al., 2020). Šajeva (2014) found that non-monetary rewards are more effective than financial incentives in encouraging knowledge sharing. Other factors such as social networks, individualism, social trust, self-efficacy, and organizational structure have also been studied. Anand, A. et al. (2019) argue that a social link exists between the one seeking information and the person providing it. However, individualism was not found to be a significant factor (Mohammed Fathi, Cyril Eze, & Guan Gan Goh, 2011). A comprehensive understanding of these factors can help leaders foster a culture of knowledge sharing, thereby maintaining a sustained competitive advantage (Smoyer, 2009).

The 2008 global financial crisis significantly impacted manufacturing industries in Malaysia, leading to retrenchment and downsizing (Ibrahim, Suhaimi, & Chong, 2015). While these measures aim to reduce costs, they often result in the loss of valuable organizational knowledge (Mårtensson, 2000). To mitigate this issue, organizations must implement effective knowledge-sharing activities. One approach is to create a culture that encourages and rewards knowledge sharing (Bahrul Zaman, N A. et al., 2019). This can be achieved through establishing knowledge sharing programs, mentorship initiatives, and collaborative team projects (Al Kashari, Z. & Al Taheri, F., 2020). However, the success of these activities depends on employees' willingness to participate. A study by Mehmood et al. (2022), stated that developing a sustainable competitive advantage heavily depends on employees' knowledge sharing.

Organizations need to ensure that employees see value in participating in knowledge-sharing activities. Leadership must establish clear goals for knowledge sharing and model the desired behaviors (Ferdinand Fournies, 2007). Organizational support, adequate rewards, and addressing concerns about the loss of power are crucial. If employees feel their contributions are not valued or fear losing their authority, they are less likely to share knowledge. Therefore, creating a supportive and rewarding work environment is essential for promoting knowledge sharing and teamwork (Bennett, A. et al., 2023).

To ensure the success of knowledge-sharing initiatives, organizations must address the barriers that prevent employees from sharing knowledge. The previously identified gap must be addressed as the advancement of knowledge sharing theory requires a thorough understanding of both knowledge sharing facilitators and challenges, in order to successfully overcome them. (Islam, T., et al., 2020). These include the perception that other tasks are more important, unclear goals and expectations for knowledge sharing, and inadequate recognition of employees' contributions. Additionally, organizations must offer meaningful rewards and alleviate fears of losing authority to foster a collaborative environment where knowledge sharing is

encouraged and valued. It is important to address any concerns about the potential loss of power. Open communication and transparent leadership can help alleviate these concerns and foster a culture of trust and cooperation within the organization (Kechot, A.S., et al., 2020). According to Wisse, B., et al. (2019) state that the organization can cultivate a collaborative and knowledge-sharing work environment where individuals feel valued and motivated to contribute their expertise by prioritizing the well-being and empowerment of employees.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to identify the relationship between organizational support, rewards, and employees' perceptions toward employee willingness to share knowledge

2. Literature Review

2.1 Knowledge Management

Alavi and Leidner (2001) observed a rapid growth in organizations treating knowledge as a valuable resource, leading to the development of knowledge management to handle this critical asset. Knowledge management is crucial for maintaining and achieving competitive advantage in businesses globally (De Leo, 2009). It involves activities related to producing both explicit and tacit knowledge (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2010). Knowledge management encompasses several actions such as acquiring, encoding, storing, transferring, applying, and exchanging knowledge (Deng, P. & Lu, H. 2022). Introduced by Tom Stewart in the early 1900s, knowledge management gained prominence as firms addressed corporate memory loss due to employee turnover and retirement, emphasizing the importance of organizational knowledge for operations and competitiveness (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2010). Moreover, the study by Colnar, S. & Dimovski, V. (2020) also highlights the evolving nature of knowledge management in response to digitalization, globalization, and the increasing emphasis on knowledge-based economies. Knowledge management also delves into the role of information technology in enabling knowledge sharing and collaboration (Rusilowati, U., 2023). Technological advancements, such as social media platforms, artificial intelligence, and data analytics, have transformed the landscape of knowledge management, offering new opportunities for capturing, storing, and disseminating knowledge across organizational boundaries (Colnar, S. & Dimovski, V., 2020).

2.2 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing, defined as the exchange of information, skills, feedback, and expertise, is recognized as a valuable asset that enhances organizational performance and competitive advantage (Myers & Cheung, 2008). Knowledge sharing is an essential component of the knowledge management process (Deng, P. & Lu, H. 2022). It involves utilizing available knowledge resources to enhance performance effectively (Mehmood et al., 2022). Effective knowledge sharing depends on trust among employees and the organizational culture, with mutual support and shared expectations being crucial (Lin, 2007). However, obstacles such as a sense of ownership over knowledge and a lack of trust can hinder this process (Riege, 2005; Singh, Dilnutt, & Lakomski, 2008). Employees may resist sharing knowledge due to concerns about job security and personal ownership of knowledge. Some researchers argue that effective leadership is essential for promoting a knowledge-centric culture and aligning organizational goals with knowledge sharing practices (Rehman, U.U. et al., 2020). On the other hand, Yeboah (2023) examined the correlation between knowledge sharing and financial and market performance and found a favourable association between knowledge sharing and financial and market success.

2.3 Organizational Support

Organizational support, as defined by Eisenberger et al. (1986), refers to the extent to which employees believe their organization values their contributions and supports their goals (Erdogan & Enders, 2007). Organizational support plays a crucial role in creating an environment where knowledge sharing is encouraged and valued. Study by Mustika, S.I. et al. (2020) state that when employees feel supported by the organization, they are more likely to engage in sharing their knowledge and expertise with their colleagues. This support can come in various forms, such as providing technological tools for sharing information, establishing clear communication channels, and recognizing and rewarding employees who actively participate in knowledge-sharing activities (Fauziyah et al., 2021). High levels of perceived organizational support lead to greater employee commitment and reduced turnover (Myers et al., 2010). Smoyer (2009) emphasized that organizational endorsement of knowledge-sharing activities can enhance employees' willingness to share information. Providing resources and support for knowledge-sharing activities fosters trust and increases participation (Wallace et al., 2009; Leiponen, 2006).

2.4 Rewards

Rewards can motivate employees to share knowledge by compensating for the costs associated with sharing, such as lost time and control over information (Ardichvili & Dirani, 2005; Von Hippel & Von Krogh, 2006; Wang et al., 2022). Both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards have been shown to encourage knowledge sharing (Benabou & Tirole, 2003; He & Wei, 2009). A well-designed reward system that combines both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, along with team-based and organizational incentives, can effectively motivate employees to share their knowledge and contribute to a culture of continuous learning and growth within the organization (Din, G.R.A. et al., 2021). However, some studies indicate that extrinsic rewards may not always be effective (Jewels & Ford, 2006; van Lieshout et al., 2023). Employees may be motivated by intrinsic rewards such as verbal praise and recognition (Yiu & Law, 2009). Similarly, organizational rewards, such as promotions or opportunities for growth, can create a supportive environment where employees feel motivated to contribute their knowledge for the overall success of the organization (Mohammad Salameh, A.A. & Zamil, A.M., 2020). The effectiveness of rewards in encouraging knowledge sharing varies depending on the context and the perceived adequacy of the rewards (Fong & Chu, 2006).

2.5 Loss of Authority

The process of exchanging knowledge is conceptualized as a well-organized procedure (Chatterjee, S. et al., 2022). Sharing knowledge can affect an employee's perceived value and authority within an organization, creating reluctance to share (Willem & Buelens, 2007). The notion that knowledge is power can discourage employees from sharing information, as they may fear losing their unique value and control (Pfeffer & Fong, 2005). Employees may feel their authority is diminished when they share valuable knowledge, leading to decreased willingness to share (Tiwana, 2000). These concerns highlight the need for organizations to address the potential loss of authority associated with knowledge sharing to foster a more collaborative environment. Employee motivation and engagement are critical factors in maintaining a productive and efficient work environment (Zakaria, N.H. et al., 2020). When employees feel that their authority and expertise are at risk due to knowledge sharing, they may become less inclined to actively participate in collaborative efforts. This can result in a decline in overall knowledge sharing within the organization, impacting innovation and problem-solving capabilities (Montani, F., & Staglianò, R., 2022).

3. Research Methodology

This research utilizes a quantitative methodology to explore the relationship between rewards, organizational support, and loss of authority with employees' willingness to share knowledge at WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd in Kuala Lumpur. Data collected via face-to-face distributed questionnaires, ensuring respondents' understanding and immediate clarification of any issues. The respondents included employees at all levels within the company, which currently employs 102 individuals. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: demographic information, rewards factor, social network factor, and organizational culture factor.

The research instrument, adapted from Smoyer (2009), consisted of a questionnaire that included various sections to measure factors affecting employees' willingness to share knowledge. The sections covered demographic information, rewards, social networks, and organizational culture. Primary data were collected directly from respondents, ensuring accuracy and reliability. According to Taherdoost, H. (2022), primary data collection refers to the procedures through which you personally acquire data for the purpose of your study. This data remains confidential until it is published, and it can be gathered using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The procedure involved gathering information from books and journals, defining research objectives, constructing the questionnaire, distributing it using convenience sampling, and analyzing the collected data to draw conclusions. The selection procedure such as sampling method is crucial for enhancing the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the research findings (Golzar, J. & Tajik, O. & Noor, S., 2022).

According to Alem (2020), data analysis is a crucial stage in both qualitative and quantitative research. Data analysis involved examining one dependent variable (willingness to share knowledge) and three independent variables (rewards, social network, and organizational support). Data analysis can also reveal gaps in knowledge sharing efforts and highlight areas for improvement (Wu, A. et al., 2022). Statistical analysis using SPSS was employed, with mean and correlation analyses, specifically Pearson's r , to determine relationships between variables. Demographic data were analyzed using frequency and percentage. This comprehensive approach facilitated the achievement of the study's objectives, identifying the relationships between the variables and employees' willingness to share knowledge.

4. Result and Finding

4.1 Demographic Information Analysis

The research on knowledge sharing among employees at WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd in Kuala Lumpur reveals a demographic profile with 81 males (71.6%) and 32 females (28.3%). Age-wise, 29 participants (25.6%) are below 25 years, 48 (42.4%) fall within the 25 to 35 years range, 27 (23.8%) are between 36 and 46 years, and 9 (7.9%) are 47 years old or above. Regarding working experience, 43 employees (38%) have less than 5 years, 27 (23.8%) have between 5 and 10 years, 30 (26.5%) have between 11 and 20 years, and 11 (9.7%) possess over 21 years of experience. Education levels among the participants include 42 (37.1%) with SPM or equivalent, 49 (43.3%) with STPM or Diploma, 10 (8.8%) with a Bachelor's Degree, and 12 (10.6%) with other qualifications.

Objective 1: Identifying the relationship between organizational support and employee willingness to share knowledge.

The Pearson's r correlation analysis between organizational support and willingness to share knowledge at WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd reveals a robust correlation coefficient of .889, indicating a very strong positive association between these variables. As organizational support improves, so does the willingness of employees to share knowledge, a relationship underlined by the statistically significant p -value of .000. This underscores the vital influence that organizational support has on the knowledge-sharing behaviors of employees.

The study also finds that the availability of platforms for knowledge exchange, like employee lounges, meeting rooms, websites, and group chats, markedly boosts knowledge sharing within the company. For instance, 84.2% of respondents acknowledged that access to meeting rooms positively affects their readiness to share knowledge, with an average score of 4.01. Furthermore, 78.4% felt that websites and group chats facilitate knowledge sharing, scoring an average of 3.87, while training courses and seminars were also seen as beneficial, receiving a mean score of 3.95 from 81.8% of respondents. Despite these positive indicators, only 51.8% of respondents feel that the organization consistently recognizes and values the knowledge and ideas they share.

These insights emphasize the critical role of organizational structures and support in enhancing knowledge-sharing practices among employees. Organizations aiming to cultivate a supportive atmosphere should focus on recognizing and valuing employees' contributions. High levels of perceived organizational support not only motivate employees to engage more in knowledge-sharing but also to offer assistance to colleagues, suggest improvements, and strengthen the overall knowledge management framework, as supported by findings from Wallace, Edwards, Arnold, Frazier, & Finch (2009), Smoyer (2009), and Fattah, Yesiltas & Atan (2022).

Objective 2: Identifying the relationship between rewards and employee willingness to share knowledge.

The Pearson's r correlation analysis between rewards and the willingness to share knowledge yields a correlation coefficient of .784, indicating a robust positive association between the rewards offered and employees' eagerness to share knowledge. The statistical significance of this relationship is affirmed by a p -value of "Sig. (2-tailed) .000," underscoring the dependability of the findings from a sample of 113 participants. This analysis underscores the impactful role of rewards in enhancing employees' motivation to engage in knowledge-sharing within the organization.

The study reveals that employees are more inclined to share knowledge or ideas when they are rewarded. These rewards can be both tangible, like monetary bonuses, salary hikes, or career advancements, and intangible, such as verbal praise, constructive feedback, trust, and recognition. Interestingly, the data suggest a stronger response to intangible rewards among employees. Specifically, 78.4% of respondents valued receiving positive feedback, with an average rating of 3.82, while 48.9% appreciated verbal praise for their contributions to knowledge sharing. Conversely, tangible rewards such as monetary bonuses and career promotions were less frequently reported in the 'often' and 'always' responses.

The findings also indicate that at WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd, tangible rewards are more typically given to employees in higher positions, leading to less motivation among lower-level employees to share their knowledge. Employees appear to value positive feedback and recognition for their contributions over material incentives. Therefore, managers should prioritize fostering a culture of knowledge sharing by recognizing and commending employees for their contributions. This approach is supported by Bock et al. (2005), and Issac et al. (2023), who noted that employees are more inclined to share knowledge when they perceive the benefits of sharing to outweigh the costs.

Objective 3: Identifying the relationship between loss of authority and employee willingness to share knowledge.

The analysis of Pearson's r correlation between loss of authority and willingness to share knowledge among employees shows a correlation coefficient of $-.216$. This negative correlation suggests a slight inverse relationship; as perceptions of losing authority increase, the willingness to share knowledge tends to decrease. However, the significance level, denoted as "Sig. (2-tailed) .066," indicates that this correlation is not statistically significant at the conventional 0.05 threshold. This means we cannot confidently assert that the observed correlation isn't due to random chance. The analysis was conducted with a sample size of 113 participants, providing a reasonable basis for the findings, yet the correlation does not strongly support the idea that fear of losing authority significantly impacts knowledge sharing behaviors.

The study's findings at WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd, Kuala Lumpur, contrast with previous studies conducted in foreign countries, which suggested that perceived loss of authority could influence employees' willingness to share knowledge. Earlier research indicated that employees might feel their current positions are threatened when they share valuable knowledge or ideas with others in the company. However, this study shows that employees at WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd do not perceive a loss of authority when sharing knowledge, and those who rarely or never share knowledge are not influenced by this perception.

It is common for studies to yield different results due to the unique cultures and perceptions within each organization. Knowledge management practices and tools effective in one organization or cultural context may not work in another (Stankosky, 2005; Adamovic, 2022). Trompenaars (1994) emphasized that many management theories are not universally applicable, highlighting the need to evaluate and understand the cultural context of each organization.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd can significantly enhance its organizational performance by adopting strategic measures to boost knowledge sharing among its employees. Key to this enhancement are strengthened support systems. The company should expand access to resources such as meeting rooms, improve digital communication platforms like websites and group chats, and regularly organize training sessions and seminars. These steps will cultivate a conducive environment that promotes the sharing of ideas and expertise among staff members.

In terms of rewards, while recognizing the effectiveness of intangible rewards, WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd should prioritize these by applauding and valuing employees' contributions through verbal acknowledgment, positive feedback, and public commendation. Establishing a formal recognition program could further drive participation in knowledge-sharing activities. Additionally, integrating inclusive tangible rewards—such as monetary bonuses, salary raises, and promotional opportunities accessible to all employment levels—will ensure that every employee feels appreciated and motivated to contribute knowledge.

Finally, it's crucial for WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd to address any concerns about loss of authority that might deter knowledge sharing. Although the study shows that this perception does not heavily influence sharing behaviors, reinforcing that sharing knowledge enhances personal and group authority could mitigate these concerns. Alongside, the company should engage in continuous assessment and adjustment of their strategies based on regular feedback from employees about the effectiveness of existing platforms and rewards. This approach of ongoing refinement will sustain high engagement levels and foster a robust knowledge-sharing culture. By implementing these strategies, WXY Automotive Sdn Bhd will be well-positioned to optimize its knowledge management practices and enhance overall organizational efficacy.

Acknowledgment

The researcher expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to submit and publish to the Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, and the UTHM Publishers, especially for actively participating parties such as editors, proofreaders, reviewers, etc., who could not be mentioned individually.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

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This guide contains examples of common types of APA Style references. Section numbers indicate where to find the examples in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.).

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