

DETERMINANTS OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING BEHAVIOR AMONG EMPLOYEES IN VIETNAM SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge management is the topic of universal interest and a great number of scholars care about and invest energy in research for a long time. In Vietnam, this topic is still very new and there are few studies on it. In fact, Vietnamese enterprises are very interested in knowledge sharing, experience sharing of employees in order to create competitive advantage, sustainable development for enterprises. However, the application of the results from research on knowledge management from foreign scholars to Vietnam still faces many difficulties due to differences in technological, technical, organizational, cultural factors and especially the human factor.

Starting from practical requirements, the article applied theory of planned behavior to study the factors that influence sharing knowledge motive power of employees in Vietnamese enterprises. This article used statistical regression method to test the correctness of research model.

Keywords: knowledge, knowledge management, kms, model, behavior.

I. INTRODUCTION

Besides facilities, investment capital, there is another important factor effecting enterprise development which is the knowledge of the officials and employees in an enterprise. Thus, knowledge management is one of the problems that are decisive for the development of an enterprise. Knowledge management is the process of getting to know, share, use and practices knowledge within the organization (Ikujiro Nonaka & etc, 2008). An important part of knowledge management is how knowledge sharing can generate additional benefits for the organization (Liebowitz, 2001), turning personal knowledge into organizational knowledge (Grant, 1996). However, the sharing of personal knowledge is not easy to do (Davenport & Prusak, 1988) when that knowledge has important values (Ryu & etc. 2003) and is an asset to a certain individual. The biggest challenge of knowledge management is how individuals can share knowledge together (Ruggles, 1998). Thi research will focus on the factors affecting knowledge sharing behavior of individuals in organizations, namely knowledge sharing behavior of

employees in Vietnamese enterprises. The findings support the small but growing body of evidence that motivational and reward factors are not the main influencers of knowledge sharing (Bock & Kim, 2002; Stonehouse, Buehring, & Pemberton, 2002; Szulanski, 1996).

There are prior studies of knowledge sharing behavior with different approaches. Theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the theory of planned behavior (TPB) showed that there are interesting results in predicting the differential behavior of people (Sheppard & etc., 1988), but there are not many applications in the study of personal behavior knowledge sharing in several specialized fields (Ryu & etc., 2003). Especially in Vietnamese enterprises, employees' knowledge is not only what they have learned in school but also is a cumulative process through practical activities of business and through learning from coworkers. Knowledge and experience, which employee accumulated, do not only contribute to increased operational efficiency but also contribute to competitive advantage, sustainable development for enterprises. If business leaders recognize the impact of knowledge sharing behavior of employees and creating condition for it to be promoted, the business will have good staffs with rich experience and consequently, it helps promote competitive advantage and sustainable development for enterprises. Starting from the above problem, this study uses the factor analysis approach and regression models, using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to determine the influence of three factors: attitude towards knowledge sharing, subjective norms (Influence from colleagues and managers), and the control of knowledge sharing behaviors to knowledge sharing elements of employees in Vietnamese enterprises.

II. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND RESEARCH MODEL

2.1 Theory of planned behavior TPB

Theory of planned behavior (TPB) is a theory, which has great influence, used in studies of human behavior (Hung & etc., 2010). This theory was developed by Ajzen (1991) from reasoned action (Theory of reasoned action - TRA), thinking that practical actions of human is affected by intention to perform the behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) with additional behavior controlling factor. This theory assumes that behavior can be predicted or explained by the intention to perform the behavior, and is used in many different research fields (Ryu & etc., 2003, Bock & Kim, 2002).

According to the TPB theory, in this study "intention to share knowledge" is the extent to which employees believe that they will participate in knowledge sharing (Ryu & etc., 2003), is affected by three main factors: subjective norms, attitude towards knowledge sharing and the control of knowledge sharing behavior. An attitude towards knowledge sharing is the extent to which each employee believed to be useful or not for knowledge sharing (Ryu & etc., 2003). This topic survey employees in Vietnamese enterprises, and thus subjective norms of knowledge sharing will be composed of two elements, the influence of business leaders and influence of coworkers to their knowledge sharing. Finally, the control of knowledge sharing behavior is whether it is easy or difficult in the perception of

employees to be able to control the knowledge sharing (Ajzen, 1991.2001; Chang, 1998; Chau & Hu, 2001). Therefore, hypothesizes of this topic are:

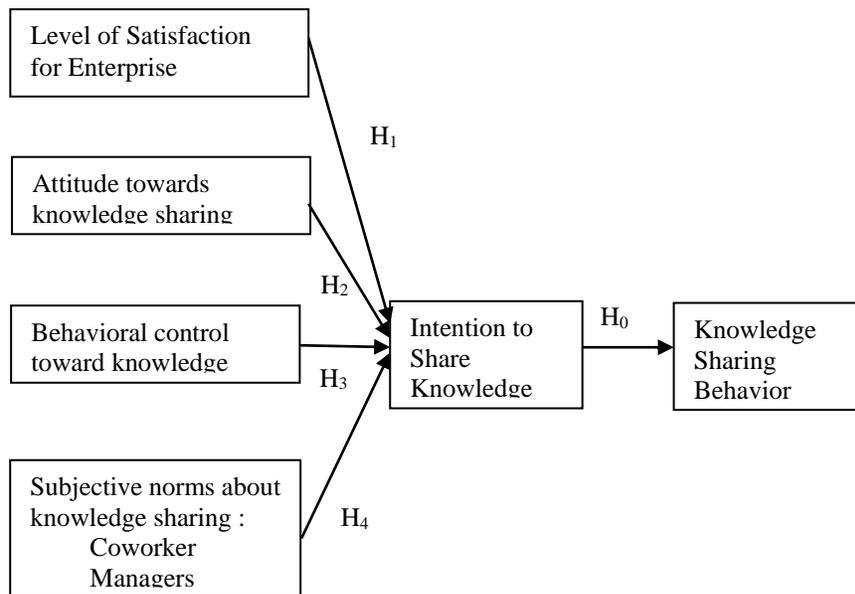
H₁: *Level of Satisfaction for Enterprise has a positive impact on knowledge sharing Meaning of employees.*

H₂: *An Attitude towards knowledge sharing has a positive impact on knowledge sharing Meaning of employees.*

H₃: *Controlling the behavior of knowledge sharing has a positive impact on knowledge sharing intention of employees.*

H_{4a}: *The effect of colleagues has positive impact on knowledge sharing intention of employees.*

H_{4b}: *The impact of managers has positive impact on knowledge sharing intention of employees.*



III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the studies of Ajzen (2001), Bock & Kim (2002), Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), the scale for the variables of the model are derived from the study of Ryu

Figure 1: Reseach Model

& etc., (2003), in which the Attitude factor (5 observed variables), behavioral control for knowledge sharing (4 observed variables), influence from coworkers (7 observed variables), knowledge sharing intention (4 observed variables), the trust in coworker factor (3 observed variables) and Intention to create a relationship (5 observed variables) derived from results of Dong & etc (2010), influence from managers (4 observed variables) those results from qualitative research. Through group discussions with employees, scale is adjusted and supplemented to fit the research context. Finally, the questionnaire consists of 38 observed variables, using the scale of five-point's Likert (from 1: Strongly disagree and 5: Strongly agree) was formed. Then questionnaire used sample survey interviews with 20 employees before performing formal survey.

Survey forms are sent by mail, e-mail, direct interviews of 500 employees of 30 businesses in the province of Thai Nguyen, Ha Noi, Bac Giang. the survey period was for 3 months (03-06/2016). Some cases responded immediately (via e-mail, direct), a number of cases gave the answers later and sent back by post mail. To improve the response rate, the questionnaire sent through the mail and newspapers are called to ask for such a favor answering the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaire survey is 286, of which 20 votes were excluded because lack of information. From the information provided by 266 respondents, 236 people are officials and employees; 30 people hold management positions. Other elements of the survey respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the survey sample

Factor	Rate (%)	Factor	Rate (%)
Sex		Place of work	
Male	52	Stated-owned comapies	22.6
Female	48	Private companies	77.4
Age group		Working period	
From 22 to 35 ages	35.4	From 1 to 5 years	28.3
From 36 to 45 ages	33.4	From 6 to 10 years	38.1
Above 45 ages	31.2	Above 10 years	33.6

From the collected data, the researcher evaluated the scales through reliable coefficient Cronbach's Alpha and applied the statistical regression method to test the correctness of research model to analyse the factors.

IV. RESULT

4.1 Evaluation of scale:

Factor analysis results for the independent variables included 33 observed variables were showed in Table 2. Accordingly, the scale of 3 factors Trust in coworker (reduced to 2 observed variables), influence from coworker (reduced to 4 observed variables) and control of knowledge sharing behavior (reduced to three variables of police). There is no change in other factors regarding the observed

variables. The analytical results show that the reliability of the scales was satisfactory with Cronbach's alpha coefficient > 0.7 (Hair & etc., 1998), with values in the range of 0.716 to 0.923.

Table 2. Factor analysis results for the independent variables

Observed variables	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Level of satisfaction with the enterprise					
Satisfied with current job	0.914				
Satisfied with work environment	0.733				
Satisfied with wages and welfare	0.822				
Satisfied with policy and working process	0.769				
Attitude towards knowledge sharing					
knowledge sharing is good		0.846			
knowledge sharing is harmful		0.561			
always concerned about knowledge sharing		0.493			
knowledge sharing is very valuable for me		0.436			
knowledge sharing is judicious		0.749			
Behavioral control toward knowledge sharing					
knowledge sharing can be performed at any point of time			0.613		
I can share knowledge when I want			0.907		
I can decide to share knowledge			0.489		
Influence from coworker					
Whom I					
... often have influence on my knowledge sharing decision				0.735	
... have influence on my knowledge sharing by giving advice				0.561	
... follow his/her opinions and always share knowledge				0.827	
... respect to ideas and support knowledge sharing				0.735	
Influence from managers					

Enterprise Managers					
... usually organize seminars					0.800
... usually encourage science research activities					0.723
... always organize training courses about professional knowledge					0.955
... always create favorable conditions for training					0.938
Eigenvalues	1.001	1.944	1.296	2.508	2.507
Variance (%)	2.410	5.661	2.901	5.963	7.898
Cronbach's alpha	0.824	0.785	0.716	0.824	0.923
KMO= 0.840; Sig = 0.000			Cumulative Eigenvalues: 59.662		

Principle Axis Factoring; Promax

After that, performing factor analysis for element of the knowledge sharing intention with four observed variables, using Principal Component, Varimax rotation. The results show satisfactory for KMO coefficient (0.777), Bartlett test with sig. = 0.000 proves suitable for data analysis. There is a factor extracted with 64.8% of total variance. Result reliability depends on the variables Cronbach's alpha coefficient = 0.818 (> 0.7) should scale satisfactory (Hair & etc., 1998) and used for subsequent analysis.

4.2 Model checking and hypothesis:

Results of regression analysis with adjusted R² is 0.508, meaning that the variability of the dependent variable intention to share knowledge is explained by the independent variables is 50.8%. F-test value sig. = 0.000 so research model fit the data that was surveyed. Results Table 3 shows that all four factors are observed positive relationship with knowledge sharing intention of employees. Therefore, the hypothesis H₁, H₂, H₃, H_{4a}, and H_{4b} are supported in this study.

Table 3. Regression analysis results– Knowledge sharing intention

	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized Beta	T	Sig.
	B	Standard error	Beta		
(Constant)	.241	.307		.784	.434
Level of Satisfaction for Enterprise	.306	.062	.356	2.35	.006
Attitude towards knowledge sharing	.503	.076	.446	6.631	.000
Behavioral control towards knowledge sharing	.241	.050	.294	4.821	.000
Effectuated from coworker	.102	.051	.118	2.016	.046
Effectuated from manager	.091	.045	.126	2.023	.045

V. DISCUSSION

The research results show that the application of theory of planned behavior Ajzen (1991) to study the factors that affect knowledge sharing intention of employees is appropriate. It means knowledge sharing intention factor of employees affected by others factors that rank from strong to weak, attitude towards knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.446$), behavioral control towards knowledge sharing ($\beta = 0.2094$), Impact of manager ($\beta = 0.126$) and the effect from coworker ($\beta = 0.118$). Attitudes towards knowledge sharing in this study has strong impact on intention to share knowledge as prior studies of Ryu & etc., 2003 and Hung & etc., 2010. This result can be explained that most employees working in large enterprises today has high level of intellect, all activities related to their knowledge depends mainly on their decisions but rarely their organization's orders. Moreover, due to the characteristics of modern enterprises, individual knowledge of employee are gradually accumulated in daily working; through the coordination at work, union activities, and the specialized workshops ... so everybody knows when they can share their knowledge. Everyday working environment helps employees improve their capacity to control knowledge sharing behaviors, thus why this factor is the second factor in this research is reasonable. Finally, effect from others (coworker and manager) in an organization is not different (Hofstede, 1998).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This research has identified the level of impact of the factors on knowledge sharing intention of employees in Vietnam. Attitudes towards knowledge sharing has the strongest effect, followed by behavioral control and subjective norms factor. In the context of this research done with Vietnamese employees who work in an environment where knowledge and experience can affect the production speed of new products, it requires employees to coordinate closely with other coworkers in the production line, sharing plays an important role in improving the knowledge and experience to work for each individual and for the enterprises. The experience and knowledge to be shared to each other can help enterprises maintain stable operations and avoid falling into the stagnation state if an individual in the production line is off duty. Therefore, to develop knowledge asset we need to create good working conditions for each person so that employees can learn and improve constantly. The organization of training courses on professional knowledge and skills, specialized seminars, corporate activities are well suited for knowledge sharing to take place. Each of the employees needs to learn from the experience of others so knowledge sharing in enterprises is of high demand. At this point, what we need is the concern from the enterprise managers to create condition for employees to promote the role and responsibilities of their jobs. Creating environment, favorable conditions as well as mechanisms to encourage and reward positive employee learning and sharing experience for others is necessary.

In summary, to intensify the knowledge sharing among employees in enterprises, managers need to care about knowledge sharing intention factors of employees in order to create favorable conditions for the employees in their enterprises to share their knowledge with coworkers.

Besides the contributions of the article, there are a number of limitations. First, the limitation of the representative sample by convenient sampling method, respondents just focus on enterprise across three provinces: Hanoi, Thai Nguyen, Bac Giang. Second, the article only apply TPB model to study knowledge sharing intention of employees without taking into account other factors that affect the group structure, progress of working, collaboration habits, nature of knowledge sharing (Robertson, 2002) or working structure, leadership style (Lipshitz & Pooper, 2000). This is a new direction for the follow-up study Third, three factors affecting attitudes towards sharing knowledge are not enough, leading to adjusted R^2 is only 0.270. There are other factors such as perception of utility, compatibility, the preference to help others can also have an effect (Hung & etc, 2010). The follow-up studies need to add above factors in order to make the model more perfectly.

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