

# Employees' Knowledge sharing Behavior in Compliance to Demographic Variables

Sadhna [Author:1]

*\*Research Scholar,*

*Haryana School of Business,*

*Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology,*

*Hisar-125 001*

B.K. Punia[Author:2]

*\*\*Vice Chancellor*

*MDU, Rohtak (on Deputation)*

*Professor & Former Dean*

*Haryana School of Business & Director, HRD Centre*

*Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology,*

*Hisar-125 001*

## Abstract

*When industrialisation arises that leads to give birth to new organisations and hence the competition. The prompt intensification in businesses have recognised the value of knowledge sharing to strengthen their systems. These days knowledge is constantly being used as an instrument in which companies are gathering and sharing information deliberately to investigate its available knowledge with respect to its information, data and human resources with their unique skills. Employees of an enterprise with their distinctive knowledge are a prized assets of firm, but we cannot make individuals to share knowledge with others so that others can also have the productive performance for the organisation. The purpose of the present research is concentrated on how knowledge sharing behavior of employees is affected by individual factors (gender, age, academic qualification and marital status) and organisational factors (type of the organisation, category of the organisation, managerial cadre and work experience) with respect to its dimensions. The study is aimed to find out the notion of knowledge sharing behavior with its variables like organisational culture, technology and reward and to examine its relationship with individuals and organisational factors in Indian context.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge sharing behavior, individual, occupational, Indian organisations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the epoch of competition, organizations profoundly relies on their ability to leverage and manage knowledge in order to achieve goal.

Although, organizations themselves are not adroit to create knowledge by themselves. They dependent upon their workforces to acquire, create and share knowledge in business operations. Knowledge has become a significant organizational asset as it is causing a momentous influence in business operations. Knowledge sharing behavior is defined as a pattern of distinct individual conducts which involves sharing employee's work-related knowledge and proficiency with other employees within an organization. It further leads to the crucial success of the organization. Subsequently knowledge is possessed by individuals, and its stimulus is only probable when individuals ready to share their knowledge with other employees of an organisation. In this age of competition it is a task of challenge for the organisations to enthuse employees so that they share their unique knowledge with others. Thus, assuming employee's to take the initiative to share knowledge seems to be unusual. Human behavior is multifaceted term and it gets influenced by individual's age, gender, academic background, work experience, managerial cadre, and type of the organisation in which personnel perform their work duties. Therefore, knowledge sharing is, often times, a co-dependent process which involves people affected by several factors: organisational and

individual. The service industry now a days is pronounced as a knowledge-intensive industry, where the generated output need extensive input of professional knowledge and problem-solving competences. Organizations in the service industry severely rely on their employees to apply knowledge to provide service products and create value. Here, sharing knowledge between individuals brings innovative ideas and new approaches to perform the crucial tasks in order to gain competitive advantage. Knowledge sharing process among individuals could bring healthy work life relations which further leads to client satisfaction and better human relations. However there are very few studies that see the sights how knowledge sharing behavior of individuals is affected by affected by individuals and occupational aspects of an organisation.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

Many researchers Weick (1978) and Simon (1976) accentuated that organizations alone does not have learning capabilities. It mainly focused upon individuals who learn and share the knowledge and make it available to others. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) specified that organization's success would be impossible in order to create knowledge without individuals because individuals are considered as being key elements in knowledge sharing process. Bohn (2000) specified that supporting knowledge sharing between employees can lead to increase innovative performance, and also decrease the resources spent on organisational assets. Spijkervet (2005) enlightened that in order to gain competitive advantage knowledge should be shared vigorously to those who are in need to create ideas of it. The speed at which knowledge circulates in an organisation is gradually more critical for the approach in which

The current research brings about the fact, how knowledge sharing behavior of employee's differ with respect to its individual and occupational factors. The research concentrated on professionals working in Indian service organisations. It is decisive for the professionals to share their knowledge to attain collaboration, building confidence, improve work efficiency and equally seek effective solutions. The structure of the paper includes the literature review and theoretical background and objectives of the research. It further comprises analysis of the quantitative data collected from 429 respondents. The validity, reliability are examined in the data analysis afterward results are conferred and the recommendations underlined. The end of the paper contains conclusion and possibility for future research.

company is running. Jackson, Chuang, Harden, Jiang and Joseph (2006) demarcated, knowledge sharing is the fundamental means through which employees can contribute to knowledge application, innovation, and eventually to the viable benefit for the business. Ehigie & Otukoya, (2005) mentioned that demographic variables has a rigorous outcome in the recent years upon job related behaviours on knowledge sharing process. Further Milter and Karakowsky (2005) found that there are differences between men and women in their effort to seek for trough knowledge in sharing behavior. Lin (2006) cited that women are more agreeable to share knowledge because they are more subtle to instrumental bonds and also in order to overcome traditional job-related hurdles. Watson & Hewett (2006) disparte that gender did not have a significant impact on knowledge sharing. Furthermore age is the other variable that has been studied. Ojlia (2003) specified

that age did not affect knowledge sharing. Collin (2004) recounted that more experienced employee's act as a mentor to the less experienced employees. So, by this form of mentorship knowledge is shared and transferred from one employee to other employee. He indicated that senior employees tend to be more involved in knowledge sharing process through mentoring young employees in organization. Ojha (2003) stated that organizational experience has a significant impact knowledge sharing. Although Wentling and Stuedemann (2006) concluded that both top and middle level managers were not taking vigorous initiative in knowledge sharing efforts. This means job position does not have significance impact upon knowledge sharing. Ojha (2003) cited that marital status and education of the employees does not have significant impact upon the knowledge sharing. Kwakye and Nor (2010) publicized that individuals are often unwilling in sharing the unique knowledge rooted in one's mind because of individual intents as well as the societal forces. Organisational culture, reward, trust, reputation and technology within the organization are responsible for reluctance of knowledge sharing. In brief there are not many studies who talked about knowledge sharing behavior of employees with respect to demographic differences. So, the effect of demographic factors upon knowledge sharing is still not decisive. But in some studies it has been noted that demographic factors do have a significant impact on knowledge sharing. In our current research we strained to catch out the variance between demographics of knowledge sharing and its variables.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study has been directed with the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the knowledge sharing behavior of employees across individual factors approximating gender, age, educational qualification and marital status.
2. To access knowledge sharing behavior of employees conforming to occupational factors like type of the organisation, category of the organisation, work experience and managerial cadre.
3. To give deep insight into four constructs of employees' knowledge sharing behavior according to individual & occupational environment.

### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

- a) **Data source:** This work is mostly based on the primary data. A structured questionnaire is used as the main tool for data collection about the employee's knowledge sharing behavior corresponding to individual and occupational factors of the organisation.
- b) **Sampling plan:** This study includes 429 sample respondents working in Indian service organisations. The sample respondents are selected using the simple random sampling method for this study. The target population for this study consisted of the employees serving in the service organisations of India.
- c) **Questionnaire Design:** A questionnaire was used to gather the information and data from the sample defendants. The questionnaires were administered by courier, online, email and personal distribution. A 5-point Likert scale was used to elicit responses to the questionnaire indicating their level of agreement (1=strongly disagree to 5 strongly

agree). The questionnaire also consist of the questions to implore the demographic data of the defendants. The questionnaire is pretested through piolet study and revised through easy translation by change in wordings.

## 5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

### a) **Demographic Profile of the Respondents:**

Selected demographic characteristics of the sample (n=429) including gender, academic qualification, marital status, type of the organisations and managerial cadre are explained as follows. It can be revealed from the data that out of total 429 respondents 309 (72%) male, 120 (28%) female. In the variables of age, respondents who are below 25years 135 (31.5%), 25-34 years are 196(45.7%) and above 34 years 98(22.8%). In the terms of academic qualification 95(22.1%) relates to Arts/Humanities,

Science/engineering 215 (50.1%) Commerce/Management 87 (20.3%) while 32 (7.5%) belong to others. In the expressions of marital status 187(43.6%) are married and 242 (56.4%) are unmarried.

Type of the organisation category has public 154 (35.9%) and 275 (64.1%) private organisations. In terms of categoryof the organisation 228 (53.1) Indian and 201(46.9%) multinational organisations. In relation to work experience employees who have an experience of less than 5 years are 210 (49%), 6-10 years of experience 131(30.5%) above 10 years of experience 88 (20.5%). Likewise In managerial cadre 53(12.4%) belongs to top level, 280 (65.3) belongs to middle level and 96 (22.4) belongs to operative level.

## 6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section focuses on knowledge sharing behavior of employees based on the individual variance which can further leads to hindrances in order to generate to new ideas, competitive

priority and the type of knowledge that is critical to success in knowledge sharing. At this point also employees are categorized on the basis of gender, age, academic qualification and marital status.

Dimensions	Mean (Gender)		T value	Significant
	Male	Female		
Organization Culture	3.97	3.84	2.23	<b>.026 Sig</b>
Technology	3.88	3.90	.565	.572
Reward	3.52	3.35	2.46	<b>.014 Sig</b>
Inclusive KSB	3.86	4.08	4.58	<b>.000 Sig</b>

**Table1: Gender based depiction of variables of Knowledge Sharing Behavior**

Table 2 explains the variances among male and female employees on the basis of dimensions of knowledge sharing behavior i.e. organisation culture, technology, and reward system. The inclusive knowledge sharing behavior of female employees (mean=4.08) is higher than that of male employees (mean=3.86). The analogous T value and significance value states that the differences are significant. The current exertion delivers the

insight dimensions of knowledge sharing behavior centred upon gender of the employees working in the Indian service organisations. As the results convey the gender based variations can occur due to the differences in dimensions of construct of knowledge sharing behavior. These variations are very useful in shaping the prominence of construct of knowledge sharing behavior as well as the knowledge management of the organisation.

Dimensions	Mean (Age of the employees)			F value	Significant*
	>25	25-34	34>		
Organisation Culture	3.96	3.89	4.03	6.66	.002*
Technology	3.92	3.89	3.85	1.37	.254
Reward	3.77	3.52	2.99	4.59	.000*
Inclusive KSB	3.95	3.85	4.01	5.01	.012*

**Table: 2 Age based depiction of variables of KSB**

The above mentioned table suggests that inclusive knowledge sharing behavior of employees who are having age more than 34 years they are more involved in the process of KSB (mean=4.01) which slightly higher than of the individuals who are having age less than 25 years (mean=3.95) and (mean=3.85) having age from 25-34 years.

The corresponding F value and significant value suggests that the differences are significant and exists due to career development, growth and fear of losing reputation or unique knowledge.

Dimensions	Mean (Marital status)		T value	Significant
	Married	Unmarried		
Organization Culture	3.96	3.93	1.03	.316
Technology	3.86	3.91	-1.59	.111
Reward	3.23	3.67	-7.17	.000 Sig

Inclusive KSB	3.92	3.92	-.023	.982
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**Table: 3** Marital Status based depiction of variables of KSB

The above mentioned table suggests that inclusive knowledge sharing behavior of employees on the basis of marital status found to be equal in both married (mean=3.92) as well as unmarried

(mean=3.92). The corresponding t-value suggests that only reward system found to be have significant and negative influence on knowledge sharing behavior of employees.

Dimensions	Mean (Type of the organisation)		T value	Significant
	Public	Private		
Organization Culture	3.97	3.93	1.194	.233
Technology	3.90	3.88	.845	.399
Reward	3.41	3.51	1.443	.151
Inclusive KSB	3.90	3.93	.567	.571

**Table: 4** Type of the organisation based depiction of variables of KSB

The depiction of knowledge sharing behavior of employees based upon the type of the organisation reveals that private organisation's inclusive KSB (mean=3.93) slightly higher than that public organisations (mean=3.90). The corresponding t-

value suggests that results does not vary significantly not in any of the dimensions like organisation culture, technology, reward and inclusive knowledge sharing behavior of employee.

Dimensions	Mean (Category of the organisation)		T value	Significant
	Indian	Multinational		
Organization Culture	3.91	3.98	2.201	<b>.028 sig.</b>
Technology	3.88	3.89	.348	.728
Reward	3.48	3.47	.138	.890
Inclusive KSB	3.90	3.94	.802	.423

**Table: 5** Category of the organisation based depiction of variables of KSB

Knowledge sharing behavior of employees in relation to category of the organisation briefs that multinational organisations (mean=3.94) possess

more inclusive KSB than that of the Indian organisation (mean=3.90). In this category of the organisation the corresponding T- value suggests that

culture varies significantly with value .028 in relation to knowledge sharing behavior.

Dimensions	Mean (Work Experience)			F value	Significant*
	>5	6-10	10>		
Organisation Culture	3.93	3.91	4.03	3.64	.039 Sig
Technology	3.87	3.95	3.84	5.09	.004 Sig
Reward	3.58	3.62	3.01	30.09	.000 Sig
Inclusive KSB	3.90	3.98	3.88	1.58	.001 Sig

**Table: 6** Experience based depiction of variables of KSB

The dimensions of knowledge sharing behavior varies significantly with respect to culture, technology, reward and inclusive KSB. The corresponding mean of employees having experience of 6-10 years (mean=3.98) which is slightly higher than that of the employees having experience (mean=3.90) and employees with experience (mean=3.88) more than 10 years. The inclusive

knowledge sharing behavior of employees who are working at operative level is (mean=4.07) is higher than the other two middle (mean=3.92) and top level (mean=3.62). The corresponding F value shows that all dimensions of KSB varies significantly with respect to managerial cadre of the organisation.

Dimensions	Mean (Managerial cadre)			F value	Significant*
	Top	Middle	Operative		
Organisation Culture	4.06	3.93	3.94	3.95	.011 Sig
Technology	3.74	3.93	3.85	9.85	.000 Sig
Reward	3.12	3.55	3.45	9.88	.003 Sig
Inclusive KSB	3.62	3.92	4.07	20.29	.000 Sig

**Table: 7** Managerial cadre based depiction of variables of KSB

Correlations		GE	AG	AC	MS	TO	CO	WE	MC	CU	TC
CU	PC	0.107	.065	-.3.25	-0.04	-0.05	.105	0.093	0.083		
	Sig.	0.025*	.175	5.05	.0316	.233	.028*	0.052	0.083		
TC	PC	0.027	-0.080	0.008	0.077	0.04	0.09	0.04	0.06	.0.42	
	Sig.	.572	0.100	0.857	0.111	.039*	.727	.923	.214	7.79	
RW	PC	0.11	-0.414	0.092	0.32	0.069	-0.00	0.28	0.09	0.16	0.28

	<b>Sig.</b>	0.01*	2.92	0.05*	3.18	0.15	0.89	2.12	0.04*	0.00*	1.39
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**Table8: Correlates depicting demographic and knowledge sharing variables**

**Note:** **CU** = Culture, **TC** = Technology, **RW** = Reward, **GE**= Gender, **AG**= Age, **AC**= Academic Qualification, **MS**= Marital Status, **TO**= Type of the organisation, **CO**= Category of the Organisation, **WE**= Total Work Experience, **MC**= Managerial Cadre, This can be evaluated from the Table-9 the **PC value** and significant value of **.000** signifies the extent of correlation which means that over the independent and dependent variable are correlated each other.

Association between Employees’ individual & occupational factors and knowledge sharing behavior. The correlation analysis between knowledge sharing behavior and employees’ individual and occupational factors depicts the association between dimensions of knowledge sharing behavior and demographic factors of employees working in the Indian service organizations. The ‘Pearson correlation’ between organization culture and gender comes out to be positive i.e. .107 and the significance value comes out to be 0.025, which stands for a positive and significant association between culture and gender of the employees. The Pearson value is 0.065 and significant value is .175 which means there is positive and non-significant relationship among culture and age of employees. Furthermore, correlation value is -3.25 and significant value is 5.05 i.e. there is not a significant correlation between academic qualification of employees and culture of the organization. Pearson value is -0.04, and -0.05, and significance value is 0.316 and .233 respectively which demarcates a non-significant association between culture and marital status & culture and type of the organization. The correlation value .105 and significance value is 0.028 which errands for positive and significant relationship between culture and category of the organization. The correlation value between culture and work experience, managerial cadre of the employee is 0.093, 0.083 and significance value is 0.052, 0.833 respectively which stands out for non-significant association between

these variables. The correlation value among technology and gender & technology and age is 0.027, -0.080 respectively whereas significant value is .572 and .100 which shows a non-significant association between technology and gender & technology and age of the employees. Similar, on that technology and academic qualification and marital status also possess a non-significant association between these variables with correlation value 0.008, 0.077 and significant value 0.857 and .111. However, technology and type of the organization have a .004 correlation value and .039 significant value which bargains a positive and significant correlation between technology and type of the organization. Whereas category of the organization, work experience and managerial cadre have correlation value 0.09, 0.04 and 0.06 and significant value .0727, .923 and .214 signifies a non-significant association with technology. The correlation between culture and technology is also a non-significant association which is clear from the Pearson value 0.42 and significant value 7.79.

The correlation value between reward and gender 0.11 and significant value is 0.01 shows a significance association between these variables. The correlation of age, marital status, type of the organization and category of the organization is -0.414, 0.32, 0.69 and 0.00 correspondingly and significance value is 2.92, 3.18, 0.15 and 0.89 bargains non-significant correlation between reward

and these variables. Next, reward and academic qualification has significant association which is clearly evident from correlation value 0.092 and significant value 0.05. Prior to that reward and work experience does not hold a significant association between their values i.e. correlation value 0.28 and significance value 5.12. On the other hand the correlation value 0.09 and significance value is 0.04 shows a positive and significant correlation between managerial cadre and reward. Further, culture and reward also hold a significant and positive association i.e. correlation value is 0.16 and significance value is 0.00 but reward and technology with their Pearson correlation value 0.28 and significance value 1.39 does not have a significant correlation.

## **7. OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATIONS**

The theoretical development of the study projected a differential and significant impact of demographic factors on knowledge sharing behavior of the employees. Even though few factors have significant effect, reason could be as service industry itself a knowledge intensive area because of which results are non-significant. But conversely, gender, age, academic qualification, work experience and managerial cadre have a significant impact on knowledge sharing behavior. On the other hand marital status, type of the organization, and category

of the organization did not hold a significant impact upon knowledge sharing behavior. The study indicated that female employees are more involved in knowledge sharing process as they want to be apparent more knowledgeable and for sake of career and development. Employees with age more than 34 years found to be more active in knowledge sharing reason could be their experience and maturity leads them to way of sharing. Employees having experience 6-10 years possessed more involvement in sharing process due to mentorship or job knowledge gained from these years. Furthermore middle and operative level of employees are more involved in sharing process of knowledge as compared to top level. Then to the dimensions of knowledge sharing behavior reward play a significant and positive correlation in gender, academic qualification, managerial cadre and culture. While technology plays a significant and positive role in type of the organization. Whereas culture has a positive and significant correlation with gender and category of the organization. The significance of the current research founded on to present an analytically and practically important significant difference of demographic factors i.e. individual and institutional on knowledge sharing behavior of employees working in knowledge intensive service organisations of India. Though it would be stimulating to find out the demographic difference with respect to knowledge sharing behavior in other industries also.

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