An Examination of the Influences of Organizational Context on Knowledge Sharing

Huei-Min Hsu – Advisor: Dr. Ling Wang

Purpose: The purpose of this research was to investigate the influences of organizational context on individual knowledge sharing intention.

Theory Applied: The socio-technical theory.
The socio-technical theory holds that the work system in an organization consists of two subsystems: the social and the technical, which are independent, but interrelated (Trist, Emery, & Murray, 1997). In other words, this theory highlights the role of social and technical factors in the workplace. Lee and Choi’s (2003, p. 188) study of the enablers of knowledge creation process clustered “organizational culture, organizational structure, and people” as the social factors, and classified information technology (IT) as the technical factor.

Dependent Variables (DV): Tacit Knowledge Sharing Intention and Explicit Knowledge Sharing Intention.

Figure 1. The research model.

Methodology
-- A cross-sectional survey research study was conducted to collect data.
-- Participants and Sampling
The target population for this research was the employees in private sectors (more than one organization) in Taiwan. The survey questionnaires were delivered to the sample frame of 500 individuals. A total of 390 responses were received (78 percent response rate). Due to missing data, 331 responses were used in this analysis (66 percent of the distributed surveys).
-- Instrument Development
Multiple-item measures and validated instruments from the extant literature were used for all of the variables to improve the reliability and validity of the measures.
-- Analysis Method
Partial least squares (PLS), a SEM technique, was employed as it allows less restrictive assumptions about the sample size, normally distributed data and model complexity (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). The SmartPLS 2.0 M3 (http://www.smartpls.de) software program was used in this data analysis.

Results
-- Norms had positive relationship with both tacit (β = 0.324) and explicit (β = 0.423) knowledge sharing intentions(p<0.001).
-- Innovation had positive effect on both tacit (β = 0.119) and explicit (β = 0.127) knowledge sharing intentions (p<0.05).
-- Specialization were effective for tacit knowledge sharing intention (β = 0.141, p<0.05), but not effective for explicit knowledge sharing intention.
-- The technical factor did not significantly affect both tacit and explicit knowledge sharing intentions in this research.

Conclusions
-- The impact of some social factors – norms, innovation, and specialization – on individual knowledge sharing intention appeared quite clearly in this research. Specifically, norms were a key role to foster employees’ knowledge sharing intentions.
-- Social factors have a more stable and stronger relationship with individual knowledge sharing intention than the technical factor.
-- This research made a distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge sharing antecedents in an organization.
-- Some important organizational factors have been pinpointed that need to be considered to have influence on individual knowledge sharing intention. By appropriately managing these factors that knowledge exchange will actually take place within an organization.

References