SEYBOLD Report
ISSN: 1533 - 9211
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7157191

THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL ELEMENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG ACADEMICS

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Abstract: Knowledge sharing is an important aspect of the life of many organisations, especially academic institutions, in terms of their competitiveness and longer-term survival. However, to ensure the success of knowledge sharing within Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), there is a need to understand the role of knowledge sharing activities in the life of these communities. This study covers interviews with 32 Malaysian academics to determine the elements that influence knowledge sharing (KS) on social media and to assist HEIs in leveraging these elements to improve their KS. Five themes and 10 sub-themes emerged from the interviews, including motivational factors (enjoyment in helping others, financial rewards, and reciprocal benefits), a social factor (social interaction tie), a social barrier (knowledge hoarding), organizational factors (open communication climate, training, and management support) and technological factors (functionality and ease of use). The findings show that the organisational strategy, reward and organisational culture elements were identified as of prime importance in contributing to participants' use of social media platforms in knowledge sharing.
Keywords: Organization element, Social media, Knowledge-sharing, Academics

1. Introduction

Currently, knowledge is considered to be a valuable resource for organisations and individuals. However, access to knowledge is an important consideration, especially in terms of the appropriate knowledge for the right people and at the right time and place. For that reason,

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7157191

knowledge could be considered as a resource which requires management (Dhamdhere, 2015). Knowledge can be acquired from various sources and is available in various forms such as books, modules, circular letters, minutes of meetings and from other sources. Moreover, knowledge can also be gained from databases, search engines and other repositories but could also be in the mind of a person (Yassin, Salim & Sahari, 2013). Therefore, as knowledge can be found in various forms and at various places, it is a necessity for organisations to manage their knowledge effectively and efficiently in order to maintain their competitiveness.

By transforming how individuals communicate, cooperate, and share their opinions and knowledge, SM has received increasing worldwide interest (Bilgihan et al., 2016). Furthermore, many organizations place a high value on KS. It involves the interrelationship between the individual who possesses the knowledge and the organization, for the greater benefit of the organization to survive in a competitive world. SM is increasingly being adopted by institutions and organizations as a tool for KS and communication (Lam et al., 2016). The HEIs are concerned about KS among academics (Seitz & Misra, 2020). Knowledge is defined as a dynamic understanding of information based on an individual's experience in a given environment (Ramayah et al., 2014). As a result, at HEIs, KS is a key component of the knowledge management system (Sohail & Daud, 2009). The sharing of knowledge across HEI stakeholders, especially in terms of effectiveness and long-term endurance, would be facilitated if done with the use of SM (Del Giudice & Della Peruta, 2016; Fook et al., 2021). HEIs must not only develop knowledge swiftly but also obtain and use it quickly to obtain a competitive advantage, making KS an unavoidable vital duty for HEI members under knowledge management (Yang, 2007). In an educational system, KS guarantees that academics are kept up to date with the latest knowledge.

Trends in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) include the expectation that academic staff members would be willing to move from a knowledge hoarding model of the institute towards an institute based on knowledge sharing (Fauzi, Nya-Ling, et al., 2018). Javaid, Soroya, and Mahmood (2020) stated that knowledge could be a basic asset for HEIs as in business organisations. In recent years, HEIs have increasingly begun to employ SM as a critical component for survival and success (Adnan et al., 2021; Syed-Ikhsan & Rowland, 2004). KS was traditionally conducted among academics through face-to-face interactions, meetings or seminars. Printed materials were also used for KS. These types of KS, were often limited to a small number of people. Nowadays, anyone may develop materials on SM and disseminate their ideas to other users. As a result, HEIs might obtain a competitive advantage by utilizing the information gained from these SM (Muda & Fook, 2020; Sobaih et al., 2016). As stated by Gaál et al. (2015), SM provides an avenue for learning and operates as a virtual hub for HEIs to stimulate KS among academics. However, issues on KS in HEIs that utilize SM are unavoidable (Dumpit & Fernandez, 2017). Academics who feel that their knowledge is treasured are hesitant to share it, particularly on SM. The intellectual capital of the university is the knowledge generated by academics and embedded in their minds. If knowledge can be shared with those who need it, a competitive advantage can be gained. Sobaih et al. (2016) claimed that academics' participation in SM and institutional KS will result in real changes to

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7157191

institutions, with possible advantage to a broader number of HEIs, and improvements in the overall performance of educational institutions. Understanding knowledge sharing on social media platforms among academic staff in HEIs is critical in order to enlighten and educate fellow friends and individuals on how to share knowledge on social media platforms (Abd Aziz et al., 2022; Naeem, 2019).

To date, various researchers have noted that the rising use of SM as a knowledge management tool in a variety of settings has gotten a lot of attention in the industry and among academics (Al Saifi et al., 2016). However, research about KS via SM among academic staff is still at an early stage of progress and numerous authors contend that dissimilarities exist in the way university academics accept KS, especially via SM platforms (Ahmed et al., 2019). Thus, the objective of this study is to explore the factors that facilitate or negatively influence KS via SM among university academics in Malaysian public universities.

2. The Current Context

In the current situation, most Malaysian HEIs face the difficult task of integrating their institutional knowledge for enhancing and improving knowledge sharing activities especially by using social media platforms (Sulaiman, Ghazali, Alias et al., 2016). To increase competitiveness in the global marketplace, Malaysia needs to go through a transition from a production-based economy to a knowledge-based one (Grapragasem et al., 2014). The Malaysian government is emphasizing the need for educating a new generation of citizens, who are well-prepared to take an active part in the knowledge society, which necessitates academics to be innovative in engaging their students (Evers & Chappin, 2020). Most Malaysian HEIs are currently facing the monumental issue of integrating their institutional expertise to improve KS in operations, particularly through the use of SM (Ghazali et al., 2016). HEIs can apply social media platforms in order to communicate and share knowledge or ideas between academic staff. University administrators can use it to increase interactions with their customers (students and parents) and for disseminating information about college and university services. Gaál et al. (2015) have pointed out that social media platforms could deliver a forum for learning and could act as a virtual centre for HEI to encourage knowledge sharing and to contribute towards research and teaching methods and a myriad of skills among academics for succeeding in educational competitiveness. However, difficulties for knowledge sharing by using social media platforms in HEIs are inevitable (Dumpit & Fernandez, 2017). Theoretically, knowledge sharing is unnatural. People believed that their knowledge is valuable and important and are unwilling to share their knowledge unless there are enough incentives to do so.

In 2016, a study of 17 Malaysian public universities discovered that KS through the use of SM is still low (Ghazali et al., 2016). Only 29.4 % of the Malaysian HEIs academics were enthusiastic about it. In this regard, Al-Kurdi et al. (2018) contended that research into KS in the context of HEIs was limited when compared to other sectors. Despite this, the majority of KS via SM research in Malaysian HEIs has focused solely on students' performance (Lim et al., 2014). However, the majority of Malaysian studies have failed to account for the unique characteristics of SM that may have an impact on KS among university academics. Thus, the following research questions were put forward:

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RQ_1: How do academics utilize SM in HEIs for KS?

RQ_2: What are factors that facilitate or negatively influence KS to take place among academics through the use of SM?

3. Methodology

The philosophical perspective adopted influences the research design and the selection of appropriate research methods. This research has adopted an interpretive approach, which takes the stance that access to reality is through social constructions of language and shared meanings. In addition, to understanding knowledge sharing, one must first understand and have experience of it, specific to a given context by using social media platforms, the meaning of knowledge to an individual, and the meaning of knowledge shared among people. Due to the knowledge-knower interrelation, 'hard' quantitative analysis has its limitations in providing deeper insights into how SM may be a method for KS, and how organizational elements may influence academics in their willingness to engage in KS. Thus, exploratory work is needed (Panahi et al., 2016). Qualitative research is used to gather descriptive and subjective information about ideas, values, attitudes, and motives that underpin actions that is not communicated in quantitative data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In addition, this study uses semi-structured interviews as the primary method, supplemented by documentation reviews as further sources of evidence to satisfy the requirements of research validity and reliability.

3.1 Participants and Procedures

This study's primary data was gathered from four Malaysian universities (two public and two private universities). Academics in various positions were the study's intended subjects (Table 1). The research team conducted interviews with academics to gain a holistic perspective based on the study's setting and research questions. Academics were invited and interviews were performed at their workplaces using purposive sampling. Snowball sampling was also utilized to find additional research participants when potential interviewees were found. Participants had to meet the following requirements to be considered for the study: (a) they had to be academics, and (b) they had to work at Malaysian research universities.

The qualities that may make the universities recognizable are not disclosed for reasons of confidentiality. There are two reasons why these four case study universities were chosen. To begin with, the case study universities chosen were the largest HEIs, in terms of students and academics population, in addition to their organizational structure and strategic capabilities. Furthermore, they were designated as research universities.

Table 1: Distribution of participants

Gender	Male	17
	Female	15
Organizational role	Non-managerial	25
	Managerial	7
Age	Under 30	14
	30 and above	18

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Total	32

To offer an overall picture of the research topic, the researcher has devised interview themes in English based on the concerns raised in the literature. The set of questions were incorporated in a draught of the interview procedure, which was then checked by additional researchers for validity. The researchers made certain that all of the subjects signed the consent forms. The participants were reminded that the interview was fully voluntary. These interviews lasted for an average of 55 minutes. They were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Thematic analysis was used in this investigation. It is one of the most prevalent types of qualitative research analysis. It focuses on detecting, analyzing, and interpreting meaning patterns in qualitative data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). It was used to manually evaluate the data. The authors used the six phases of Braun and Clarke (2012) for thematic analysis: Learn about the data, create initial codes, look for themes, review themes, define themes, and publish a report. The study team examined the transcripts verbatim after the interviews, using an inductive technique to comprehend the participants' experiences and to identify themes (Gratton & Jones, 2014). The emergent themes were compared and refined using a continual comparison process concerning the participants' diverse experiences (Ritchie et al., 2014). To explore the topics, an inductive technique was chosen due to the scarcity of literature that analyses academics' experiences in an Asian context.

4. Results and Discussions

Firstly, the data obtained from the interviews and through the observation of 32 academics were coded. Consequently, 10 sub-themes were obtained through the open coding method. Secondly, refining and analyzing the 10 sub-themes by utilizing the open coding method help clarify the logical relationship between the 10 sub-themes. Hence, the 10 sub-themes were narrowed down to five major themes: motivational factors, social factors, social barriers, organizational aspects, and technological factors.

4.1 Motivational Factors

Participations stressed that another influencing factor was the motivation provided by management at the case study universities to encourage academic staff to use social media platforms to assist the technological infrastructure and other methods used to share knowledge. The results that the majority of respondents suggest that the management provided motivational support and successfully motivated academic staff to develop their own expertise using additional technologies like social media platforms this enabled the staff development to further enhance individual and university performance output. KS requires a high level of motivation (Ardichvili, 2008; Zboralski et al., 2006). Many participants of this study validated the influence of motivational factors on KS. The self-determination theory (SDT) was extensively used with knowledge management in the existing research (Friedrich et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2019). According to SDT, there are two main types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for its own sake, out of

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7157191

interest, or for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from the experience (Lin, 2007). In light of these findings, we conclude that intrinsic motivational factors comprise enjoyment in helping others, financial rewards, and reciprocal benefits.

Enjoyment in helping others. This study has identified the motive of sharing knowledge through SM as the desire to help the university to reach its goals and assist academics. Respondents believe that helping behaviours can increase work performance and help SM communities attract and keep better members by increasing value, teamwork, and a sense of belonging to the university. The desire of respondents to assist other lecturers in using SM derived from the notion of altruism. Altruism, according to Organ (1988) is a discretionary activity that entails assisting others in organising relevant activities or issues. Knowledge workers may be motivated by relative altruism owing to their desire to help others and assist the exchange of both tacit and codified knowledge (Saide et al., 2019). By fulfilling their own altruistic or pro-social motives, they derive intrinsic enjoyment via SM. As a result, intrinsic motivation for KS is concerned with how interested academics are to assist others and share their expertise through SM.

In addition to intrinsic motivation, the SDT posits that human behavior is also driven by a range of extrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Through that lens, the participants stated that there are different types of extrinsic motivation (reciprocal benefits and financial rewards) that encourage and incentivize KS on SM. According to the social exchange theory (Liang et al., 2008), individuals base their interactions with others on a self-evaluation of costs and benefits. Costs refers to the financial rewards and reciprocal benefits refers to the social rewards (Wasko & Faraj, 2005).

Financial rewards. Several organizations have implemented incentive initiatives to encourage workers to share their knowledge. Monetary rewards are a common extrinsic motivation tool that can influence KS. Kettles et al. (2017) found that monetary rewards for workers helped to increase the quantity of knowledge contributed to an enterprise through SM. This was validated when one of the participants mentioned that when working in any organization, people want to be recognized and financially rewarded for sharing their knowledge with others. Fullwood et al. (2019) agree, noting that rewards are widely utilised as a technique to encourage KS through the use of SM among academic staff, and stating that KS through the use of SM will only occur if the benefits outweigh the costs.

Reciprocal benefits. It has been defined as the benefits gained by the individuals who engage in a social exchange (Wang et al., 2019). Reciprocity is a behavior that provides a sense of mutual indebtedness, causing knowledge contributors to generally expect help from others, and this ensures ongoing knowledge sharing (Li et al., 2020). Previous researches indicated that knowledge sharing in an online community is facilitated by a strong sense of reciprocity (Koranteng & Wiafe, 2019).In addition, researchers have observed that reciprocal benefits is an effective motivation tool that facilitates knowledge sharing and helps promote long-term cooperation (Ghahtarani et al., 2020). This was supported by one of the participants, who acknowledged that by sharing her knowledge via SM, she gained reciprocal benefits from other colleagues. A rough explanation for this could be that those who are used to sharing knowledge

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7157191

via SM platforms would do so. Even if there was a reward, those who are not used to sharing would refuse to do so. This is relevant to the question of such platforms' affordability.

The findings of this study also covers the social factor affecting KS on SM which includes social interaction ties and social barriers, otherwise known as knowledge hoarding.

4.2 Social Factors

KS is interwoven with social aspects such as knowledge transfer, learning, distributed cooperation, and knowledge generation, according to Von Krogh et al. (2012). Knowledge "donation" and "collecting" are two aspects of KS that are regarded crucial in social interactions in organisations (Van den Hooff et al., 2012).

Social interaction ties. The social interaction ties among colleagues and friends in organizations lead to creation of trust, and a wider communication, producing positive effects on KS (Chen & Huang, 2007). The more social interaction linkages there are, the more KS activities and communication occur. (Larson, 1992). Rulke and Zaheer (2000) referred to these interactions as learning pathways based on relationships. One of the precursors for KS is strong social interaction bonds. Strong social links among academics, according to one participant, have a good impact on their knowledge contributing practices. Academics would be more actively interested in contributing and sharing their expertise if they had strong social links with their peers and colleagues through SM. One of the participants stated that SM allows us to learn about the interests of others, encourages others to break down university barriers in order to form new relationships, and allows others in the faculty to exchange expertise with others. These findings were confirmed by Ellison et al. (2014), who stated that social interactions within networks can accumulate social capital, particularly among those with weaker and more heterogeneous social ties, resulting in the creation of new information for a larger world and thus influencing the quality of KS.

4.3 Social Barriers

Social barriers inhibit many academics from participating in KS especially through SM. According to Corcoran and Duane (2018), the use of SM for KS among academics can be problematic because they associate SM with triviality that should not be associated with the academic working environment.

Knowledge hoarding. Despite our earlier findings that indicate the importance of social interaction ties in KS through SM, one of the participants agreed that knowledge hoarding still exists among academics. Knowledge hoarding is described by Evans et al. (2015) as an individual's deliberate attempts to conceal knowledge that has been sought or unrequested by another person. Sitkin and Brodt (2006) stated that employees who are hoarding knowledge may be struggling to honor their social commitments (e.g., to the organization, to co-workers and to clients). While knowledge hoarding has been shown to improve individual performance, it has also been shown to have substantial negative consequences, including impaired work-related relationships (Černe et al., 2014; Connelly & Zweig, 2015). This is because most

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7157191

academics have been hampered in sharing their knowledge through SM at times.

4.4 Organizational Factors

The findings of this study also revealed several organizational factors that affect KS on SM within HEIs. Participants agreed that open climate may induce KS among academics. Previous research has found a relationship between organizational atmosphere and knowledge retention (Janz & Prasarnphanich, 2003).

Open climate: Organizational climate determines the values, beliefs, and work systems that encourage learning and KS (Janz & Prasarnphanich, 2003). Knowledge management is also aided by an open environment inside firms, as it stimulates individual contact, which enhances KS (Alavi et al., 2005). The findings in this paper revealed that an open climate is one in which academic and managerial behaviors are supportive, genuine, and are positively engaged in KS through SM. In this KS climate, feedback and constructive criticism from management give lecturers with an opportunity to bring up new perspectives by minimizing social pressure, creating amicable discussions to think outside the box, and promoting autonomous independence.

Training: In this study, the participants support the importance of training on KS via SM. The participants stressed that training has a major role in KS within HEIs. Training is a key enabler of employee empowerment. In this context, it refers to training on KS or any skill and not just training on the SM platform itself. Allam (2013) confirmed our findings that employee training had a positive impact on SM usage. Furthermore, Shanshan (2014) noted in his research, the positive influence of training in general, including the training process itself, as it also involves sharing and interaction among contributors and receivers.

Management support: Several participants pointed out leadership management and support was an essential aspect in management practices that influenced academics' perception on the use of SM. Management support has significant effects on encouraging academics to share their knowledge via SM. As indicated by Allam (2013), an organization where management facilitates and supports knowledge sharing among its employees and across its organizational structure, help to foster KS. He noted that knowledge contribution in an enterprise service management (ESM) is significantly influenced by managements' support. For instance, the universities involved in the case study stated that management support was one of the most key factors influencing SM usage in HEIs.

4.5 Technological Factors

The finding highlighted that participants agreed that the technological hardware supporting social media platforms performance must be applicable because the efficacy of networking capabilities must be fully functional and efficient. This is reinforced by the work of Javaid et al. (2020) who also explored the effectiveness of the organizational technology elements for knowledge sharing. The results revealed that all the academic staff respondents had identified that the intention to use social media platforms was related to academic staff increasing interest in the value of using social media platforms for sharing knowledge. In addition, they indicated

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7157191

that they perceived that academic staff may receive encouragement from colleagues to use social media to share experience, ideas, and knowledge, and to display their research by sharing it with others. The predominant evidence and the analysis of the findings in this study indicate that technological factors such as the functionality of SM and its ease of use positively influences SM usage for KS in HEIs.

Functionality: According to responses to the interview question, it is used at all of the case study institutions, however it should be enhanced to increase existing promptness and emphasis on the university network's security. For KS, the use of networking inside and across organizations, as well as the capacity of personnel to use networking, must be examined. This is supported by Kim and Lee's (2006) research, which looked at the functioning of organizational technology aspects for KS. According to McAdam et al.(2008), SM was seen as a critical organizational component in KS's success.

Ease of use: The reduced complexity of the SM, is a technical factor that can positively influence its use and correspondingly increase the levels of KS engagement and contribution of its users.

Some of the participants noted that, in addition to email and official channels, their universities had provided social platforms for KS. These platforms were created solely for academics to share their teaching and learning approaches and for their convenience in accessing and connecting with other lecturers without any barriers. Consistent with Razmerita et al. (2016), new communication technologies facilitate new ways of working and new dimensions of KS and interactions within HEIs. Researchers found proof of the positive impact of SM's ease of use on KS behaviors (Allam et al., 2020; Bălău & Utz, 2017; Sullivan & Koh, 2019)

5. Conclusion

Overall, the goal of this study was to determine how the various factors aid Malaysian academics who use SM to share their knowledge within HEIs. This study indicates that five primary themes, namely, motivational, technical, organizational, social, and social barriers, have influence on KS through SM in a holistic way. It enables HEIs to utilize these influences, to boost KS. The interview results are grouped into 11 sub-themes, each of which relate to the five primary themes. The findings show that all the elements such as intrinsic and extrinsic incentives, enjoyment in helping others, financial rewards, reciprocal benefits, social interaction ties, open climate, training, management support, SM functionality, and SM ease of use, have positive effects on KS. The negative effects of knowledge hoarding are also mentioned. Thus, higher education administrators are advised to use SM to boost academics' KS. The HEIs' knowledge management (KM) initiatives should leverage these five primary themes simultaneously, to maximize the potential of achieving effective KS through SM.

6. Implications

This research found that using social media platforms proved to be a convenient way to overcome some difficulties that the academic staff faced such as geographical distance, time and cost and has increased academic staff feelings of self-efficacy using the technology, a skill which is transferable from a personal setting to an educational setting, and thereby can be

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.7157191

utilised for conducting research, collaboration and networking with others. This has certain consequences for the globalisation of knowledge sharing. The organizational and managerial implications resulting from this study are multifaceted, spanning across the individual, technical, social, and organizational dimensions. Organizational initiatives to improve KS should be carefully considered and designed to simultaneously address the individual, social and technical aspects in a holistic way. According to this research, SM can increase the academics' KS. Thus, it would be wise for HEI managers, to take advantage of SM to strengthen their academics' KS in their respective universities. SM is a social interaction platform that involves social and technical dimensions. According to sociotechnical systems theory (Emery & Trist, 1965), universities as organizations should optimize the technical and social sub-systems to facilitate KS among their academics. The use of SM to improve KS among academics and within HEIs, as well as the notion that SM may be used as an on boarding and mentoring tool for new employees, should be of practical relevance to management.

7. Limitations and Directions for Future Researches

Although our research findings are valuable, they should be treated with caution for the following reasons. Firstly, the scope of this study focuses on KS through SM, and as such, it does not consider other types of KM tools. It would be beneficial for the HEIs if further research is conducted in examining other emerging KM tools. Secondly, the scope of this study encompasses the elements that influences the KS process but does not address knowledge creation. It would be worthwhile to examine the elements that could help foster knowledge creation. Thirdly, although the number of individuals who participated in this study were sufficient for model building (Vasileiou et al., 2018), the sample size may restrict the accuracy of the mechanism model of the influences of SM on academics' KS.

Based on the qualitative findings in this study a quantitative research study can be used to conduct a more systematic investigation of the phenomena by gathering quantifiable data and performing statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. Quantitative research has the capacity to collect information from existing and potential academic users of social media platforms in HEIs using sampling methods and sending out online surveys, online polls, and questionnaires, the results of which can be depicted in the form of numerical. After careful understanding of these numbers to predict the future of a product or service and make changes accordingly. To strengthen this, we should select a larger pool of academics for the interviews and to consider different types of institutions in the future researches. Finally, to guarantee the reliability and validity of the sub-themes discovered in this study, they should be validated using questionnaires.

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