

Determinants of Knowledge Sharing in Knowledge Management Systems

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Abstract

Understanding knowledge-sharing behavior of employees is essential to prevent failure of adoption of knowledge management systems in organizations. It is argued that the knowledge sharing behavior depends on the knowledge type-based on content, the knowledge sharing medium, organizational culture, organizational trust and employees' prosocial behavior. A survey of 203 executives in knowledge intensive organizations in India was carried out to test the research model. The results of the study are briefly mentioned below.

1. Contrary to popular wisdom, results of the study suggest that helping behavior, which is a factor of prosocial behavior, is not significantly associated with propensity to share knowledge.
2. General compliance behavior, which is another factor of prosocial behavior, is positively associated with propensity to share knowledge.
3. Trust in the organization is important when sharing the knowledge can have negative consequences. Trust enhancing properties of organizational policies and of top management, support knowledge sharing only when it reduces the cost of sharing as in the case of sharing a mistake.
4. Trust among the employees supports knowledge sharing.
5. Knowledge content has a major influence on sharing behavior.
6. Developmental culture, group culture and rational culture

generally support knowledge sharing whereas hierarchical culture was found to have limited negative relation to it.

Knowledge sharing can be improved in an organization by a series of steps. Sharing should be made a general organizational norm, as it would encourage employees to share knowledge because they would like to comply with organizational norms. An atmosphere of trust among the employees should be created. Organizational policies should be modified to increase trust in the organization for sharing mistakes. Thus the study gives useful guidelines towards design of knowledge management systems, which encourage knowledge sharing.