

Factors Influencing Knowledge-Sharing Behavior Among Academicians in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions

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Abstract: The key concern of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions is to generate graduates of high caliber. The TVET institutions endeavor to best serve the community and the nation. Being productive in their area of expertise will determine the extent to which TVET institutions can compete to provide the best education globally. Accordingly, academicians' perceptions and personalities were assessed to identify the factors contributing to knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB). The academicians were selected from premier polytechnics in Malaysia through purposive sampling. Analysis was conducted with partial least square structural equation modelling. Resultantly, KSB reflected moderate variance whereas knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) had weak variance. The results suggested that KSI moderately influenced KSB. The academicians' KSI positively influenced their KSB. Nevertheless, individual perception did not significantly affect academicians at KSB. The findings on Malaysian TVET academicians' KSB can be a general benchmark for other technical and vocational institutions. Future researchers could focus on other individual factors that might influence KSB, such as religiosity.

Keywords: *Knowledge-sharing behavior, individual perception, personality, higher learning institution.*

1. Introduction and Background

Educational institutions and colleges share knowledge to remain relevant and competitive. While knowledge-sharing is successful only if academicians are willing and share their knowledge freely, few academicians truly share their knowledge. Some individual traits might result in the intention to share their knowledge, but actual knowledge-sharing does not occur. The Malaysian government committed RM 6.8 billion in 2024 to implement a range of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) projects (Bernama, 2023). If TVET institutions do not effectively share knowledge, this significant investment would be rendered ineffective. The TVET institutions should foster a culture that promotes knowledge sharing among academicians through teaching and collaborative learning. Organizational performance can be significantly impacted by fostering a culture of knowledge sharing that enhances employees' capacity to tackle organizational difficulties and challenges (Alshamsi & Ajmal, 2018). In general, knowledge can be classified into two categories: implicit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is regarded as substantially less costly due to its impersonal nature, while tacit knowledge is deemed more expensive and highly valuable (Reychav & Weisberg, 2010).

It is simple for academicians to communicate and acquire explicit knowledge. As tacit knowledge cannot be obtained or accessed easily (only the person who owns the knowledge can share it), it is intangible and thus considered tacit knowledge to be more valuable than explicit knowledge (Goh & Sandhu, 2013). Preserving tacit knowledge relies on understanding individual traits, which include individual perception and personality. Most TVET institution academicians are subject area experts whose knowledge is typically private and known only to them. Thus, such knowledge will be lost if shared inappropriately. Nevertheless, some academicians choose not to share their knowledge due to individual, organizational, and technological factors (Riege, 2005). Improper knowledge-sharing leads to a dearth of new knowledge, research, and innovations. Furthermore, studies to understand knowledge-sharing in TVET institutions are scarce compared to those of other higher education institutions (HEIs). Thus, this study is important for academicians as well as upper-level management.

Besides, educating students has become increasingly challenging in the present times. Knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB) can aid academicians' teaching and learning productivity, creativity, and innovation. Thus, the current research questions focused on the underexplored aspects of the individual factors of knowledge-

sharing: Do individual perception and personality affect KSB and knowledge-sharing intention (KSI)? Does KSI affect KSB? According to Al-Kurdi (2018), there is a shortage of research on knowledge-sharing within higher education institutions (HEIs) when compared to other industries. Meanwhile, the studies conducted by Akbari and Ghaffari (2017), Razi, Habibullah, and Hussin (2019), and Annansingh et al. (2018) were done in higher education institutions (HEIs) and have all found a strong and statistically significant correlation between knowledge sharing behavior (KSB) and individual variables in both public and private HEIs. Although the production of superior outcomes is more likely when highly skilled academicians are involved, research is scarce on knowledge sharing in TVET institutions. The findings of this study have the potential to improve the knowledge of academicians and result in the production of students with greater quality in TVET institutions.

2. Literature Review

Knowledge-Sharing: Knowledge-sharing, commonly referred to as "knowledge exchange" and "knowledge transfer", is the process of utilizing specialist knowledge to assist others and address organizational problems (Amayah, 2013). Knowledge-sharing is a crucial component of knowledge management where employees explain what they know to others to resolve workplace issues. Employees individually learn the "common knowledge" when conducting organizational tasks and allow other organizational members to access their knowledge and experience by sharing their interpretations. Numerous studies have examined knowledge-sharing from technological, organizational, and individual behavior perspectives in different fields, such as HEIs, banks, hotels, information technology (IT) companies, hospitals, non-profit organizations, and public organizations. Many factors, such as organizational culture, the nature of the technology, and the individual's values and attitudes toward sharing characterize knowledge-sharing. Nevertheless, most of the discussions described in the following sections emphasized individual behaviors (Cyr & Wei Choo, 2010; Chedid, Alvelos & Teixeira, 2022).

Individual Perception: The effectiveness of knowledge-sharing is dependent on an individual's perspective and reality (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). An individual's judgment of the importance and transfer of information or teaching material is essential to the sharing of knowledge. The impression of owning information is considered crucial and has a favorable correlation with the act of sharing knowledge (Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2001). In a study conducted by Khan (2014) on information-sharing in the Dhaka University library, it was discovered that 91% of participants perceived users as easily approachable when it comes to exchanging knowledge. According to Wiewiora, Murphy, and Trigunarsyah (2010), perception plays a role in increasing employees' trust, which can be a motivating element for success in knowledge-sharing. In their study, Hidayanto et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of perception and recommended that an assessment of employees' perceptions be conducted to evaluate the environment for knowledge sharing inside a company.

They added that the intrinsic qualities of employees are of greater significance compared to their extrinsic counterparts. Alhawary (2017), and Reger, Jennifer, and Rachel (2013) found evidence of a robust and favorable correlation between knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) and knowledge-sharing behavior (KSB). This suggests that sharing knowledge has the potential to enhance and strengthen relationships among colleagues, as well as provide career advancement opportunities such as internal promotions or external appointments. Individual perception strongly influences knowledge sharing in organizations (Ishrat & Rahman, 2019). An organization will experience more knowledge-sharing if its employees have higher perceptions of knowledge-sharing. Based on the aforementioned studies, employees' perceptions significantly and positively influence organizational knowledge-sharing. Thus, the management should consider human perception when designing and implementing effective KSB practices. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H1: Individual perception significantly affects employees' KSB.

Personality: Personality is crucial to comprehending human behavior (Yesil & Sozibilir, 2013). A person's behavior can be explained by their personality traits, which are psychological qualities (Leri & Theodoridis, 2021). Openness to experience, agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism are the five personality trait categories that make up the Big Five personality theory, which is used to evaluate personality (Laouiti et al., 2022). According to Yesil and Sozibilir (2013), a person's personality has an impact on their performance and ability to share knowledge. According to Wang and Hu (2020), sharing knowledge is considered a personal action. Variations exist in individuals' qualities and interests, as well as in the extent to

which knowledge is conveyed. Several factors, including personality traits, willingness to share, motivation sources, and commitment to the company, influence the extent to which employees share knowledge (Jadin et al., 2013). Mooradian et al. (2006) highlight that the characteristics of the individual who shares knowledge play a crucial role in the process of knowledge-sharing. Abou-Shouk (2022) found that positive personality qualities significantly improved employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities in sharing. Based on the aforementioned data, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: Individual personality significantly affects employees' KSB.

The KSI: According to the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and the theory of reasoned action (TRA), intention directly affects individual behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Reychar and Weisberg (2010) reported the correlation of KSI to both explicit and tacit knowledge. Nonetheless, some employees who are unwilling to share their work reports, manuals, models, and expertise and proficiency gained from training and education might hoard their knowledge. Mandating knowledge-sharing is challenging, where the main issue is to convince, coerce, direct, or otherwise persuade employees to share their information (Gupta et al., 2008). Individuals must be willing to share their knowledge continuously. Organizational support can enhance KSB and lead to a desirable culture. Ishrat and Rahman (2019) reported that organizational support fostered a culture in which participants were urged to give freely and responsibly of their knowledge, abilities, resources, and information. Accordingly, academicians' KSI directly affects their sharing behavior (Chang et al., 2015).

The KSB: The KSB refers to employees' behavior that results from their intentions. Knowledge-sharing focuses on expert knowledge to aid others, resolve issues, create novel concepts, or put rules and regulations into effect (Amayah, 2013). People also share knowledge for many other reasons, such as to benefit society (Basu & Sengupta, 2007) and for organizational competitive advantage (Jackson et al., 2006), empowerment (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Barachini, 2009; Jeon, 2011), extrinsic and intrinsic rewards (Lin, 2007), adding value to others (Hairil Adenan, 2015), and research productivity (Fauzi et al., 2019). The aforementioned studies were conducted in different locations and industries, such as banks, hospitals, professional service firms, pharmaceuticals, tourism, and construction. Academicians who share their knowledge have access to more information and are better equipped to seek new ideas and develop thinking paradigms for teaching and learning. Annansingh et al. (2018) reported that HEIs that share knowledge continue to keep expanding, regenerating, learning new things, and becoming more aware of possibilities and threats. Therefore, individual KSB affects HEI productivity. Nevertheless, Turyahikayo and Pillay Muhenda (2021) claimed that most Ugandan public sector employees, specifically those in the Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Education and Sports, and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, exhibited negative attitudes towards KSB. Some public sector knowledge sharers were discourteous to their knowledge-seeking colleagues.

The KSI and KSB: According to Ajzen (1991), intention refers to a measure of the amount of work one is willing to put in to carry out a behavior. It is a motivating element for that particular activity. In Ajzen's proposed TPB model, it is assumed that behavioral intention positively affects actual behavior. Furthermore, previous studies reported a strong causal relationship between behavioral intention and actual behavior in a broad behavioral category range (Davis, 1989; Mathieson, 1991; Hartwick & Barki, 1994). Lin and Lee (2004) and Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010) explored KSB with the theoretical TPB model and confirmed that KSI directly influenced KSB. Additionally, Fauzi (2019) reported that all KSI factors, excluding perceived cost, were significantly related to KSI and KSB, thus proving that the underlying theory of TPB could forecast academicians' KSI. Nonetheless, Cyr and Wei Choo (2010), who used social exchange theory, denoted the significant relation of KSI to KSB. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H3: The KSI significantly influences employees' KSB.

Individual Perception and KSI: Individual perception towards KSI is measured in different contexts. Individual perception positively and directly influenced KSI, where knowledge was shared to increase engagement in value creation (Fait et al., 2023). Hung and Cheng (2013) identified a significant relationship between individual perception of technology and KSI, as technology was deemed useful for sharing knowledge. Thus, improving an individual's degree of perception regarding knowledge-sharing with technology could increase virtual community KSI. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H4: Individual perception significantly influences employees' KSI.

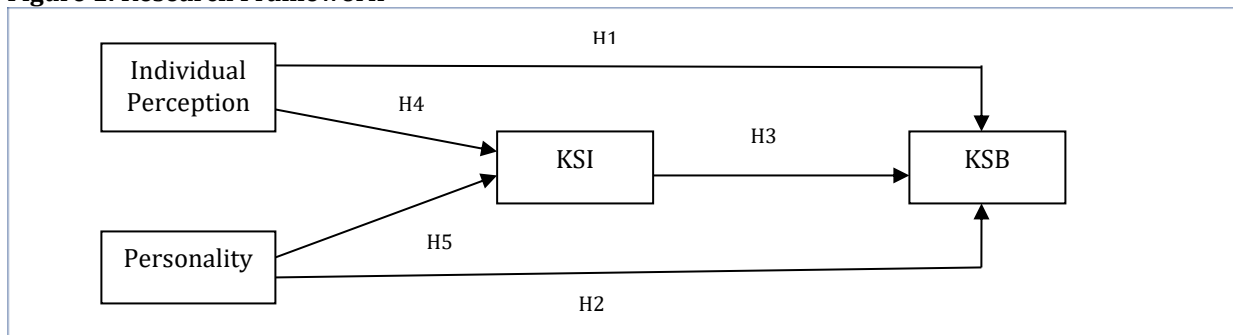
Personality and KSI: Many researchers studied individuals' personalities to determine their KSI. Akbar and Warraich's (2023) study on personality and KSI following John and Srivastava's (1999) Big Five personality inventory revealed that the personality features of agreeableness, openness to experience, and neuroticism contributed significantly to KSI. Agyemang, Dzandu and Boateng (2016) reported that extraversion, agreeableness, openness, and neuroticism affected teachers' knowledge-sharing attitude and behavior, but conscientiousness did not affect KSB. Abdul Manaf and Marzuki (2013) proposed that individuals should possess extraversion, agreeableness, openness to experience, neuroticism, and conscientiousness to enable knowledge-sharing and improve their work performance. Based on the aforementioned studies, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H5: Personality significantly affects employees' KSI.

Theoretical Development: The TPB (Ajzen, 1988) is an extension of the TRA (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and has garnered much attention from social science researchers. Both the TPB and TRA models were designed to provide clear explanations of informational and motivational influences on certain behaviors. The aforementioned theories state that individuals make behavioral decisions by carefully considering available information. Subsequently, many studies on knowledge-sharing widely applied TRA and TPB as their underpinning theories (Syed et al., 2021; Negara et al., 2021; Pham Thi & Duong, 2022; Ahmed et al., 2022; Fait et al., 2023). Many researchers enhanced the TPB by adding more variables, which yielded the extended TPB (Moksness, Olsen & Tuu, 2020; Negara et al., 2021). Furthermore, other researchers in knowledge sharing used and combined other theories, such as the Social Expectation Theory (SET), Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and Big Five Personality Theory.

Framework

Figure 1: Research Framework



3. Research Methodology

Research Tools: The questionnaire distributed to the respondents consisted of 60 questions in the following sections: A (demographic), B (individual perception), C (personality), D (KSI), and E (KSB).

Item Generation: Every item on the questionnaire was adapted from earlier research by Akhavan et al. (2015), Soto & John (2017), Fauzi et al. (2019), and Bock et al. (2005). Each item was presented in both Malay and English.

Data Collection: Purposive sampling was used to collect data over two months, starting from August 2023 until October 2023 from academicians at three premier polytechnic institutions in Malaysia. The academicians population at the three institutions in 2021 totalled 1,331. The Ministry of Higher Education approved the study to be conducted. The academicians were required to respond to the survey online. In total, 144 academicians addressed the questionnaire. After data cleaning to account for missing values, 141 responses were used for analysis.

Analysis Tool: Partial least square structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used for the SEM-based variance following its robustness and the fact that this study was exploratory (Hair et al., 2014). PLS-SEM 4.0

was used, as it can analyze variables and models and check errors simultaneously to ensure the suitability of the theory used. The PLS-SEM 4.0 can analyze complex models that require multiple variable and relationship testing.

4. Results

Descriptive Statistics: There was a total of 141 respondents (113 women and 28 men) (Table 1). Fifty respondents were in the 31–40-year age group, while 71 and 23 respondents were in the 41–50- and 51–60-year age groups, respectively. The respondents held Diplomas (n = 1), Bachelor’s degrees (n = 36), Master’s degrees (n = 100), and PhDs (n = 7). Eighty-seven respondents were lecturers while 54 respondents were senior lecturers. One respondent had ≤ 5 years of work experience, while 12, 58, 36, 31, and three respondents had work experience of 6–10 years, 11–15 years, 16–20 years, 21–25 years, and ≥ 26 years, respectively.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (N = 141)

Measure	Item	Frequency	%
Sex	Male	28	19.8
	Female	113	80.1
Age (years)	31–40	50	35.4
	41–50	68	48.2
	51–60	23	16.3
Education level	Diploma	1	0.7
	Bachelor’s degree	36	25.5
	Master’s degree	97	68.7
	PhD	7	4.9
Position	Lecturer	87	61.7
	Senior lecturer	54	38.2
Work experience (years)	5	1	0.7
	6–10	12	8.5
	11–15	58	41.1
	16–20	36	25.5
	21–25	31	21.9
	≥ 26	3	2.1

Measurement Model: The first stage of reporting the findings involved measurement model analysis, which consisted of convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014). Convergent validity assesses the cross-loading of each item, composite reliability (CR), and the average variance extracted (AVE) of the construct. The AVE must be higher than all related inter-construct correlations to meet the discriminant validity. The results demonstrated that all item loadings met the minimum 0.7 value, excluding the items for individual perception (IP)2 (0.345) and personality (P)5 (-0.143), which were subsequently deleted. The AVE and CR of all constructs exceeded 0.5. In this vein, the construct in the model discriminated against other variables, where other items did not load on other constructs (Hair et al., 2014). Table 2 depicts the discriminant validity of the study.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity (N =141)

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	CR	Cronbach Alpha	rho_A
Individual perception	IP1	0.917	0.821	0.958	0.945	0.947
	IP3	0.882				
	IP4	0.909				
	IP5	0.926				
	IP6	0.895				
	KSB1	0.929				
KSB	KSB2	0.901	0.822	0.949	0.928	0.930
	KSB3	0.925				

	KSB4	0.870				
	KSI1	0.864				
	KSI2	0.880				
KSI	KSI3	0.910	0.754	0.939	0.918	0.926
	KSI4	0.764				
	KSI5	0.917				
	P1	0.712				
Personality	P2	0.715	0.574	0.870	0.815	0.833
	P3	0.733				
	P4	0.776				
	P6	0.844				

The discriminant validity was assessed using extended discriminant analysis with the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) correlation proposed by Henseler et al. (2015). The required HTMT threshold among the constructs was < 0.9. The HTMT correlation is depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: The HTMT Matrix (N = 141)

	Individual Perception	KSB	KSI	Personality
KSB	0.526			
KSI	0.687	0.811		
Personality	0.663	0.646	0.687	

Structural Model: The second stage of results reporting involved structural model analysis, which required the determination of path coefficient and coefficient of determination (R^2). In Table 4, all paths between the variables were significant, excluding the relationship between individual perception and KSB. Individual perception did not positively affect academicians' KSB. Thus, H1 was not supported.

Table 4: Path Coefficient (N = 141)

Hypothesis	Path model	Original sample (O)	T-value	P-value	Confidence interval (BC)		R2	VIF	Decision
					LL	UL			
H1	Individual perception -> KSB	-0.053	0.74	0.459	-0.187	0.091	0.588	1.937	Not significant
H2	Personality -> KSB	0.196	2.366	0.018	0.045	0.367		1.838	Moderately significant
H3	KSI -> KSB	0.666	8.834	0	0.494	0.795		1.977	Strongly significant
H4	Individual perception -> KSI	0.424	5.676	0	0.272	0.562	0.494	1.582	Moderately significant
H5	Personality -> KSI	0.36	3.903	0	0.179	0.533		1.582	Moderately significant

Discussion

The KSI: Many studies reported a positive relationship between an individual's intention and their actual behavior. Employees feel more encouraged to share knowledge if there are sufficient resources and opportunities to engage in such behavior (Wu & Zhu, 2012). The intention is also due to a relationship interaction between the person and other individuals demonstrated in their behavior (Fauzi et al, 2019). The finding of this study is similar to a study done by Xu & Li (2022), showing a positive correlation between instructors' intentions and behaviors related to knowledge sharing. Employees are more likely to share if they

have access to sufficient resources and opportunities for sharing. This is the first study to examine Malaysian TVET academicians' KSB. The academicians' KSI demonstrated that the variables explained 49.4% of the variance. In this study, personality was significantly related to KSB (model fit score = 0.08). Both individual perception and personality were significantly related to KSI. Resultantly, using TPB as the underpinning theory could predict the respondents' KSI. Respondents who were willing to share knowledge believed that knowledge-sharing was advantageous to the institution. The findings paralleled those of Xu and Li (2022), who demonstrated that teachers' KSI positively influenced their KSB.

The KSB: Being an academician requires KSB, which should be inherent and represented by their actions. Thus, KSB is a frequent behavioral habit. The results demonstrated that individual perception and personality were positively related to KSB. Therefore, the factors that would positively influence academicians' KSB were emphasized. The results demonstrated that individuals were significantly more inclined to share their knowledge. Cyr (2009) stated that individuals chose to share with their superiors more frequently than with close or distant colleagues. Possibly, TVET HEI academicians continue to share their knowledge, regardless of their management level.

Individual Perception: Individual perception is unique and influences KSB. For example, the responses in a previous study differed from those of this study. Ishrat and Rahman (2019) reported that employees had higher perceptions of knowledge-sharing which allowed the organization to experience more knowledge-sharing. Nevertheless, the respondents in this study were not prepared to share their knowledge and perceived knowledge-sharing as less important. Therefore, the result was insignificant. More activities, training, and exposure prove necessary to overcome the aforementioned barriers to knowledge-sharing. Consequently, academicians will perceive knowledge-sharing as important to their careers and convert knowledge-sharing into a culture.

Personality: Overall, the respondents possessed good personal characteristics that allowed them to communicate and share their knowledge. They were willing to share their knowledge and considered the knowledge-sharing part of their work. Nonetheless, the respondents were uncertain of their knowledge-sharing capabilities. Overall, the findings indicated the high possibility of KSB implementation in TVET institutions if knowledge-sharing initiatives were appropriately accounted for.

5. Managerial Implications and Recommendations

The findings were consistent with the outcomes of prior research conducted by Davenport and Prusak in 1998, as well as by Khan in 2014. In their study, Gagné et al. (2019) discovered that organizations can effectively motivate employees to engage in information sharing by fostering an understanding of its significance and creating an enjoyable environment for it. This has the potential to alter individual perceptions regarding KSB. Therefore, future studies on academicians' KSB should examine the influence of organizations in greater detail. In addition, other personal aspects, such as an individual's level of religious devotion, should be taken into account. Religion can influence individuals' conduct in carrying out their work. Research on KSB in polytechnics is limited, particularly concerning the need for a more comprehensive investigation.

Given the significant financial allocation by the Malaysian government for technical education in 2024, it is recommended to conduct further studies on TVET. Due to the widespread use of technology in knowledge management, future research on knowledge-sharing is anticipated to incorporate technology as a moderator. Conducting a more thorough investigation and enhancing the connections between factors could be beneficial. The results can be utilized to foster a culture of knowledge sharing Education Institutions HEIs can achieve success and long-term viability by establishing a conducive environment for sharing information. Upper management must possess a comprehensive understanding of the unique characteristics of present and potential employees. They should leverage employees who have a strong inclination to share information by providing them with the necessary assistance and resources.

Conclusion

Knowledge is the main thrust of HEI that requires it to be managed effectively. The presence of academicians with the highest KSB is essential for HEI growth and sustainability. Academicians of all levels should share their

knowledge and expertise. Academicians who share their knowledge without omitting any details out of self-interest would be beneficial to a HEI. Nevertheless, having good KSI is insufficient if a person is unwilling to share their knowledge with others in the HEI. The results demonstrated that all hypotheses except H1 were significant for understanding academicians' KSB. The findings indicated that the individual perception variable was insignificant. Academicians should recognize the significance of KSB and possess the necessary abilities to utilize them effectively. Furthermore, promoting KSB in HEIs would aid academicians in achieving their performance indexes and annual promotion requirements. Overall, the results could aid TVET enhancement and allow premier polytechnics to compete against other public universities in Malaysia.

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