Chapter 70
Predicting Student Academic Performance:
Role of Knowledge Sharing and Outcome Expectations

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ABSTRACT

The biggest challenge in nurturing an academic community is encouraging knowledge sharing among its members. Literature on communities, however, has paid less attention on the role of outcome expectations in encouraging the knowledge sharing behaviors. This study examines the effects of Personal Outcome Expectations (POE) and Community-related Outcome Expectations (COE) on the knowledge sharing behaviors of students and its consequent impact on their academic performance. In order to study these relationships a survey of university students was conducted. Based on structural equation modeling approach, it was found that COE have significant impact on knowledge sharing among the students.

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic management of organization's knowledge is an important source of competitive advantage in the 21st century (Bock & Kim, 2002). It does not only allow organizations to compete in the dynamic, competitive and ever changing business environment (Majid & Wey, 2009) but also helps in developing the distinctive human capital (Hsu, 2008). Knowledge is considered a power that is as relevant to an individuals' competitive advantage as it is to an organization. This adds natural barriers to knowledge sharing; as individuals usually believe that knowledge sharing may lead to loss of their competitive advantage at the workplace. Prevalence of competitiveness

instead of cooperative behavior in organization adds to likeliness of knowledge hoarding (Xue, Liang, Hauser, & O'Hara, 2012). It is therefore important for organizations to identify the factors that could motivate their members to share knowledge (Welschen, Todorova, & Mills, 2012). Although modern organizations fully recognize the strategic importance of knowledge sharing, they have to deal with negative attitude of their employees towards sharing knowledge. 'What makes people share their knowledge?' thus is an important question.

One point of view suggests that incentives can play an important role in encouraging people to share knowledge. Incentives in organizational terms could be pay raise, bonus, and/or reward and recognition plans. However the studies empirically testing this relationship have produced mixed results i.e. whereas some studies have found positive relationship between the two (e.g. Zhang, de Pablos, & Zhou, 2013) others have found no or negative relationship (e.g. Bock & Kim, 2002; Hung, Durcikova, Min Lai, & Mei Lin, 2011). This study examines outcome expectations of individuals as an explanatory factor in knowledge sharing. An outcome expectation is related to a belief about the aftermaths of actions. The concept of outcome expectations is based on the expectancy theory which postulates that people pursue different goals based on the outcomes of these goals; i.e. they are more likely to follow goals they value high than the ones they do not value high or do not value at all (Landry, 2003). Some recent studies have shown that there exists a positive impact of outcome expectations on knowledge sharing (e.g. Chiu, Hsiang Hsu, & Wang, 2006; Hsu., L. Ju, Hui Yen, & Ming Chang, 2007).

Universities are breeding grounds for professional behaviors. Hence the issue of "how knowledge sharing behaviors can be encouraged?" is as relevant (or may be more relevant) in universities as in other organizations (Yuen & Majid, 2007). Accordingly, this study examines the relationship between outcome expectations and knowledge sharing in the university environment. A possible motivator for any action in university environment could be academic performance. It is important for educational institutions to understand which curriculum and non-curriculum related factors impact the academic performance of the students. Especially, it is important for higher education institutions because these institutions produce graduates that directly get immersed into the society for starting their respective careers. Career success of these graduates is contingent upon a variety of factors emanating from their academic and personal life. Human capital theory attributes the differences in career success of various individuals, having similar credentials, to the difference in their capabilities. Social capital theory, however, suggests that in order to leverage human capital of an individual, social capital is required (Burt, 1997). The general idea of social capital theory is that the social networks to which people belong provide them with support in conducting their affairs (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998); and hence these networks can be a productive resource (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). Drawing on this theory, it can be suggested that in academic environment, knowledge sharing within the social networks can also be a source of knowledge gain (and hence competitive advantage) for the students.

Understanding the motivators for knowledge sharing is a critical research area in knowledge management field (Hung et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2013). Considering the plethora of studies that explore various aspects of knowledge management in the organizational settings, there is an unusual dearth of studies that aim to highlight the possible impact of knowledge sharing on performance in an academic setting. There have been examples of such studies in academic environment from the faculty point of view (e.g. Khalil & Shea, 2012), but research studying knowledge sharing behaviors among students is rare. This study seeks to fill this gap by identifying the factors that affect students' knowledge sharing behaviors in their social network. Investigating that 'how' and 'why'

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