

# **KNOWLEDGE SHARING BEHAVIOUR: THE ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY, ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND ORGANISATIONAL TENURE**

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## **Abstract**

There is dearth of information on the combining role of self-efficacy, organisation justice and organisational tenure in the literature and the unflinching role of these three variables in predicting knowledge sharing behaviour could not be overlooked. Therefore, this study investigated the role of self-efficacy, organisational justice and organisational tenure in knowledge sharing behaviour. Three hundred participants comprising of 148 males and 152 females between the age range of 23-47 years with the mean age of 32.62 and SD = 6.63 participated in the study. Self-efficacy Scale and Organisational Justice Scale were employed to gather data from the participants. The result of the Regression Analysis indicated that self-efficacy; organisational justice and organisational tenure significantly independently and jointly predicted knowledge sharing behaviour. The implications of these findings are that self-efficacy; organisational justice and organisational tenure played important roles in knowledge sharing behaviour among employees. The results of these findings were discussed in line with existing theories and literatures and recommendations were made.

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**Keywords:** Self-efficacy, organisational justice, organisational tenure, employees

## **Introduction**

Knowledge sharing behaviour may be a critical tool to determine the development and growth of any organization in this world of global competition and knowledge may be considered as the basic economic resource in this century world economy. It is an important weapon with which organizations could have better opportunity to compete favourably with others in the global market (Bouthilier & Shearer, 2002). Staffing and training may not be adequate for any organization to compete in the global market (Hansen & Avital), but ability to reproduce expertise in employees

(Lin, 2007). Reproduction of expertise in employees may largely depend on the self-efficacy and job tenure of the employees and that is the basis for this research study. It aims at investigating self-efficacy and organizational tenure as predictors of knowledge sharing behaviour. To know the extent of the importance attached to knowledge sharing, many organizations are now spending more in order to be able to march up with the global requirement (Williams, Piure, & Zainuba, 2002). Any organization that effectively and efficiently utilize knowledge may be of greater advantage compare to those that do not and Bontis (1999) and Mickeen, Zack and Singh (2006) reported positive relationship between knowledge management and higher organizational performance. The target of knowledge management should be knowledge sharing (Bouthilier & Shearer, 2002), as this will assists organizations to increase their wealth of knowledge and experience. Knowledge sharing could also encourage transfer of knowledge from higher personnel to people that will be utilizing it and this had also been established by studies that effective knowledge sharing impact positively on organizational performance (Chen, 2006; Jacob & Roodt, 2007; Yang, 2007). The importance of knowledge sharing could not be overemphasized as it assists employees to widen their horizon on knowledge acquired about a particular tasks or assignment in order to avoid or reduce to minimal level the effect of unfruitful learning (Zhang, Tsui & Wang, 2011) and at the same time helps the management to reduce the expenses incur by building on existing knowledge or creating new ideas through knowledge sharing behaviour (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), which may be a great asset for such organization to have an edge above other organizations. So, this study is investigating the predicting power of self-efficacy of individual employee and their tenure in the organization on knowledge sharing behaviour.

Knowledge sharing behaviour could be defined as the voluntary behaviour on the part of an individual to allow other employees gain access to the wealth of knowledge and experience possessed (Hansel & Avital, 2005). This suggests that knowledge sharing behaviour should be the type that comes out of the willingness of the individual employee so as to enjoy the maximum benefit it has to offer any organization. Knowledge sharing behaviour could also be conceptualized as a process of interaction by employees through which ideas are exchanged that eventually give birth to new thoughts and processes of doing things in a better way (Bartol and Srivastava, 2002). Knowledge sharing is all about “give” and “take” behaviour or reciprocating in nature. There must be a giver of knowledge and receiver of knowledge, but whatever category an employee belongs to, willingness to share and receive must be considered an important factor for such exercise to be successful. Knowledge sharing behaviour according to Ipe (2003) could be grouped into four categories, namely; type of

knowledge, motivation to share, available opportunity to share and organisational culture of the workplace of the individual employee. A research study by Lin (2007) revealed that altruistic individual and self-efficacy serve as strong determinants of knowledge sharing behaviour. In addition organizational culture in the dimensions of communication and justice has also been reported to exert influence on knowledge sharing behaviour (Kin & Lee, 2006). This implies that the willingness to share must be propelled and motivated by the prevailing circumstance in each organisation, without which, it may be a little bit difficult to achieve. Some authors have identified reasons why employees might not be willing to share knowledge. These include why sharing knowledge and what to share (Garfield, 2006; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002), how to share and having the thought that some other things are more important than knowledge sharing (Garfield, 2006).

Individual employee could serve as knowledge generator or receptor in which self-efficacy may be a crucial determinant in engaging in such endeavour. Self-efficacy could be considered an important factor that individual employee should possess before such could engage in knowledge sharing behaviour, especially on the part of the donor of knowledge. Self-efficacy may be conceptualized as the assessment of one's own ability based on the mastery of particular job or phenomenon. In addition, self-efficacy deals with employee's judgement of his/her ability to organize and implement a certain course of action, which also determines the involvement of an individual employee in knowledge sharing behaviour (Bandura, 1997). Snyder and Lopez, (2007) further assert that self-efficacy is the belief an employee has in himself that he can accomplish a particular task with his skills in a particular situation and this may be a necessary ingredient in engaging in knowledge sharing behaviour in the workplace. Furthermore, Endres, Endres, Chowdbury and Alam (2007) suggest that personal judgement of one's own abilities determines the commitment of an individual to knowledge sharing. Suffices to say that employee's engagement in knowledge sharing may be a function of self-efficacy, which is the personal assessment of one's own abilities to bring forth the necessary output. Some research studies (e.g. Bandura & Shunk, 1981; Barling & Beatrice, 1983; Bouffard-Bouchard, 1990) reported that self-efficacy influence the choice of one's engagement in a task, the effort expended and the persevering attitude displayed in completing the assignment, and the quality of performance (Locke & Latham, 1990; Mone, 1994; Robertson & Sadri, 1993).

Individual employee would be more involved in activities in which they tend to have high level of self-efficacy than those they perceive to have low self-efficacy (Van der Bijl & Shortridge-Baggett, 2002). As knowledge

sharing behaviour may be determined by self-efficacy of individual employee, likewise self-efficacy may be enhanced by engaging in knowledge sharing behaviour. Research has shown that self-efficacy and attainment of goal were enhanced as a result of knowledge sharing (Roach et al., 2003) and could also be stimulated through self-motivation and organizational policy (Baron & Morin, 2010). This implies that as individual employee has roles to play in enhancing self-efficacy, the organization too is an important instrument that may assist the employees to build on their self-efficacy by engaging in practices that could promote such. Employees with high level of self-efficacy may be more prone and useful to the organization in sharing knowledge and this may assist in overcoming hoarding of knowledge in any organization.

*Hypothesis 1: Self-efficacy will significantly predict knowledge sharing behaviour*

Employees' disposition and response to things that concern the organization may be a function of organizational justice or perception of fairness from the perspective of the employees, although it is not contained in the written documents of the organization, yet it may be a strong determinant of employees' commitment to knowledge sharing behaviour. Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, and de Vera Park, (1993) fairness heuristic posits that employees' perception of justice in one aspect affects the perception he/she has concerning other areas in the organization, which invariably affects the behavioural outcome of employees (Lind et al; 1993). Organizational justice may be defined as the perception of fairness by the employees as regards issues that concern their welfare in an organization. Organizational justice has been defined as the perception and study of fairness within an organization in the treatment of employees in matters relating to them (Moorman, 1991; Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005). With reference to Greenberg (1990), there are three types of organizational justice, which includes; distributive justice, procedural justice and interactive justice. Distributive justice has to do with the perception of equity or fairness in the evaluation and reward system of an organization by employees and this is in accordance with Adams equity theory (1963), which states that individuals compare their effort and reward given and also compare their effort and reward with other employees in the organization. Procedural justice concerns itself with the perception of employees with the methods and processes employed in decision making as regards matters that have to do with welfare of the employees (Ang, Van Dyne, Begley, 2003). Interactive justice deals with the way the employees perceive fairness in respect accorded to them during the course of executing the procedures in the organization (Bies & Moag, 1986). Researches revealed that employees who perceived all-round organizational

justice engage more in behaviour that promotes the growth of the organization (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Paine & Bachrach, 2000). Procedural justice was reported to affect the extent to which an employee engages in extra role activities on behalf of the organization (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Moorman, 1991; Skarlicki & Latham, 2006; Farh, et al, 1990; Schappe, 1998). Perceptions of fairness by the employees in the way they are being treated by the organization motivate them to engage in behaviour that reciprocate for the benefits enjoy from the organization as argued by social exchange theory (Crompanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

*Hypothesis 2: Organizational justice will significantly predict knowledge sharing behaviour.*

Organizational tenure deals with number of years or years of working experience of an individual employee in the organization which may be an important factor that could influence the involvement of an individual employee in knowledge sharing behaviour. Job tenure may be considered important due to the fact that employees that are just being employed may not exercise much trust toward organization unlike those employees that have spent many years and have developed much trust toward the organization. It has been argued that increase in years of working experience leads to increase in trust and commitment which invariably enhances positive correlation between job tenure and knowledge sharing behaviour (Watson & Hewett, 2006). This could be an important point because it has been pointed out by Chowdhury (2006) and Van den Hooff and De Ridder (2004) that both trust and commitment has positive relationship with knowledge sharing behaviour. Bakker, Leenders, Gabbay, Kratzer, and Van Engelen (2006) also reported a positive correlation between organizational tenure and knowledge sharing behaviour. This suggests that as the years of working together increases among employees, their trust level for one another also increases which enhances their involvement in knowledge sharing. Boardia, Irmer and Abusah (2006) revealed from their study that organizational tenure significantly predicted knowledge sharing on interpersonal interaction.

*Hypothesis 3: Job tenure will significantly predict knowledge sharing behaviour.*

## **METHODS**

### **Design and Participants**

An expo facto research design was employed in this study. Three independent variables (self-efficacy, organizational justice and organizational tenure) and one dependent variable were examined in this study. Three hundred participants drawn from private =115 or 38.3% and

public = 185 or 61.7% comprising 148 or 40.3% males and 152 or 50.7% females with the age range between 23-47 years and mean age of 32.62 and SD = 6.63 took part in the study. Their educational qualifications include SSCE = 24 or 8%, NCE/OND = 130 or 43.3%, HND/BSc = 103 or 34.3% and Postgraduate = 43 or 14.3%. As regards the marital status, 102 (34%) were singles, 172 (57.3%) married, 8 (2.7%) divorced, while 18 (6%) widowed. Concerning the job tenure, 152 (50.7%) has spent 5 years, 98 (32.7%) has spent between 5-10 years and 50 (16.7%) has spent 19 years and above in their organizations.

### **Measures**

Self-efficacy was measured using General Self-efficacy Scale (GSES) developed by Schwarzer and Marthias (1979). It is a 21-item scale designed to assess general sense of perceived self-efficacy rated on 4-point scale (1 = not at all true and 6 = exactly true). The reliability coefficient ranged between .76 to .90 but the researcher obtained .85 in this study as the cronbach alpha.

Organizational justice was measured using Organizational Justice Scale developed by Hoy and Tarter (2004). It is a 10-item rated on a 6-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) designed to measure the degree to which fairness operates in an organization. Hoy and Tarter (2004) provided the reliability coefficient of .90, while the researcher obtained .73 as reliability coefficient in this study.

### **Procedure**

After permission had been obtained from relevant authorities of the organizations used for this research, the questionnaires attached with a letter of introduction were administered to the participants in their duty posts after explaining to them the purpose of the study. The researcher with the help of research assistance explained verbally to those who did not understand how to fill the questionnaire. Some of the participants submitted as soon as they finished filling the questionnaires, while some could not do it on the spot. So the researcher had to go back and collect the remaining questionnaires. It took the researcher four weeks to gather the data which was subjected to statistical analysis and even at the point of analysis, some of the questionnaires were not found usable because they were not properly filled. Out of 350 questionnaires distributed, 310 were retrieved in which 300 were found usable.

## Statistical Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the relationship among the study variables; Multiple Regression was employed to test the prediction power of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

## Result

Table 1: Showing the relationship among study variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>1.Organizational Tenure</i>	<i>1</i>			
<i>2.Organizational Justice</i>	<i>-.02</i>	<i>1</i>		
<i>3.Self-efficacy</i>	<i>.09</i>	<i>.14*</i>	<i>1</i>	
<i>Knowledge Sharing Behaviour</i>	<i>-1.27*</i>	<i>.59**</i>	<i>.45**</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>.03</i>	<i>.00</i>	<i>.00</i>	

\*correlation significant at .05level (2tailed) \*\*correlation significant at .01 level (2tailed)

The result of the analysis in table 1 indicated that organizational tenure had negative significant relationship with knowledge sharing behaviour [ $r(298) = -1.27$ ;  $p < .05$ ]. The result also revealed that organizational justice had significant positive association with knowledge sharing behaviour [ $r(298) = .59$ ;  $p < .01$ ]. Furthermore, from the table, self-efficacy had positive relationship with knowledge sharing behaviour [ $r(298) = .45$ ;  $p < .01$ ].

In order to determine the predicting pattern of the independent variables on the dependent variable, Multiple Regression Analysis was employed

Table 2: Showing the prediction pattern of the study variables

<i>Variables</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>1.Organizational Tenure</i>	<i>-.08</i>	<i>-1.98</i>	<i>&lt;.05</i>				
<i>2.Organizational Justice</i>	<i>.54</i>	<i>12.83</i>	<i>&lt;.00</i>	<i>.70</i>	<i>.49</i>	<i>95.46</i>	<i>&lt;.00</i>
<i>3.Self-efficacy</i>	<i>.37</i>	<i>8.73</i>	<i>&lt;.00</i>				

Dependent Variable: Knowledge Sharing Behaviour

From the table 2 above, organizational tenure significantly predicted knowledge sharing behaviour [ $\beta = -.08$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. The result from table 2 also indicated that organizational justice significantly predicted knowledge sharing [ $\beta = .54$ ,  $p < .00$ ]. Self-efficacy from the same table further predicted knowledge sharing behaviour [ $\beta = .37$ ,  $p < .00$ ]. Lastly the three independent variables significantly jointly predicted knowledge sharing behaviour [ $F(3,296) = 95.46$ ;  $p < .00$ ].

## Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of organizational tenure, organizational justice and self-efficacy on knowledge sharing behaviour.

Hypothesis 1 stated that self-efficacy would significantly predict knowledge sharing was confirmed by the analysis in table 2. This implies that individual employee's involvement in knowledge sharing is determined by their level of self-efficacy. In line with this finding, competency and belief in oneself to a greater extent serves as basis for knowledge sharing behaviour. This supported Synder and Lopez (2007), who argued that the belief an employee has in himself that he is competent to accomplish certain task at a particular situation could be seeing as such employee possessing high level of self-efficacy which could enhance knowledge sharing behaviour. In addition, this study supported the thought of Endres et al (2007) that personal assessment of one's own ability determines the commitment to knowledge sharing behaviour. This implies that the level of individual self-efficacy is an important determinant of involvement in knowledge sharing behaviour. This study further corroborated this assertion that self-efficacy influence the choice of task, the effort expended in completing the task and the quality of performance (Bandura & Shunk, 1981; Barling & Beatrice, 1983; Bouffard-Bouchard, 1990; Locke & Latham, 1990; Mone, 1994; Robertson & Sadri, 1993). The study by Van der Bijl and Shortridge-Badget (2002) was supported by the findings from this study, who reported that individual employee were more involved in activities in which they believe that they have high level of self-efficacy than the one they believe that they possess low self-efficacy. From all these findings above, for individual employee to be involved in knowledge sharing behaviour, the level of self-efficacy cannot be overlooked. It is an important determinant in line with the findings from this study. Any employee that is not confidence of his/her ability may not be interested in knowledge sharing.

Hypothesis 2 which also stated that organizational justice would significantly predict knowledge sharing behaviour was also confirmed by the analysis in table 2. This implies that perception of organizational justice by the employees influences their engagement in knowledge sharing behaviour. This supported the assertion of Podsakoff et al, (2000), that employees engage more in behaviour that promotes the growth of the organization when they perceive all-round fairness in the organization's dealings with the employees. This study also supported the study conducted by Konovsky and Pugh (1994) and Skarlicki and Latham (2006) that procedural justice had been found to exert influence on employees' engagement in extra role in which knowledge sharing may be considered as one of these roles. Engagement in behaviour that could reciprocate for the benefits enjoyed from the organization by the employees has also been reported to be influenced by organizational justice as perceived by the employees (Crompanzano & Mitchell, 2005). From these findings, it is clear that the perception of organizational justice by the employees played an important



role in involvement of employees in knowledge sharing behaviour. When an employee perceives that he is not fairly treated by the organization, he may be reluctant to engage in knowledge sharing behaviour which is one of the ways the organization could benefit from the employee and at the same time enhances the growth of such organization.

The third hypothesis which stated that organization tenure would significantly predict knowledge sharing behaviour was further confirmed by the analysis in table 2. This supported the work of Watson and Hewett (2006), who reported a positive correlation between organization tenure and knowledge revealing that increase in years, spent in the organization leads to increase in trust among employees which promotes knowledge sharing behaviour. In addition, a positive association between organization tenure and knowledge sharing behaviour was reported by Bakker et al (2006), which was also supported by this study. This study further supported Boardia, et al (2006), who reported from their study that organizational tenure significantly predicted knowledge sharing on interpersonal interaction. This implies that period spent together by members of a team or department in an organization could enhance knowledge sharing because, during those period of interaction, the employees involved would have developed certain level of trust (Chowdbury, 2005) and commitment (Van den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004) would have developed and these have been found according to these authors to positive association with knowledge sharing behaviour.

### **Conclusion and Implication**

This study examined the role of self-efficacy, organizational justice and organizational tenure in predicting knowledge sharing behaviour. Findings from this study in line with the hypotheses stated revealed that self-efficacy significantly predict knowledge sharing behaviour, meaning that self-efficacy is an important factor to be considered for any employee to exhibit knowledge sharing behaviour.

The study also revealed that organizational justice significantly predicted knowledge sharing behaviour, which implies that perception of employees as regards all-round justice fairness in matters relating to them is also an important determinant of employees' involvement in knowledge sharing in any organization.

Lastly, organizational tenure as a factor further predicted knowledge sharing behaviour, meaning that the periods spent together by employees as team members goes a long way to determine their involvement in knowledge sharing behaviour, because during the period of working and interaction of the employees, certain level of trust and commitment would have developed that could enhance knowledge sharing behaviour.

The implications of these findings are that both at the individual level and group level, self-efficacy enhanced for the organization to benefit from the wealth of experience or knowledge of the employees that could enhance organizational growth. In addition, organizational justice should not be played down as this serves as motivational push for employees to share their knowledge when they perceive fairness in the way they are being treated by the organization.

Furthermore, organization should not be interested in recruiting of new employees from time to time, but engage in policies and practices that can assist to retain the employees as the period spent together as team members by employees could enhance knowledge sharing behaviour as trust and commitment would have developed the longer the time spent together.

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