
Impact of knowledge sharing on organizational learning: Moderating effect of organizational leadership

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ABSTRACT

The connection between knowledge sharing and organizational learning is of fundamental significance to any organization specially for banking sector. If an organization is able to enhance its learning by sharing knowledge, then it can operate more effectively. This study is related with finding out the relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning with the moderating role of leadership. Data was collected through questionnaires by adopting the cluster sampling. Total 130 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 103 usable responses were received given the study a response rate of 79%. Descriptive statistics, simple linear regression and correlation techniques were used to analyze the data. Findings of data support that there is a relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning. Moreover leadership plays a strong positive role as a moderator and facilitates the relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning. This study is beneficial for the banking sector leadership and management to improve the performance in the long run because a strong learning orientation is needed to maintain a competitive edge over growing number of competitors. This research will contribute in improving the learning of banking sector through knowledge sharing by understanding and enhancing the roles of leaders.

Key words: Knowledge Sharing, Organizational Learning, Organizational Leadership, Tacit Knowledge and Explicit Knowledge.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Today's business environment is characterized by fast, unexpected and dramatic changes. Therefore organizations need to learn to cope with these unexpected and dramatic changes. This learning is at two levels at individual level as well as of organizational level. Individual learn new skills, capabilities and efficient ways to perform their jobs from both the internal and external sources. Therefore sharing knowledge in the minds of customers and in the hard form is critical for the success and learning for the employees and organization. Managers and employees must have to be adaptive learners not only the high performers for the success of their organization (Karaevli and Hall, 2006). Previous researchers identified variety of elements that effects the knowledge sharing. One key element is the type of knowledge mainly the Tacit and explicit. In the words of Huang the sharing of explicit knowledge is

much easier and quick than tacit knowledge because explicit knowledge is in hard form (Huang, Davison, and Gu, 2011). Literature suggests that sharing of knowledge is also influenced by the leadership performance, commitment and support (Lee, Gillespie, Mann, and Wearing, 2010). A leader is demonstrated as a “knowledge builder” by Mann (Mann, Bain, Atkins, and Dunning, 2005). Reige concludes that leaders influence knowledge sharing behaviors within the organization through leading, by asserting that sharing of ideas is critical for success and efficiency (Reige, 2005). The purpose of this research is to show the impact of knowledge sharing on organization learning with moderating effect of leadership performance. This relationship is identified to increase the organizational effectiveness, efficiency, productivity through organizational learning.

1.2 Significance of the study

Previous researches show that much focus is given on explicit knowledge sharing by formal learning and use of electronic means of learning is not as much valued even in today’s era of technology. Therefore, a strong need is felt to study the impact of sharing tacit as well as explicit knowledge with one another in the organization by using informal face to face chats and communications as well as through the use of electronic means. Moreover banking sector needs to focus on learning orientation to maintain a competitive edge over the growing number of competitors and to improve the performance in the long run. This research will contribute in improving the learning of banking sector through knowledge sharing by understanding and enhancing the roles of leaders.

1.3 Broad and specific problem area

Banking sector is one of the key financial areas of the economy. Effective performance of banking sector plays a very important role for the development and progress of overall economy and business sector. In order to gain a competitive edge over competitors, innovation and profitability banking sector needs to adapt changing needs and demands of customers as well as of work environment and need to change accordingly. Therefore it is observed that banking sector needs strong learning orientation. This learning is through proper knowledge management practices including knowledge sharing. Knowledge is mainly of two types e.g. tacit and explicit so, banks need to manage and share both type of knowledge for individual and organizational learning. Literature suggests that tacit knowledge is hard to share as it is observed that employees do not have informal meetings with their leaders and co workers to share their experiences and work related knowledge in banking sector. Moreover it is also accessed that the use of state of art technology in knowledge sharing is also very limited in the banking sector of Pakistan. Leader’s role can also play a very effective role in various knowledge sharing practices as it can hinder or motivate the employees to actively participate in knowledge sharing practices. Some major problems observed are as follows

1. Lack of knowledge sharing practices in banking sector for effective learning.
2. Lack of opportunities to share and discuss the tacit knowledge with one another in the organization as well as with external sources of knowledge.
3. State of art Information technology is not used as it is being used in many developing countries for the free flow of information and knowledge sharing in banking sector.
4. Leadership role is normally ignored in learning through knowledge sharing. Understanding the role of leadership is necessary.

Therefore research is conducted to evaluate the relationship between knowledge sharing and organization learning with the moderating effects of leadership performance.

2. Literature review

2.1 Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing is a process of transfer of knowledge among employees or among the firm (Gravin, 1993). Effective knowledge sharing is influenced by nature of knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be shared easily as compared to tacit knowledge through use of formal methods of training and development but it is more important to share tacit knowledge for effective learning and development (Carmican and Dooley, 2007). Lall emphasized that knowledge sharing is often seen as occurring through a dynamic process of learning whereby organization interact with its customers and suppliers on continuous basis for the purpose of innovation or imitation (Lall, 2000). Knowledge sharing requires a sharing mind set along with sharing of vision, values, communication and information based on trust and openness among the employees (Ipe, 2003).

2.2 Organizational learning

Organization learning refers to “the processes by which new knowledge and information are applied with the goal of improve routines and performance” (Simon, 1991). Bell define learning as the collection of all those process by which the additional technical skills and knowledge is acquired by the individual employees and then by the organization. This basically results in the learning of the organization based on individual knowledge (Tran and Thuhang, 2008). Research of Dodgson asserts Organizational learning is the way by which the firms build, supplement, and then organize knowledge according to the activities and prevailing cultures for the development of organization through wide use of skills and knowledge of individual employees (Dodgson, 1993). Organizational learning is a result of individual learning although individual learning does not always guarantee organizational learning but without it organizational learning is not possible (senge, 1994).

2.3 Leadership

“Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement” (Rauch and Behling). Crawford explained in his research that the main part of leadership performance in every organization is related with change that occurs in the processes, policies, strategies, rules and regulations, leadership behaviors, leadership performance, organizational cultures and environments etc. It is not a small change but a considerable change that has great impact on the organizational performance activities and the leadership performance and behaviors. He said that Leaders are made not born but the way they develop is difficult for organizational change (Crawford C. B., 2008).

2.4 Knowledge sharing and leadership

Study conducted by Xiong and Deng conclude people as the main entity of knowledge sharing process because knowledge mainly retains in the minds of individuals. They assert that knowledge sharing starts from individual level and then spread to the organizational level. Moreover study shows that effectiveness of knowledge sharing depends on various factors and leadership style and performance is the most important and effective among them (Xiong and Deng, 2008). Leaders are considered as the persons who are responsible for establishing

a culture that respects knowledge either of tacit or explicit nature, reinforce the sharing of knowledge, retain the human capital and builds commitment, trust and loyalty for the organization in the long run (Bollinger and Smith, 2001).

2.5 Organizational learning and leadership

Research carried by (Bierly, Kessler, and Christensen, 2000) conclude that the leaders quality of inspiring others, individual consideration and charismatic personality improve the organizational learning and overall competitive advantage. (Kotter, 1990) suggests that leadership causes movement in any organization and bring change that may be positive or negative. They brought the change by giving employees direction and motivation to learn and adopt change and to overcome the barriers in their way of improvement and learning. Leadership plays a vital role in enhancing organizational and individual learning. The leaders learn to lead others through observation, education, experience and trial and errors (Zemke, 1985).

2.6 Knowledge sharing and organizational learning

Winter asserts that knowledge sharing is one element of overall knowledge management that helps an organization to make it more competitive and encourage its learning and innovation capabilities (Winter, 1987). Kharabsheh concludes that there is a positive relationship between learning orientation and knowledge sharing. This relation helps in gaining the competitive advantage (Kharabsheh, 2007). The research study of Dibella and Nevis suggest that organizations learn on continuous basis to maintain a competitive advantage. The learning capability of organization is developed through three stages of knowledge management including knowledge acquisition, knowledge utilization and knowledge sharing (Dibella, Nevis, and Gould, 1996). Weerawardena concludes organization learning as a combination of four learning activities namely knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization and unlearning (Weerawardena, 200).

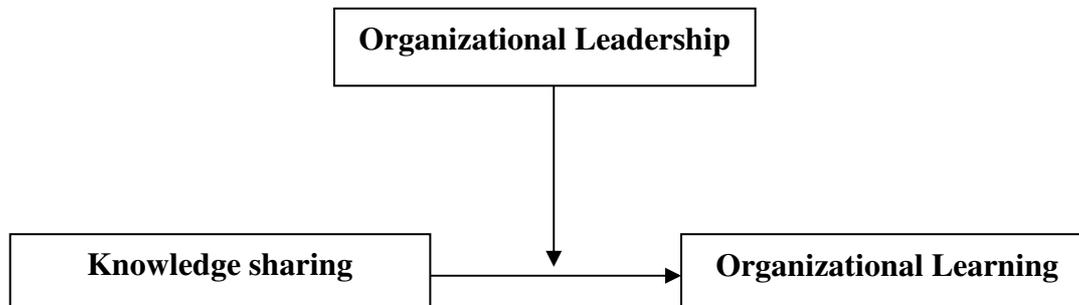
2.7 Literature gap

Banking sector of Pakistan is playing a vital role in the development of economy. Over the last few years a significant increase can be seen in the number of bank branches across the country. This rapidly increasing number of branch network of bank shows immense competition among the local and foreign banks. To remain and perform well in this intense competition banks need innovation, competitive edge, better and efficient staff, sharing and learning environment. Banking sector now a days is changing its way of doing things as technology is playing a key role in businesses so, literature suggests that banks are taking advantage of technology for individual and organizational learning. Modern organizations are knowledge based that face dynamic business environment and scarce resources therefore managing knowledge is of primary interest for efficiency (Jansen, Van den, and Volberda, 2006).

Literature shows that employee knowledge is mainly of two types tacit and explicit. Explicit knowledge is documented and easily shared as compared to tacit knowledge because it is not in hard form. Therefore, a strong need is felt to draw a mechanism to share the tacit knowledge of employees by using various technological ways to judge its effect on individual and organizational learning.

(Hansen, Mors, and Lovas, 2005) Recognized the importance of knowledge sharing in business settings but it is observed that traditional motivational theories of management e.g. expectancy theory and social cognitive theory of motivation are not employed to facilitate knowledge sharing environment (Quigley, Tesluk, Locke, and Bartol, 2007). Therefore it is of worth consideration to judge the impact that leaders have on employees for sharing and maintaining a sharing environment within organization.

3. Conceptual Framework



Conceptual Framework

3.1 Research aims and objectives

3.1.1 Main objectives

The basic objective of this study is to explore and understand the relation between the knowledge sharing practices and organizational learning with the moderating effects of leadership performance.

3.1.2 Sub objectives

1. To explore the relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning
2. To explore the relationship between organizational leadership and knowledge sharing
3. To explore the relationship between organizational leadership and organizational learning

3.2 Hypothesis

The research model presented in the study openly shows all possible relationships by connecting the three constructs. To confirm these relationships a literature search was conducted to find the theoretical evidence upon which the hypothetical relationship is built and presented in this study. This study will help to test following hypothesis.

H1: Null Hypotheses (H₀): There is no relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning

Alternate Hypotheses (H₁): There is a relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning

H2: Null Hypotheses (H₀): Relationship between Knowledge sharing and Organizational learning will be negatively moderated by leadership

Alternate Hypotheses (H₁): Relationship between Knowledge sharing and Organizational learning will be positively moderated by leadership

4. Research methodology

The organizational learning concept is developed in this study with the impact of knowledge sharing and organizational leadership performance. Qualitative survey is employed to empirically examine the hypotheses proposed in the research framework. The prepared questionnaires were distributed to 130 selected bank employees of Gujrat city. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample from the established Clusters of four major banks of Gujrat MCB, UBL, ABL and Punjab bank. Only 103 employees returned the completed questionnaires which provided this study with a response rate of 79%. Questionnaire was classified into different sections.

4.1 Population Frame

The target population for this research study is the banking sector of Gujrat city and it includes the workers employed in the baking organization. The survey population is the employees working in the four major banks namely UBL, ABL, MCB and Punjab Bank. The result of the survey is generalized to entire banking sector of Gujrat city.

4.2 Unit of Analysis

4.3

The unit of analysis for this research is the employees working in the banks of Gujrat city.

4.3 Sample Selection

The population is divided into different clusters for sample selection. Four major clusters are targeted including MCB, UBL, ABL and Punjab Bank. Sample size of this research is consisted of 130 respondents from the branches of banks in the selected clusters. Simple random sampling technique is used to select the respondents from the clusters.

4.4 Type of study

Cross sectional study design and simple random sampling was used to draw sample from the selected clusters. Qualitative survey was employed to empirically examine the hypothesis proposed in the research framework.

4.5 Instrument Development/Selection

To collect the relevant data from the target population, questionnaire survey was employed based on the previous validated and tested instruments in the literature. Minor modifications and changes were done where necessary as per the research context. The research questionnaire consisted of two sections demographic and subjective. The first section consisted of Gender, Age, and work experience of the respondents. The subjective section comprised of the variables the knowledge sharing, organizational learning and the leadership practices within banking organizations. All these items are rated using a five point item likewise Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

4.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics and multiple regression techniques were used for the analysis of the data and Pearson's moment correlation is calculated which tested the relationship of the knowledge sharing and the organizational learning with moderating effects of leadership.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

By using Cronbach's Alpha, a reliability test was carried out which measures the internal consistency and reliability of the research constructs. The minimum acceptable limit of alpha value is 0.60 (Hair, Tathan, Black, Babin, and Anderson, 2009). The following table shows that the results of alpha values for all the constructs (Knowledge Sharing, Organizational Learning and Leadership) are above the recommended value. It is then rightly said that the scale has a high level of internal consistency and reliability. In another way the items used in questionnaire measures exactly what they are intended to measure. Results of the test shows that answers obtained from respondents are normally distributed (sig 2-tailed < 0.05) and therefore data is valid for the further analysis.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha of Research Constructs

Research Constructs	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Knowledge Sharing	15	0.768
Organizational Leadership	09	0.811
Organizational Learning	10	0.812

Total number of Observations (N) = 103

5.1 Descriptive Statistics Results

The first section of the questionnaire measures the basic demographics of the respondents. Table.2 below shows that the research sample consisted of 67 male (65%) and 36 females (35%).

Table 2: Distribution of Research respondents according to Gender

Variable Name	Frequency	Percentage
Male	67	65.0
Female	36	35.0
Total	103	100.0

The Table.3 below shows the complete descriptive of all research constructs

Table 3: Descriptive statistics Results

Variables	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance
Knowledge Sharing	2.47	4.73	3.7903	0.43710	0.191
Leadership	2.89	5.00	3.9644	0.49457	0.245
Organizational Learning	2.70	5.00	3.8428	0.49340	0.243
Gender	0	1	0.35	0.479	0.230

Valid N (list wise) 103

The above table shows that mean value of knowledge sharing is 3.7903 that shows positive tendency of the respondents. This value is close to the absolute value of 4 which shows that the knowledge sharing has an important impact on organizational learning. The standard deviation of knowledge sharing is 0.43710 which shows that almost 44% respondents had variation in their responses. The mean value of moderator organizational leadership is 3.9644 which is equal to 4 shows a positive tendency of respondents, means respondents agree on the proposed relationship that leadership might affect the relationship of knowledge sharing and organizational learning. Standard deviation of leadership is 0.49457 which shows that almost 49% had variation in their responses. The mean value of organizational learning is 3.8428 that show positive tendency of the respondents. This value is close to 4 which show that the knowledge sharing practices has significant impact on learning.

5.2 Correlation Results

To test the hypothesis 1 correlation analysis was used to determine the strength of relationship between independent variable knowledge sharing and dependent variable organizational learning. Moreover the same correlation technique was used to test the relationship of leadership with knowledge sharing and organizational learning separately. The results of the correlation analysis shows that the relationship between the variables are significant on 0.01 level of significance ($P\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.01$). This shows that there is a relationship between leadership and knowledge sharing, leadership and organizational learning and knowledge sharing and organizational learning.

The correlation of knowledge sharing regarding leadership performance is 0.598 and regarding organization learning is 0.579. The correlation of leadership regarding organizational learning is 0.668. The above table suggests that there is strong positive relationship between leadership and knowledge sharing, leadership and organizational learning and lastly strong positive relationship exist between knowledge sharing and organizational learning.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

		Knowledge Sharing	Leadership	Organizational Learning
Knowledge Sharing	Pearson Correlation	1	0.598**	0.579**
	Sig (2-Tailed)		0.000	0.000
	N	103	103	103
Leadership	Pearson Correlation	0.598**	1	0.668**
	Sig (2-Tailed)	0.000		0.000
	N	103	103	103
Organizational Learning	Pearson Correlation	0.579**	0.668**	1
	Sig (2-Tailed)	0.000	0.000	
	N	103	103	103

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-Tailed)
 N=103

5.3 Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis of this study. In order to check the role of moderating variable i.e. leadership first the interaction variable was created. After this the main effect was checked by simple linear regression. Interaction effect was analyzed by same simple linear regression technique. Main effect for this study includes Knowledge sharing and Leadership and interaction term was created by taking product of knowledge sharing and leadership scores. Following table shows the results of the regression analysis

Table 5: Regression Analysis of the relationship between Research Constructs

Coefficient	t	Sig.	Beta	Durbin Watson	R	R ²
Knowledge Sharing	7.142	0.000	0.579	1.863	0.579	0.336
Leadership	9.016	0.000	0.668	1.943	0.668	0.446
Knowledge Sharing x Leadership	9.700	0.000	0.694	2.022	0.694	0.482

Dependent Variable: Organizational Learning
 Sig: 0.000, N = 103

First null hypothesis for this study show that there is no relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning which was rejected by the results of regression analysis ($\beta = 0.579$, P-Value < 0.05) and alternate hypothesis is accepted that states there is a

relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning. The results of the regression analysis again reject the second null hypothesis that there is negative moderating effect of leadership between knowledge sharing and organizational learning because the table shows that the value of R² increases from 0.336 to 0.482 by adding moderating effect of leadership between knowledge sharing and organizational learning. Moreover the value of R for knowledge sharing is 0.579 which shows that 58% variation in organization learning is due to knowledge sharing. For knowledge sharing x leadership R = 0.694 which shows almost 69% variation in learning is due to the knowledge sharing and the moderating effect of leadership .So null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted that there is a positive moderating effect of leadership between knowledge sharing and organizational learning ($\beta = 0.694$, P-Value < 0.05).

Table 6: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	Beta	S.E	Beta		
Constant	1.364	0.349		3.906	0.000
Knowledge Sharing	0.654	0.092	0.579	7.142	0.000

Dependent Variable: Organizational Learning
 Sig: 0.000, N = 103

Regression line for the study is presented as

$$\text{Organizational Learning} = 1.364 + 0.579 \text{ Knowledge Sharing}$$

This equation shows that one percent change in knowledge sharing practices will bring 58% change in organizational learning.

5.4 Findings

Table 7: Summary of Research Alternative hypothesis and Decisions

Hypothesis		Decision
H1	H0: There is no relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning	Rejected
	H1: There is a relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning	Accepted
H2	H0: Relationship between Knowledge sharing and Organizational learning will be negatively moderated by leadership	Rejected
	H1: Relationship between Knowledge sharing and Organizational learning will be positively moderated by leadership	Accepted

5.5 Delimitations

There are certain delimitations of the study as there can be other factors having an impact on the learning of the organization but this study investigates only knowledge sharing with the effects of leadership performance although there can be other moderating variables e.g. organization culture and employees commitment towards their organization. Moreover, the results of this study can be generalized to the banking sector as data is collected from three major banks of Gujrat city.

5.6 Conclusion

This research empirically study the effect of knowledge sharing on the learning organizations with moderating effects of leadership in banking sector. To better capture the relationship a unified conceptual model was proposed. This study therefore offers empirical evidences in support of proposed relationships. Study proved that organizational learning is predicted by knowledge sharing among the employees within the organization and with external persons. While also the sharing of moderating effect of leadership played between knowledge sharing and learning. Results suggests that practitioners in banking sector that are working to develop knowledge sharing should work and focus more on enhancing and strengthening the leadership skills and to device a mechanism that foster sharing attitude among employees Both employees and organization can get benefit from organizational learning as it can enhance adaptability to innovation and risk management that will add in the revenue side for the organization. This research paper has valuable contribution in the literature as it studies the effect of leadership as a moderating variable. Most of the studies found in literature were conducted to draw the effects of culture and formal sharing of ideas. This paper focuses on sharing of both tacit and explicit knowledge in formal as well as in an informal setting by using state of the art technology and with the support of the leadership. To conclude this paper finds out the relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational learning. Moreover also prove the positive moderating effects of leadership between knowledge sharing and organizational learning.

5.7 Future directions

This study is conducted at one point in time so cross sectional design may hide some of the insights which can be seen in longitudinal study design. This research was conducted only on employees of banking sector located in one city this could restrict the research to one location only and sample size was also small. Future research can be conducted by taking cross cultural sample which can provide even more insights about the knowledge sharing, organizational learning and leadership in cross cultural context by considering the diversity in different cultures. Further additional measures can be taken to measure the organizational learning.

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