An Incorporated Structure of Perceived Organizational Support, Knowledge-Sharing Behavior, Organizational Trust and Organizational Commitment: A Strategic Knowledge Management Approach

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Abstract

The research aimed to determine an integrated framework of perceived organizational support, organizational trust, organizational commitment and knowledge-sharing behaviors of glass manufacturing plant employees in Malaysia. The total 159 responses were reported from the respondents working in different parts of Malaysia from 20 different palm oil manufacturing plants. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics using SPSS (version 18). In addition, to measure the cause and effect relationship of mediating variables LISREL (version 9) was utilized. Findings of the research indicate that dimensions of perceived organizational support, organizational trust, and organizational commitment have positive mediating effect on knowledge-sharing behavior. Moreover, organizational commitment fully mediates the relationships between perceived organizational support and knowledge-sharing behavior and between organizational trust and knowledge-sharing behavior. Furthermore, perceived organizational support is positively correlated with organizational trust.

Keywords: knowledge-sharing behavior, organizational commitment, organizational trust, perceived organizational support

1. Introduction and Proposed Model

Competitiveness of a firm is characterized by the extreme global stiff competition and quick delivery of quality products and services among customers. In such type of economies, one thing is increasingly becoming important source of firm's competitiveness and i.e. knowledge. As per extant literature, knowledge is one of the sources that can strengthen firm's core competencies and it can help in providing necessary resources for a firm to compete and innovate (Bollinger & Smith, 2001; Teece, 1998). Previous studies in the field of knowledge management primarily focused on strategic implications and applications in knowledge management processes (Teece, 1998). From the aspects of knowledge-based firms, knowledge has been acknowledged in studies of strategic management as most important strategic asset for an organization to sustain a competitive edge (Grant, 1997). Recently, knowledge management (KM) remained successful in capturing the attentions of management scholars and practitioners of various organizations as a major source contributing toward theoretical and practical fields alike (Chiang, Han, Chuang, 2011). In the same sense, knowledge sharing behavior plays an important role in process of knowledge management as it contributes to the conception and application of knowledge. However, many factors contribute toward knowledge management such as knowledge coding, knowledge adoption, knowledge utilization, knowledge storage and knowledge sharing among these factors knowledge sharing is considered as most significant part of knowledge management. They further asserted that knowledge sharing leads the organizational members to collect knowledge more easily and briskly as it helps them not only to complete the cycle of knowledge management but also by enhancing the KM performance (Chiang et al., 2011).

Moreover, perceived organizational (POS) can be defined as "the overall extent to which employees believe that their organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being" (Eisenberger et al., 1986). In addition, organizational commitment can be defined as the identification and involvement of an individual with an organization (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Likewise, Chiang et al. (2011) discussed that there is positive relationship between perceived organizational support and organizational commitment because when employees perceive organizational support, the relationship between organization and employee changes. Further, Aselage and Eisenberger (2003) quoted the higher the quality of POS lead to higher organizational commitment of employees and lesser the notice of discrepancies to the organization which results in higher productivity. Likewise, organizational commitment is considered as an important factor in performance of an organization and committed employees willingly assert extra efforts to accomplish the organizational objectives (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). Organizational commitment further has two branches; affective and normative commitment. The emotional attachment of employees toward the organization is called affective commitment and normative commitment refers the moral obligation of an employee to remain with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). On the other side, organizational trust (OT) is one of the major sources of organizational commitment. Likewise, Kim and Mauborgne (1998) opined that employee trust is reflected in a degree to which they trust in their organizations and leaders. Trust is further classified into two parts, cognition-based trust and affect-based trust (Aryee et al., 2002). According to them cognition-based trust refers to the beliefs of reliability, dependability and competency of individual employees used to evaluate their ability to carry out the responsibilities.

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Similarly, affect-based trust reveals that it is the emotional attachment of an individual which results in mutual care among members of organizations.

Furthermore, knowledge sharing, perceived organization support and organizational commitment have been discussed in variety of organizations from different parts of the world. For instance, Gutierrez (2012) discussed the relationships between organizational commitment and organizational support in nursing sector across USA and concluded that POS is positively correlated with organizational commitment. Another study was floated among the HRM practitioners discussing the relationship between organizational trust, knowledge-sharing behavior, organizational commitment and perceived organizational support in Taiwan with similar findings (Chiang, Han, Chuang, 2011). Additionally Islam et al. (2013) discussed the perceived organizational support and organizational commitment are negatively correlated with employee turnover intentions in banking sector of Malaysia, moreover, organizational commitment, organizational trust have been extended to teaching sectors of Turkey (Celep, 2012). The extant of literature demonstrates there is potential to discuss the relationship between perceived organizational support, organizational trust and knowledge sharing behaviors and organizational commitment in different sectors to extend the validity of the variables. For the reason, the study is an endeavor to test the mediating effect of organizational commitment and knowledge sharing behavior of Malaysian palm oil employees between POS and OT and organizational knowledge, task knowledge and interpersonal knowledge. An integrated framework was developed with reasonable literature support.
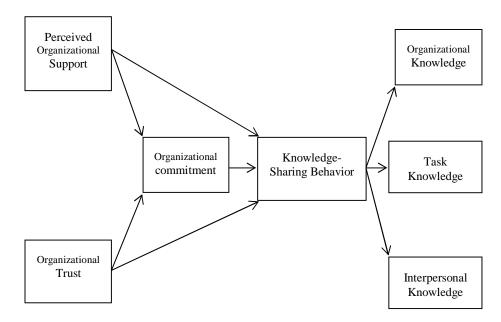

Figure 1: Proposed Model/Framework of the Study

2. Review of Literature

Knowledge management has long been an eye catching concept in recent studies. Studies related to knowledge management and information technologies majorly focused on the

technological and operational aspects of knowledge management, that's why these studies neglected other different important aspects of knowledge management processes which are related to the individual knowledge behavior of employees in an organization (Bollinger & Smith, 2001). In addition, knowledge sharing is also an important step in the knowledge management (Wasko & Faraj 2005) because it can help the organizations to leverage their most valued asset in shape of employees by sharing their knowledge with each other. In the absence of effective knowledge sharing, organizations may fail to integrate critical knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) of experts to accomplish innovative and complex work (Breu & Hemingway, 2004). Furthermore, Dyer and Nobeoka (2000) expressed the concept of knowledge sharing as it is the combination of activities that contribute to individual and organizational goals assist people to work together and exchange their knowledge and improve organizational learning capacity. Similarly, organizational support theory (OST) (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995) affirms that to assess the benefits of increased work efforts and to meet socio-emotional needs, employees develop a general perception about the organizations' values, their contributions and cares about their well-being. Perceived organizational support may increase the employees' feelings of obligations to help organization in the achievement of its objectives, their expectation and their commitment to organization so that the improved performance can be achieved (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002; Shore & Shore, 1995).

Furthermore, perceived organizational support serves as basis for the trust in organizations so that extra efforts can be observed and rewarded on its behalf (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Shore & Shore, 1995). Likewise, Levinson (1965) opined that organizational employees perceive the organizational representatives' actions as the actions of organization rather than personal motives of her representatives. Similarly, in previous literature, there is positive relationship between favorable job conditions and perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1997). Organizational support theory (OST) states that perceived organizational support promotes affective organizational commitment by coping up socio-emotional needs of employees, for instance, esteem needs, approval, and emotional support (Armeli et al., 1998; Eisenberger et al., 1986). However, employees feel that the received organizational support should be reciprocated by affective commitment to the organization (Rhoades et al., 2001). Moreover, Eisenberger et al. (2001) argued that this felt obligation mediates the relationship between affective commitment and perceived organizational support. As perceived organizational support is referred as how much the employees' contribution are valued in organization and how much organization cares about them (Allen et al., 2008). According to OST, employees work harder in return for a high level of support and they exert extra efforts to achieve the organizational goals (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003) because job satisfaction and organizational commitment are significantly affected by organizational support(Aube et al., 2007; Riggle et al., 2009). Aryee et al. (2002) argued that organizational trust can be divided into two types; affect-based trust and cognition-based trust. Moreover, the trust of employees toward management team can be mirrored in their trust of a leader and organization (Kim & Mauborgne, 1998).

In addition, through social exchange processes, the development of employee's trust can be explained as organizational actions and reciprocation (Whitener, 2001). Additionally, the employees who trust management team are more supportive members to

organizational actions (Whitener, 2001). Organizational commitment stems three components of commitment i.e. continuance commitment, normative commitment and affective commitment. Affective commitment can be defined as the emotional attachment of employees, their organizational identification and their involvement in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Likewise, normative commitment can be expressed as the feelings of employees as obligation to remain with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Continuance commitment is defined as a commitment that is based on the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Organizational commitment refers to stabilizing or obliging the employees psychologically that binds individuals to courses of action relevant to the organization (Bentein et al., 2005). According to Hackett et al. (2001) organizational commitment can be defined as an employee's belief and loyalty toward the organization.

Moreover, organizational commitment is not an objective measure rather a subjective measure, which is used to capture the perception of employees about their identification with organizational core values, their willingness to exert more effort than expected by their organization and their desire to stay with the organization and (Mowday et al., 1979). Additionally, Klein et al. (1999) asserted that organizational commitment is critical for meeting the challenging goals (Klein et al., 1999) because these type of goals oblige more efforts as complex and challenging goals involve lower chances of success (Latham, 2007). Additionally, organizational commitment has been abstracted as a mindset or psychological state that put obligation to individuals to complete a required course of action relevant to given target(s) and their readiness to strive for the accomplishment of a given action (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005). Porter et al. (1974) discussed that organizational commitment is acceptance of organizational goals, and is a strong belief in toward organizational goals. Further, it is willingness to exert extra efforts for organizational goals and a willingness to be the part of particular organization (Porter et al., 1974). Here it is important to consider that commitment is different from motivation. As commitment influences individual behaviors independently for other attitudes and motive, and therefore, May lead to consistent course of action despite of having conflicts with motives (Meyer et al., 2004; Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). Organizational commitment has long been source of interest for researchers and practitioners due to its particular characteristics. It has been reported in several studies by demonstrating a positive relationship to work behaviors such as high productivity, job satisfaction and low turnover (Cohen, 2003).

Organizations are constantly looking ways to arise and increase the commitment among employees because organizational commitment is translated to get the competitive edge as it ultimately results in improved work attitudes job satisfaction, performance, reduced absenteeism and employee turnover intentions (Lok & Crawford, 2001). In addition, knowledge sharing is described as the disclosure of task information and to collaborate with peers and colleagues to solve given problems, and trying to develop new ideas (Cummings, 2004). Knowledge sharing can become possible through face-to-face communications or written correspondence or through relations with other experts, or organizing, documenting and capturing knowledge for others (Cummings, 2004). Further, Cummings (2004) asserted that knowledge management is consisted on knowledge adoption, knowledge storage, knowledge coding, knowledge utilization, knowledge sharing, and among them knowledge sharing is the most critical aspect of knowledge

management. Similarly, Gold et al. (2001) stated that organizational innovation and core values can be effectively facilitated by knowledge sharing. In addition, knowledge creation traditionally happens through integration and exchange of knowledge elements (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Likewise, perceived organizational support produces improvement in positive attitudes and behaviors like normative and affective commitment (Aube et al., 2007; Riggle et al., 2009). According to Maslach et al. (2001) perceived organizational support is strongly correlated with positive leadership behavior, while insufficient leader support may lead to employees toward job burnout and job dissatisfaction. Additionally, leadership behavior and perceived organizational support are significant factors to get the desired work outcomes, like reducing turnover intention and increasing commitment (Connell et al., 2003). Furthermore, employees having perceived organizational support develop long-term relationship and trust with the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1990). Perceived organizational support is positively and significantly correlated with employee's trust (Whitener, 2010).s

Similarly, employees having high degree of perceived organizational supports relatively are more willing to remain with that particular organization (Allen et al., 2003) and on the job these employees perform well (Eisenberger et al., 1990). Moreover, Allen et al. (2003) discussed that employees receiving organizational care and perceived organizational support would have a better rate of job satisfaction, job performance, attendance, organizational citizenship behavior and having positive commitment to an organization. Likewise, employees with higher level of trust may improve their commitment as they accept the responsibilities for assigned tasks of organization (Tremblay et al., 2010). Organizational trust is positively and significantly related with behavior of extra-role (Tyler, 2003; Gould-Williams, 2007). According to Andrews and Delahaye (2000) organizational trust is helpful in predicting knowledge-sharing behavior of employees and attitude. Moreover, organizational support for knowledge sharing can be exhibited by highlighting and sharing lessons learned from mistakes instead of letting employees to commit the mistakes (Teo, 2005). Therefore, organizational justice and trust is significant as knowledge sharing includes providing knowledge to other persons such as a community of practice or team and also expecting for the same from others (Wu et al., 2007). Additionally, organizational trust has also been examined as a mediator or antecedent of knowledge sharing at the team and dyadic levels (Mooradian et al., 2006; Wu et al., 2007). Moreover, Hislop (2003) discussed that organizational commitment can also be used as a predictor of employees' attitude and knowledge-sharing behavior. As employees' perceptions of the knowledge-sharing culture and willingness to share knowledge to be positively associated with management support for knowledge sharing (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003; Lin, 2007). According to Lee et al. (2006) support from top management have positive effect on both quality and level of knowledge sharing through influencing employee's commitment to knowledge management. Additionally, perceived co-workers and supervisor support and their inspiration of knowledge sharing also enhance employees' knowledge exchange as well as perceptions of knowledge sharing (Cabrera et al., 2006; Kulkarni et al., 2006).

3. Research Methodology

Data were collected from159 operational employees from 20 different Palm oil manufacturing plants operationalized in Malaysia through proportionate random sampling out of them 55% were male. The study employed Yamane's formula for data

collection (Yamane, 1970) with 95% confidence level. All of the variables were measured against seven - point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Descriptive statistics techniques were used to analyze the data through using SPSS (version 18) and path analysis as well as confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed to confirm the heterogeneity of all constructs with $\alpha > 0.8$ (Joreskog & Sorborn, 1993). In addition, to measure the mediating effect of variables, the cause-effect relationships were performed using LISREL (version 9). Moreover, a structured questionnaire comprising standard scales of organizational commitment, perceived organizational support, knowledge-sharing behavior and organizational trust,, along with demographic details such as education, age and total experience with the organization.

Likewise, Eisenberger et al. (1986) eight items were utilized to measure the perceived organizational support. In addition, trust of employees toward their organization was reflected in their trust toward their leaders and organization and employees traditionally trust that organizational practices will benefit them. For the reason, Robinson and Rousseau (1994) five-item scale inventory was adopted to capture employees' organizational trust. Similarly, to measure the organizational commitment questionnaire was utilized developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) containing 18 items to measure three dimensions of organizational commitment, namely continuance commitment, affective commitment, and normative commitment. Finally, to measure the knowledge-sharing behavior the 13-item scale was adapted from Senge (1997) consisting on three factors of knowledge sharing, called task knowledge, organizational knowledge, and interpersonal knowledge.

4. Results and Discussion

Table1: Respondent Distribution by Age

N	Valid	159
	Missing	15
Mean		37.26
Median		36
Mode		33
Std. Deviation		7.27
Skewness		0.52
Std. Error of Skewness		0.1477
Kurtosis		0.2325
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.2944
Range		42
Minimum		21
Maximum		63
Percentiles	25	32
	50	36
	75	42

Table 2: Respondent Distribution by Occupational Tenure

N	Valid	159
	Missing	15
Mean		12.036
Median		10
Mode		7
Std. Deviation		7.4707
Skewness		0.8245
Std. Error of Skewness		0.1474
Kurtosis		0.6691
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.2938
Range		41.9167
Minimum		0.0833
Maximum		42
Percentiles	25	7
	50	10
	75	17

Table 3: Respondent Distribution by Organizational Tenure

N	Valid	159
	Missing	15
Mean		3.9319
Median		3
Mode		3
Std. Deviation		3.6713
Skewness		1.1882
Std. Error of Skewness		0.1483
Kurtosis		1.4536
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.2954
Range		1809167
Minimum		0.0833
Maximum		19
Percentiles	25	0.5625
	50	3
	75	6

Table 4: Perceived Organizational Support and Organizational Commitment as Predictors of Knowledge Sharing Behaviors

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R. Square	Sq. Std. Error of the estimate
1	0.282	0.08	0.073	5.485
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	719.284	2	359.642	11.954	*.000
	Residual	8303.447	276	30.085		
	Total	9022.732	278			
Coefficients						
Model		Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	34.759	1.757	19.786	*.000	
	POS	0.021	0.141	0.01	0.149	0.881
	Total Org Commitment	0.414	0.097	0.278	4.287	*.000

Table 5: Organizational Trust and Organizational Commitment as Predictors of Knowledge Sharing Behaviors

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R. Square	Sq. Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.105	0.011	0.004	3.037

ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.55	2	14.275	1.547	*.000
	Residual	2546.391	276	9.226		
	Total	2574.941	278			

Coefficients					
Model		Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.956	0.973	20.513	*.000	
	Org. Trust	0.035	0.078	0.03	0.444	0.658
	Total Org. Commitment	0.07	0.054	0.088	1.315	0.19

The analysis of the study shows that POS and KSB are correlated positively directly and indirectly and OT is also positively correlated with KSB directly and through mediation effect of OC. POS was found positively associated with OC and KSB ($R^2 = 0.08$) and OT was also positively correlated with OC and KSB (i.e. ($R^2 = 0.011$) Analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows model of the study is significant at $p < 0.001$, table 4.4 and 4.5 that show the strength of correlation among the variables and explains the degree of variance in the light of R^2. Econometric model of the study can be explained with the help of following equations:

$$KSB = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 POS_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (1)$$
$$KSB = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 OT_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (2)$$
$$OC = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 POS_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (3)$$
$$OC = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 OT_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (4)$$
$$KSB = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 OC_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (5)$$
$$KSB = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 POS_{it} + \beta_2 OC_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (6)$$
$$KSB = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 OT_{it} + \beta_2 OC_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (7)$$

Equations 1-4 statistically represent the direct relationship between the said variables while the equation 6 and 7 show the mediation relationships. Findings of the study

indicate that perceived organizational support, organizational commitment and organizational trust positively mediated positive the knowledge-sharing behavior. Interestingly, the study finds fully mediating effect of organizational commitment between the relationship of organizational trust and knowledge-sharing behavior and between perceived organizational support and knowledge-sharing behavior.

Various researchers have studied the relationships of perceived organizational support, organizational commitment, organizational trust, and knowledge-sharing behaviour in many organizations. In the light of integrated framework of the study, perceived organizational support, organizational trust and organizational commitment is positively correlated with knowledge-sharing behaviour of employees working in palm oil manufacturing plants in Malaysia. The results of the study are consistent with prior literature. Research has shown that management support is critical for the success of knowledge management and knowledge- sharing initiatives. Moreover, organizations should properly compensate the managers for providing the necessary support for encouraging knowledge sharing among their team members.

5. Conclusion

The study was an attempt to determine the causal model of perceived organizational support, organizational trust, and knowledge-sharing behavior through an integrated causal model from employees working on oil manufacturing plant in Malaysia. After carefully conducting all the analysis, it was found that the variables of perceived organizational support, organizational trust, and organizational commitment played a positive mediating effect on knowledge-sharing behavior. Interestingly, organizational commitment was found as full mediator between the relationships of organizational trust and knowledge-sharing behavior and perceived organizational support and knowledge-sharing behavior. Moreover, perceived organizational support was positively and significantly correlated with organizational trust. This current study helps in determining that how knowledge-sharing behavior can be foster through organizational practices and positive employee cognitions. In addition, high organizational commitment can be achieved by the efforts from organization to make their employees realize that their efforts are appreciated and by providing them the perceived organizational support. As employees sense the organizational support they will exert extra efforts for the achievement of organizational goals. Moreover employees may be invited in decision making to arise the level of trust among employees. . The result of the study showed that organizational commitment and knowledge-sharing behavior needs the adoption of the appropriate perceived organizational support to enhance the organizational trust and it is equally important for increasing the levels of both organizational commitment and knowledge-sharing behavior. The study contributed to the existing body of knowledge by testing the mediation effect of organizational commitment between POS and knowledge sharing behavior and OT and knowledge sharing behavior. In prior studies, organizational commitment has been analyzed with different variables and found positively correlated with knowledge management. Another distinction of the study is that it has been conducted in a particular sector of palm oil manufacturing plants in Malaysia. There is further need to enlighten the grey area of different sectors of different countries by taking most important factors that contribute toward the knowledge management as it is source of organizational commitment and innovation. The study

employed LISREL to test the cause and effect relationship between the POS, OT, OC, and KSB. Hence, there are other some most effective second generation statistical tools and techniques such as SEM to get the better statistical results.

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