Chapter 7
Exploring the Determinants Affecting Academics’ Knowledge-Sharing Behavior in United Arab Emirates Public Universities

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ABSTRACT
This chapter investigates knowledge-sharing practice among academics, examines the relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and its predictors based on theory of planned behavior, and identifies the motivators and barriers affecting these predictors. Data were collected using a web-based questionnaire. Using SPSS and PLS-SEM, the analysis process involved (1) measuring the extent of knowledge sharing practice, (2) assessing the measurement model, (3) assessing the structural model, (4) testing the hypotheses, (5) validating research model fit. Results showed (1) great extent of knowledge-sharing practice, (2) knowledge-sharing behavior is significantly affected by intention, which is affected by attitude, subjective norms, self-efficacy, but not affected by controllability, (3) attitude is positively affected by trust and reputation as motivators of knowledge sharing, while controllability is negatively affected by lack of time and poor communication as barriers of knowledge sharing. This is the first research on knowledge-sharing behavior in higher education in UAE.

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge sharing is a key process of knowledge management (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) and its strategies are keys to organizational and individual development (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Earl, 2001). Knowledge sharing is defined as the process of exchanging and transferring existing knowledge and ideas among people in order to create new knowledge and ideas (Syed, Zaini, Noormala & Zahairah, 2009). In short, it is known as a process of exchanging knowledge including skills insights, and experience (Durmusoglu Jacobs, Nayir, Khilji & Wang, 2014; Lillemore & Hansen, 2011). Generally, it occurs when individuals with a common purpose and similar problems come together to exchange ideas and information (McNeil, 2003).

The benefits of knowledge sharing for organizations and individuals are numerous. On the organizational level, the benefits include facilitating knowledge creation (Akhavan, Ghojavand & Abdali, 2012), achieving continuous organizational growth, survival, and development (Durmusoglu et al., 2014), meeting organizational goals and objectives (Wang & Noe, 2010), solving business problems (McDermott & O’Dell, 2001), enhancing performance, maintaining competitiveness and profitability (Hsu, 2008), gaining better understanding of customer needs and identifying new business opportunities (Sandhawalia & Dalcher, 2011), enhancing process efficiency (Chugh, 2012), and improving the knowledge base for decision-making and more balanced policy decisions (Egger, 2013).

On the individual level, the benefits include getting the information easier and faster (Badaracco, 2010), promoting individuals’ learning and innovation (Ling, Sandhu & Jain, 2009), transferring knowledge among workers in the same unit or from one unit to another (Burgess, 2005), strengthening capabilities (Egger, 2013), enhancing performance (Xiao & Jin, 2010), improving efficiency (Cummings, 2004), empowering team effectiveness (Pangil & Chan, 2014), developing strategies to encourage organizational knowledge base (Reychav & Weisberg, 2009), reducing loss of individuals’ knowledge and expertise (Gurbuz, 2008), and transmitting knowledge and expertise to new generations (Badaracco, 2010).

The growing recognition of the importance of knowledge sharing in several fields including research and development and scientific production (Bousari & Hassanzadeh, 2012; Ensign & Hebert, 2010; Lillemore & Hansen, 2011) is creating a demand for applying it in higher education (Babalhavaei & Kermani, 2011; Chikoore & Ragsdell, 2013; Dokhtesmati & Bousari, 2013). This is due to the deep-rooted role of academic institutions in higher education as a plant of knowledge creation, scientific inventions, intellectual and cultural production, and innovative researches (Fullwood, Rowley & Delbridge, 2013; Patel & Ragsdell, 2011).

For academics in particular, knowledge sharing is within the core of their work, since they are involved in teaching, writing and publishing scholarly works.
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