Knowledge Management: Organisational Culture and Effective Knowledge Sharing

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Abstract

In the knowledge economy, organisations rely on knowledge to improve and stay competitive in the industry. Knowledge exists both explicitly and tacitly and the challenge lies in transferring the tacit knowledge from experts to less experienced employees before they leave the organisation. This study, conducted at a financial services organisation in South Africa, is based on qualitative research, which seeks to determine how knowledge is shared between novices and experts in a financial services organisation. This study aims to identify how employees currently share knowledge and to discover more effective knowledge sharing tools and methods that can foster effective knowledge sharing in the organisation. The main research question is: What is the effectiveness of existing knowledge sharing methods between experienced employees and new hires at a financial services organisation? The research question is answered through the questionnaires that were distributed and interviews that were conducted with the participants. The data collection was carried out based on an exploratory research design and a descriptive research method. The data analysis followed an inductive approach. Quantitative analysis using tables and graphs and qualitative analysis by means of themes were used to analyse the data collected. The findings reveal that most employees are not aware of the knowledge management or sharing strategy in their organisation owing to silos of organisational culture in the organisation. Knowledge sharing is not driven organisation-wide, and knowledge sharing tools are not managed effectively. Based on the study's findings, an organisation-wide knowledge management and sharing strategy is essential. In addition, organisations should enable employees to share by providing more capacity dedicated to knowledge sharing.

Keywords: knowledge sharing; culture; organisational structure; knowledge management

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Introduction

Various researchers such as Kannan (2011, 489) and Palanisamy (2013, 22) define experts as people who have gained vast experience in their professions. Either they had been employed in an organisation or had been working in a specific profession for many years, in which they had accumulated a vast amount of experience and skills. On the other hand, novices are defined by Kannan (2011, 490) as people who are learning continuously but do not have experience that would qualify them as experts.

Modern organisations spend large portions of their revenue on developing their employees through various learning programmes. The value of this investment can be determined by the quality of their output and the success of the organisation (Argote and Miron-Spektor 2011, 5). Effective and efficient knowledge management and transfer have the ability to bridge the knowledge gap between experts and other employees in an organisation (OHCHR 2011).

Smith (2001, 311) states that the flow of tacit knowledge among employees is crucial to the productivity of the organisation as a whole. Janus (2016, 4) adds by stating that a successful organisation shares knowledge about how to operate efficiently and effectively in the organisation so that employees can grow and share their knowledge on a regular basis.

With these barriers to knowledge sharing, the challenges lie in finding the most effective knowledge sharing process between employees of different experience levels as well as finding the best organisational culture and environment that will guide the employees in sharing and transferring their knowledge in the best possible way.

Critical tacit knowledge which often determines the success of an organisation largely exists among experts. The transfer of this knowledge to novices is critical to the continuity of a team and the organisation. The culture within an organisation plays a key role in the decision of experts to frequently share their knowledge and experiences with novices.

It is commonly found that organisations do not have distinct processes and/or incentives in place that encourage knowledge sharing among experts and novices. This study aimed to determine whether this was the case within a financial services organisation, and if proven to be so, what are the hindering cultural factors that prevent the sharing of critical knowledge.

Purpose of the Study

In keeping with the traditional view of an expert, i.e. more experienced individuals (Kannan 2011, 489; Palanisamy 2013, 22) as the focus of knowledge sharing, this study

focuses on the learning processes of employees in an organisation and the process of knowledge transfer of experts to those less experienced in an organisation.

The aim is to determine the way in which knowledge can be extracted from experts in an organisation and preserved for newly appointed employees or novices that are learning in the organisation. This includes finding existing mechanisms that are used to share knowledge in an organisation, determining their effectiveness as well as barriers to knowledge sharing, and proposing a solution for better mechanisms, if need be.

Research Objectives

- To understand the knowledge management structure of Company X.
- To understand existing methods of knowledge sharing between employees.
- To understand the causes of knowledge hoarding of employees.
- To understand the mechanisms that can be used to share knowledge more effectively.

Main Research Question

What is the effectiveness of existing knowledge sharing methods between experienced employees and new hires at a financial services organisation?

Research Sub-questions

- In what way does the existing culture of Company X hinder or encourage effective knowledge sharing?
- What is the most effective or preferred knowledge sharing method and tool that will improve employee growth, innovation and knowledge sharing between employees with different levels of expertise?
- What is the process of knowledge sharing between employees of different levels of expertise throughout the employment cycle?

Value of the Research

The value of this research is derived from an analysis of the current knowledge sharing process within an organisation as well as whether this process seamlessly and effectively integrates new employees into the knowledge sharing processes of the organisation. This research contributes to the field of knowledge management as it highlights the need for effective knowledge sharing processes that require the participation of all employees in an organisation.

There are existing research studies about knowledge sharing but this research contributes to academia as it highlights the knowledge gap that exists in organisational knowledge sharing between experienced employees and novices or new hires.

This research adds to the awareness of the challenges facing the sharing of knowledge in organisations as well as the implications of not sharing knowledge effectively. While there are a few limitations of this study, such as investigating only one organisation out of many, this study widens the path for a broader scope of study in future.

Background to the Study

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge is an important phenomenon that can be viewed and understood from different perspectives and contexts. The value of knowledge found in one instance can be seen as useless in another instance (Zins 2007, 481). Employees' knowledge in an organisation is valuable in that their learning process and their ability to apply their creativity and knowledge can influence the organisation's productivity positively or negatively. It is very important to make sure that knowledge is created, stored and shared effectively (Smith 2001, 311).

Knowledge sharing is referred to as the shared actions of employees in which they waive their personal pursuits and instead share their knowledge in order to add value to the organisation (Spender and Scherer 2007, 9; Van den Hooff and Van Weenen 2004, 15).

Smith (2001, 311–312) states that tacit knowledge is misplaced when companies subcontract, downsize, merge and retrench employees, and it is important to ensure that efforts to collect, categorise, convert, document and share knowledge are encouraged otherwise priceless knowledge will be lost.

Anderson and Hardwick (2017, 1194) mention further that the first level of trust between people allows them to share knowledge on a transactional level but as the relationship deepens, people share knowledge on a more personal level because there is a personal interest in sharing and creating new knowledge.

Organisational Knowledge Sharing Culture

Stylianou and Savva (2016, 1516) define organisational culture as rules, traditions and principles that are commonly held by the employees.

Lee et al. (2012, 6) state that the culture of an organisation should be motivational and positive so that employees can have confidence in their abilities and effectively carry out tasks assigned to them in their working environment.

Reychav and Weisberg (2009, 189) mention that employees who are in a good knowledge sharing environment will be encouraged and motivated to network more and complete tasks more effectively and efficiently. This could lead to an incentive to stay in the organisation due to the employee's contentedness, a positive environment and a drive to expand one's know-how.

Jain (2012, 751) continues further to say that individuals do not realise that sharing knowledge adds more value to the individual as well as the organisation, as the knowledge grows and develops into something more substantial, and that individual development equals organisational development.

Haas and Hansen (2007, 1133–1134) contradict the aforementioned by saying that since there is no guarantee that increasing knowledge sharing in an organisation will improve the performance of employees, researchers should assess how knowledge assets are used by employees to improve their performance.

From the aforementioned, one can deduce that in order for an organisation to retain competent and motivated staff, the culture of the organisation has to keep the employee morale high as well as aid the effective productivity of employees without putting their health or livelihood at risk.

Influence of Organisational Structure on Knowledge Sharing

An organisational structure can affect the movement of information in an organisation, employee perspectives, as well as how employees relate to and communicate with each other (Yap et al. 2010).

Rishipal (2014, 56–57) mentioned seven types of organisational structures, which are line and line and staff, functional, divisional and market, product and process, project and matrix, bureaucratic, and network or virtual organisational structures.

The knowledge sharing culture of employees in a flat organisational structure such as the product and process structure, encourages open communication between employees of different levels. This structure will allow for knowledge sharing because there is no competition between employees, but each person will be working to serve the purpose and goals of the organisation and to satisfy customer needs (Rishipal 2014, 58).

However, knowledge sharing in a hierarchical structure such as line and line and staff and bureaucratic structures, might be less because the culture might be such that employees feel that they have power over another because of certain knowledge that they possess and might not be encouraged to share. The communication might not be as easy as there is a bureaucracy that might control the knowledge that is shared among employees with little room or flexibility for sharing (Rishipal 2014, 58).

Diefenbach and Sillince (2011, 1522) point out that there is always some form of hierarchy in an organisation, but the difference lies in the formal or informal hierarchical structures and cultures. In a formal hierarchical structure, there is an imbalanced interaction between employees and there is little or no transparency between the top management and the lower-ranked employees. This could impede collaboration and flexibility as employees are not encouraged to network with other people in the organisation.

In an informal structure, bureaucracy might not necessarily be a knowledge sharing impeding culture, as employees possess the skills and abilities to work in a formal setting but find a way to perform their tasks in an informal way (Diefenbach and Sillince 2011, 1520). In essence, employees are able to create an informal culture in a hierarchical structure.

In a tall organisational structure such as a project and matrix, functional, divisional and market organisational structure, knowledge sharing could be encouraged, but there is little or no autonomy and trust given to the employees so that they can share freely, and sharing could be restricted to a need-to-know basis (Rishipal 2014, 56).

Knowledge Sharing Motivation of Experts

Experts are referred to as employees that are knowledgeable in one or more subject matters (Kannan 2011, 489). Palanisamy (2013, 22) states that experts are formed when routine and procedural work is carried out with continuous learning, and through that process, skills, proficiencies and new knowledge are gained.

Lynch (2008, 7) states that the experienced employees have a different viewpoint and expectation about work and learning. The experienced employees prefer:

- work that does not require teamwork but an individual effort from employees;
- work that provides access to information that is governed and controlled;
- job security;
- managers that are skilled and proficient;
- a structured environment;
- a well-paying organisation;
- an organisation-defined career forecast for employees; and
- face-to-face communication with other employees.

Knowledge Sharing Motivation of New Joiners

Kannan (2011, 490) defines new joiners as people of a younger age group that are determined, highly motivated and aspiring. New joiners are referred to as rookies or

novices or apprentices that are in the younger age group than experts and are new to the working industry; in essence new hires. An example of a new joiner could be a newly employed person or an employee that moves to a different department in the same organisation (McCrindle 2012).

Deloitte (2016) and PwC (2011) say that employees that are new to the organisation value autonomy. Brack and Kelly (2012, 4), PwC (2011), and Smither, Houston, and McIntire (2016) describe the motivation for learning of newly employed people as follows:

- New joiners value personal growth and an equilibrium between their personal life and work commitments over monetary incentives.

- New joiners might be motivated to work in an organisation where there is an allowance for flexibility in their working hours. Some employees might live further away from the office than others, so an arrangement can be made for the employees to arrive at work either earlier or later than others.

- New joiners feel more comfortable when they are able to use technology openly and when technology is incorporated into their daily tasks. The use of technology will promote teamwork and aid their development.

- New joiners prefer an organisational culture of openness, collaboration, encouragement and innovation, as well as recognition of effort and performance.

Barriers to Knowledge Sharing

In finding the motivation for experts and novices sharing their knowledge, it is important to identify the barriers to knowledge sharing in the organisation. A few barriers of knowledge sharing are identified by different authors as described below.

Jeenger and Kant (2013, 3), and Seba, Rowley, and Delbridge (2012, 120–122) mention a few barriers to knowledge sharing as follows:

- Leadership: Leaders who do not encourage knowledge sharing between employees or give any instructions to guide employees in knowledge sharing.

- Time allocation: Employees with a heavy workload but not enough capacity might not have the time to share knowledge.

- Trust: Lack of trust will cause employees to hoard knowledge instead of openly collaborating and sharing knowledge.

- Organisational structure: The structure of the organisation will affect the way in which employees communicate. For example, a hierarchical structure might limit open communication between employees due to required pre-approval (Rishipal 2014, 56–57).

Seba, Rowley, and Delbridge (2012, 123) and Zawawi et al. (2011, 63) state that the lack of organisational rewards could be the reason some employees do not share their knowledge.

In addition, Jeenger and Kant (2013, 3) and Zawawi et al. (2011, 62) state that employees who are not motivated or challenged in their workplace, and who do not have the confidence to share knowledge owing to poor writing or speaking skills and poor interaction with computers and technology will not share knowledge.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design that was chosen for this study is exploratory in nature. An exploratory research design is used when the understanding of the subject is insubstantial, insufficient and unclear or the researcher requires additional knowledge about the subject. There is a broad and unbiased investigation at the beginning of the research owing to the uncertainty about the subject. In addition, exploratory research gives answers to what, why, who, where, when, which and how questions (Onions 2012, 79).

This research design was chosen because the study involved exploring the knowledge management and sharing culture of the organisation as well as exploring the effectiveness of the mechanisms and tools that employees use to share knowledge.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is defined as the basic belief or understanding that will drive the entire research process, from the choice of research approach to the research strategy, method and analysis (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2012, 128).

The chosen research philosophy for this study was realism because this study focuses on exploring the knowledge sharing culture of the company that was chosen for this study. Realism seeks to provide rationalisation and resolves "how" and "why" questions in an uninhibited and open manner. Realism claims that the study and examination of subjects should occur through empirical exploration instead of in laboratories (Robson and McCartan 2016, 30–31).

Realism claims that there is a world that exists and can be observed independently from human awareness and the belief is that knowledge is created collectively (Eriksson and Kovalainen 2016, 20). Ormston et al. (2014, 21) add by saying that realism claims that while reality exists independently of humans, it can be interpreted based on the observations of humans.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research was used for this study to determine the knowledge sharing practices and the knowledge management methods used in a financial services organisation in South Africa.

Qualitative research involves data that cannot be quantified or measured by numbers. This research seeks to understand experiences, motivation and aspirations of the participants or target audience (Kothari 2004, 3).

Research Approach

The research approach for this study was an inductive approach. Dudovskiy (2016) describes the inductive approach as a research approach that begins with observations or assessments which lead to patterns from which a theory is created. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012, 145) concur with Dudovskiy (2016) by stating that the inductive approach entails gathering data and developing a theory from the analysis of the data.

The inductive approach was applied in this study as follows: Interviews were conducted and questionnaires were distributed to participants, the data collected from the interviews and questionnaires were analysed with qualitative and quantitative data analysis and a theory was created based on the analysis of the collected data.

Research Strategy

The research strategy that was chosen for this research study is a survey, particularly a cross-sectional survey. Cross-sectional surveys are used to collect data about present-day elements, opinions or beliefs.

Surveys consist of one or more techniques used to collect data from participants. These techniques include observations, questionnaires as well as structured and detailed interviews (De Vaus 2014, 3). Semi-structured interviews were conducted and questionnaires were distributed to the participants chosen for the research study.

Research Method

Descriptive research was used for this study through the analysis of the interviews that were conducted and the questionnaires distributed. The collected data from the questionnaires were presented in tables and figures and the interview responses were presented in the form of direct quotations from the participants and discussed according to themes.

Sampling Approach

The sample chosen for this study was a total of 40 participants, however, 29 participants agreed to be part of the study. Questionnaires were distributed to 16 participants and interviews were conducted with 13 participants. Stratified purposive sampling was used

for the selection of participants. Stratified purposive sampling is used when participants are divided into groups and classifications in order to select specific characteristics of subjects for analysis (Acharya et al. 2013, 332).

Suri (2011, 7) says that stratified purposive sampling is valuable for analysing different ways of executing a specific approach for learning and teaching. This sampling method, therefore, applies to this study, as it deals with learning. The strata that were used for this study were the level of experience of participants and the inclusion of different departments in the organisation.

The target population consisted of employees in a financial services organisation. The employees were from different departments in the chosen organisation, such as the Retail and Business Banking Technology, Technology Risk, Digital, Early Careers, and the Finance department.

The employees were selected owing to the explorative nature of the study, to discover whether there is effective knowledge sharing in the organisation. Owing to the exploratory nature of this study, the requirements for selecting the participants were not specific to any pre-existing assumptions; the strata only included employees in different department as the first layer and employees that are temporary and permanent as the second layer.

For the questionnaire, there were three temporary employees and 13 permanent employees. The sample consisted of newly employed employees as well as employees that have many years of experience in the organisation. Ten people had been employed between one month and two years and were classified as novices. The remaining six people had been employed between three and 10 years and were therefore classified as experts.

For the interview, there was one temporary employee and 12 permanent employees. Ten people had been employed between one month and two years and three people had been employed between three and 10 years.

The sample represented people with different levels of experience so that the collected data from the participants' responses would incorporate different perspectives.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data analyses were used to analyse the data collected for this study. Harwell (2011, 149) states that in quantitative research, deductions made from the analysis of statistical data lead to general deductions about the characteristics of people.

In this study, a quantitative data analysis was used to analyse the closed-ended questions received from participants in the data collection process. Each question in the questionnaire was tabulated and it included: the number of participants and percentages. The questionnaire was also presented in percentages on bar and pie charts. At the end of each section, the number of participants versus their responses was measured.

Data analysis in qualitative research involves finding common themes within the participants' responses and analysing the themes critically in order to accomplish research goals and purposes (Dudovskiy 2016).

The study involved categorising and summarising the responses of the participants from the interviews into themes. Similarities and contradictions in the participants' responses were identified and discussed. Direct quotes from the participants were also added in different sections.

Study Findings

The findings from the responses of the participants from the questionnaires and interviews are summarised and explained according to the objectives and research question of this study.

Table 1 shows that 18.75 per cent of the respondents were temporary employees and 81.25 per cent were permanent employees for the questionnaire, while 7.69 per cent of the respondents were temporary employees and 92.3 per cent were permanent employees for the interviews. We deduce that the majority of the respondents were permanently employed by the organisation.

Table 1: Employment status of respondents

Questionnaire			Interviews		
Employment status	Number	Percentage	Employment status	Number	Percentage
Temporary employees	3	18.75	Temporary employees	1	7.69
Permanent employees	13	81.25	Permanent employees	12	92.3
Total	16	100	Total	13	100

Table 2 shows for the questionnaire that 18.75 per cent of the respondents were employed in the organisation between 0 and 5 months, and 43.75 per cent between 6 months and 2 years. In using the previously defined classification, these respondents are classified as novices equating 62.5 per cent of the population. With 25 per cent of the respondents employed between 3 years and 5 years, and 12.5 per cent of the respondents

between 6 years and 10 years, these employees are classified as experts totalling 37.5 per cent of the population.

Overall 31.25 per cent have been in the employ of the industry between 6 months and 2 years, 12.5 per cent of the respondents have been in the employ of the industry between 3 and 5 years, 25 per cent have been in the employ of the industry between 6 and 10 years, with 31.25 per cent of the respondents being in the employ of the industry for over 10 years.

Table 2 depicts that of the interview respondents, 15.38 per cent have been in the employ of the organisation between 0 and 5 months, 61.53 per cent of the respondents have been in the employ of the organisation between 6 months and 2 years; these respondents fall into the category of novices. A total of 23.07 per cent of the respondents have been working between 3 and 5 years and are therefore classified as experts.

Overall 23.07 per cent of the respondents have been employed between 6 months and 2 years, 30.76 per cent of the respondents have been employed overall between 3 and 5 years, and 46.15 per cent of the respondents have been employed overall for over 10 years.

Table 2: Respondents' years of experience

Questionnaire						
Years of employment Company X	**0–5 months**	**6 months**	**3 years**	**6 years**	**10 years**	**Total**
Number	3	7	4	2	0	16
Percentage	18.75	43.75	25	12.5	0	100
Years of employment overall	0–5 months	6 months to 2 years	3–5 years	6–10 years	10+ years	
Number	0	5	2	4	5	16
Percentage	0	31.25	12.5	25	31.25	100
Interviews Years of employment Company X	**0–5 months**	**6 months**	**3 years**	**6 years**	**10 years**	**Total**
Number	2	8	3	0	0	13
Percentage	15.38	61.53	23.07	0	0	100
Years of employment overall	0–5 months	6 months to 2 years	3–5 years	6–10 years	10+ years	
Number	0	3	4	0	6	13
Percentage	0	23.07	30.76	0	46.15	100

Objective 1 – To Understand the Knowledge Management Structure of Company X

The participants were asked what knowledge management means to them and they defined knowledge management as the process of accessing, sharing and storing knowledge in a way that makes it easier for the relevant people to access, use and store the knowledge.

Some of the participants learned about knowledge management from university while some learned about it from work, general knowledge and experience over the years.
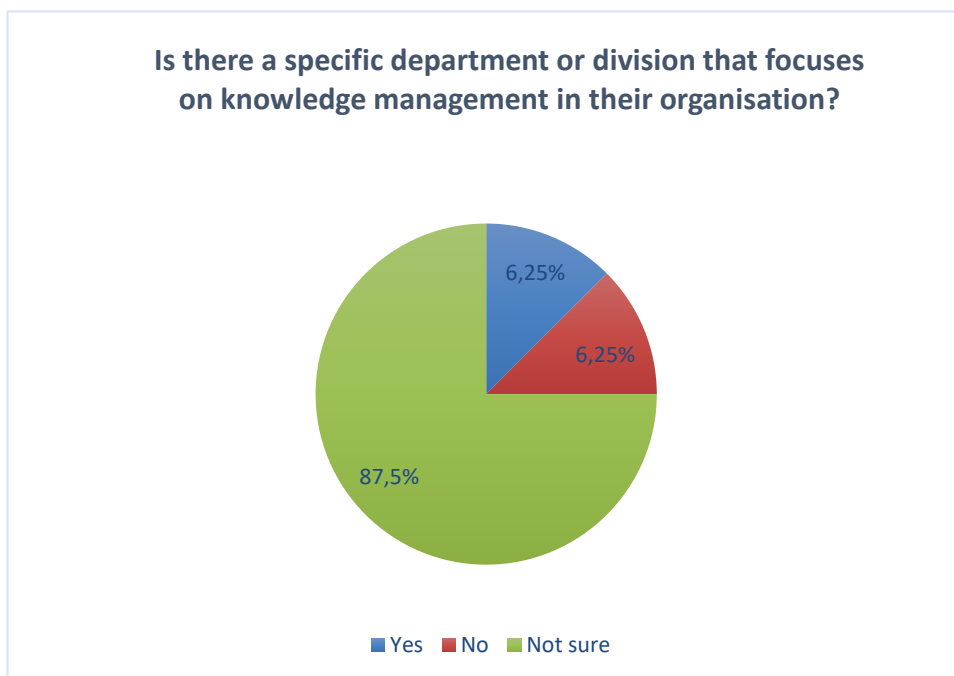

Figure 1: Knowledge of knowledge management department

Figure 1 shows that 6.25 per cent of the respondents said that there is a specific department or division that focuses on knowledge management, 6.25 per cent of the respondents said that no specific department or division focuses on knowledge management, and 87.5 per cent of the respondents said they are not sure. The employees that know about the knowledge management division in the organisation do not know exactly what the organisation offers regarding knowledge management. This, in turn, means that knowledge management is not encouraged or driven in the organisation and the structure of knowledge management in the organisation is not known.

The unknown structure of knowledge management in the organisation also speaks to the culture of the organisation. The culture of the organisation is one of secrecy from

the leaders in the organisation, either intentional or unintentional which creates uncertainty among employees.

The empirical findings in this section support theory findings which state that the structure of the organisation affects the learning of employees. The lack of a recognised knowledge management structure identified in the findings reveal that the learning and growth of employees can be affected, which also affects the knowledge sharing in the organisation.

Objective 2 – To Understand Existing Methods and Tools of Knowledge Sharing between Employees

The results from the data collection revealed that employees shared and stored knowledge with other people in the department or organisation through Microsoft SharePoint, network drives, Cloud storage, JIRA, Confluence, Bitbucket, and AWS.
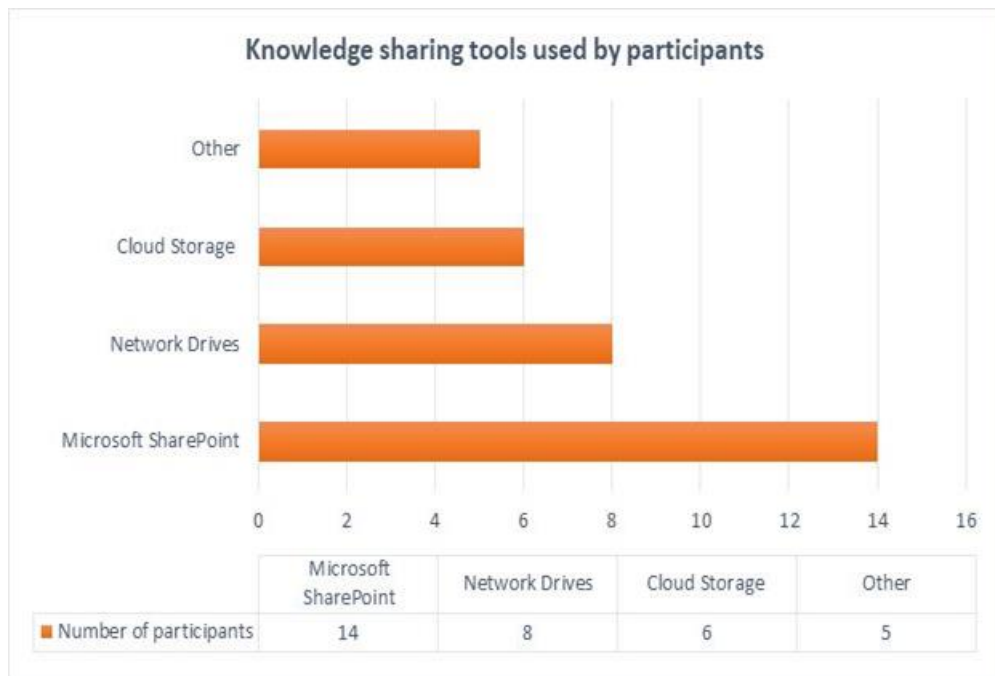

Knowledge sharing tools used by participants

	Microsoft SharePoint	Network Drives	Cloud Storage	Other
Number of participants	14	8	6	5

Figure 2: Knowledge sharing tools

Figure 2 shows that eight participants marked multiple boxes and four participants marked only one box. Two participants chose Confluence and JIRA as their other collaborative tool, two participants chose Confluence, one participant chose JIRA, Confluence, Bitbucket and AWS, and one participant chose Atlassian. From this response, one can deduce that employees in the organisation use a wide range of collaborative tools to share knowledge with other employees.

The participants also commented that while there are tools available and used to store knowledge between employees, the knowledge is not stored according to relevance or in an easily retrievable manner. Employees would store documents but there is no one responsible for making sure that the content is correct or updated. One can deduce that employees do not find value in using current knowledge repositories or tools as an effective way of sharing knowledge because the repositories or tools are not managed.

The participants mentioned that when they need to research a new topic, they check on Google and other participants said that they also ask their colleagues for help. The participants mentioned that they have an electronic library or repository where business processes are stored. Some of the participants said that there are paper and electronic libraries or repositories.

Some of the participants mentioned that they mentor newly employed employees when they join the department and that they also show the new employees the best practices when completing tasks. One participant mentioned that the lack of time is a challenge to mentoring new employees and other participants mentioned that the mentoring of new employees is not driven in their department. From the results, it was identified that the mentorship happens mostly in an informal setting. A few participants mentioned that the mentorship happens formally.
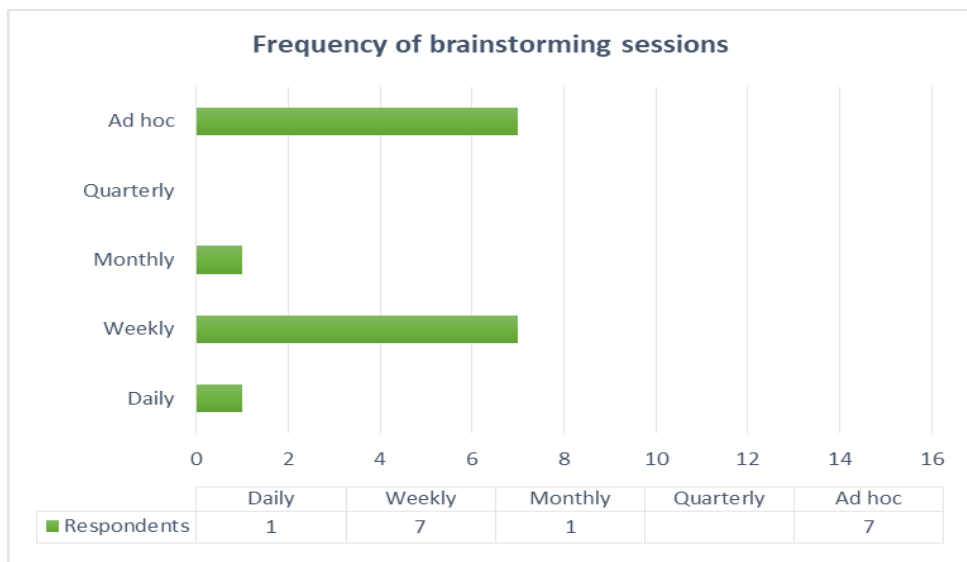

Figure 3: Frequency of brainstorming sessions

Figure 3 shows that 6.25 per cent of the respondents said that they engage in brainstorming sessions every day, 43.75 per cent said their brainstorming sessions happen weekly, 6.25 per cent said their brainstorming sessions happen monthly and

43.7 per cent said they happen on an ad hoc basis. No respondents said that they brainstorm on a quarterly basis.

One can deduce from the findings of the research that while there are a few knowledge sharing methods and tools established by some employees, there is no uniformity or consolidation of tools or methods, and knowledge sharing occurs in isolation and silos of different departments or teams in the organisation.

Objective 3 – To Understand the Causes of Knowledge Hoarding between Employees

The findings of the research revealed that one of the biggest challenges of sharing knowledge with other employees is the lack of capacity. The participants mentioned that they do not have enough time to mentor employees, brainstorm or share knowledge with other employees.
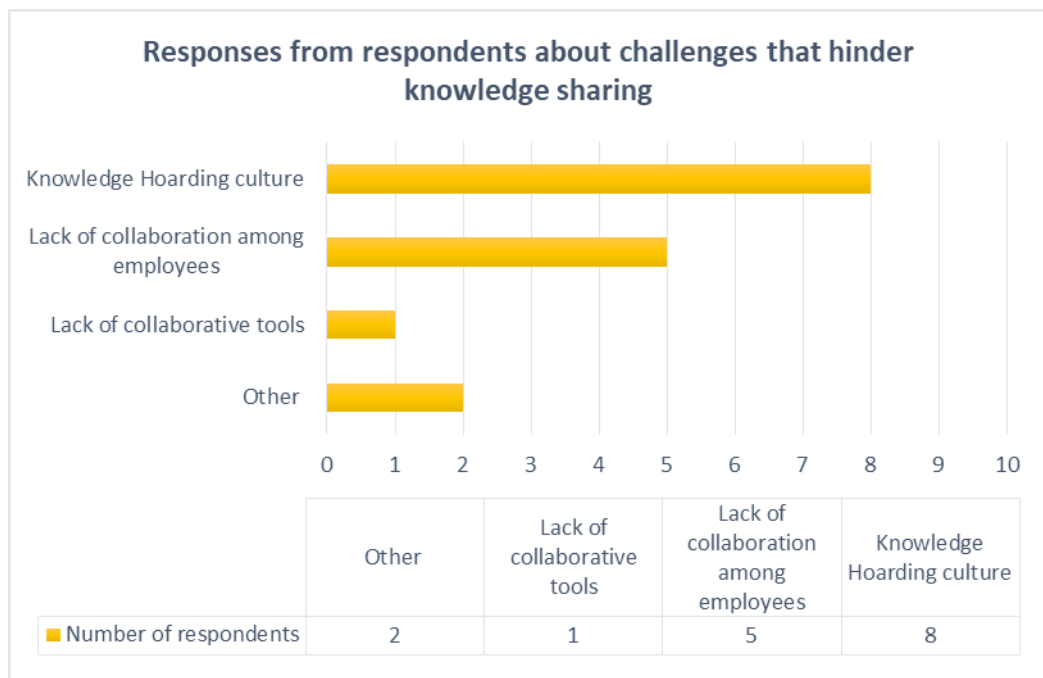
Responses from respondents about challenges that hinder knowledge sharing

	Other	Lack of collaborative tools	Lack of collaboration among employees	Knowledge Hoarding culture
Number of respondents	2	1	5	8

Figure 4: Challenges that hinder knowledge sharing

Figure 4 shows that 10 per cent of the respondents said that their challenge for sharing knowledge is the lack of collaborative tools, 80 per cent chose the knowledge hoarding culture, 50 per cent chose the lack of collaboration among employees, and 20 per cent chose other.

Out of the 62.5 per cent of the respondents, 50 per cent chose one option only and the other 50 per cent chose multiple options in this section. Two of the respondents did not choose any of the provided options but they indicated that there were other challenges that hinder knowledge sharing in their department. One respondent mentioned ego as a challenge and one other respondent mentioned that some people find it difficult to explain the knowledge in their head.

When asked which generation is most likely to share knowledge, some participants mentioned that younger generations hoard knowledge while some participants said that the older generation and experts hoard knowledge because of their perceived need for job security. Some participants mentioned that some employees only assist other employees based on those employees' levels of education and experience. On the other hand, there are participants who mentioned that all employees with different levels of experience in their department are willing to share knowledge.

One can deduce from the findings that the sharing or hoarding of knowledge in the organisation is based on the culture of the team or department. In addition, there is no recognised and uniform culture in the organisation with regard to knowledge sharing. One can extrapolate that the biggest cause of knowledge hoarding is the organisation's culture of isolation among employees in different teams and departments and the culture of secrecy between leaders and employees.

Objective 4 – To Understand the Mechanisms that can be Used to Share Knowledge more Effectively

The results of the study revealed that knowledge is shared through brainstorming sessions between employees, through learning or training sessions on various platforms and through formal or informal mentoring sessions. Table 3 highlights the frequency of learning or training sessions by employees. The knowledge sharing tools that employees used are repositories, portals and applications that are not managed.

The results of the study also revealed the divide between employees that have a good knowledge sharing culture where the process of sharing and retrieving knowledge is clear to everyone in the department and employees who are not sure about the knowledge sharing process and who are not enabled or encouraged to share knowledge more effectively.

Table 3: Frequency of virtual and classroom learning or training sessions

Frequency of virtual learning or training sessions			Frequency of classroom style learning or training session		
Response	Number	Percentage	Response	Number	Percentage
Monthly	4 out of 15	26.6	Monthly	0	0
Quarterly	9 out of 15	60	Quarterly	8 out of 16	50
Never	1 out of 15	6.67	Never	3 out of 16	18.75
Other	1 out of 15	6.67	Other	5 out of 16	31.25

One can deduce from the results that there are different cultures that exist in different departments and teams. The employees in teams or departments that have adopted the knowledge sharing culture openly share their knowledge, and the other employees in teams or departments that have not adopted the knowledge sharing culture do not feel enabled to share knowledge. In addition, the employees also require encouragement from their leaders to share knowledge and learn from the experts in the organisation.

Research Question and Sub-Questions

This section aims to answer the research question and sub-questions that were posed at the beginning of this study.

Sub-question 1: How does the Existing Organisational Culture of Company X Foster a Healthy Environment for Learning?

According to the research findings, the existing culture of Company X is not clear to all employees, thus creating isolated cultures within the organisation. In some parts of the organisation, there is a healthy environment for learning but in other departments, there is a lot of uncertainty. The uncertainty, in turn, creates an environment where different employees and teams make and abide by their own rules and standards which might not be a true reflection of the organisational culture and strategy.

Sub-question 2: In what way does the Existing Culture of Company X Hinder or Encourage Effective Knowledge Sharing?

According to the research findings, the existing culture of Company X hinders effective knowledge sharing because of the following factors:

- There is a lack of awareness of the knowledge sharing culture and knowledge management culture or strategy of the organisation.

- There are no known platforms for knowledge sharing between employees in the organisation.

- There are no dedicated tools identified for knowledge sharing between employees.

- In addition, employees do not have enough capacity to complete their daily tasks and still share knowledge with other employees.

In order to foster an environment that encourages knowledge sharing, the aforementioned factors will have to be dealt with.

Sub-question 3: What is the most Effective or Preferred Knowledge Sharing Method and Tool that will Improve Employee Growth, Innovation and Knowledge Sharing between Employees of Different Levels of Expertise?

According to the research findings, owing to the isolated knowledge sharing culture of the organisation, there will be different methods and tools that will be preferred by individual employees as well as specific teams and departments. The aforementioned poses a challenge in proving whether the methods or tools will improve employee growth, innovation and knowledge sharing between employees of different levels of expertise.

Recommendations

The following recommendations for effective knowledge sharing are based on the current findings:

- Knowledge sharing and knowledge management strategies should be developed and implemented organisation-wide. The knowledge sharing and knowledge management culture of the organisation should be made known to all employees in the organisation.

- Knowledge management and knowledge sharing should be added to employees' key performance indicators (KPIs).

- Knowledge sharing platforms should be formally encouraged organisation-wide. Training should be provided for the use of knowledge sharing platforms available in the organisation. Training materials should be readily available and accessible to employees, if applicable.

Conclusion

The concept of knowledge sharing and management might seem straightforward, however, knowledge sharing between employees of different experience levels in an organisation might be far more complex when factors such as organisational culture are considered. This realisation was corroborated by the findings of the study which revealed that the participants do not know of the organisation's knowledge management strategy. Furthermore, there is a culture of isolation in the organisation that creates silos of knowledge sharing between employees.

The focus of this research study was to establish a way that knowledge can be shared between subject matter experts and new joiners or novices in a financial services organisation. This includes finding out whether there are existing effective knowledge sharing methods as well as determining if employees experience barriers to knowledge sharing in the organisation.

The knowledge of effective knowledge sharing would in turn help organisations find the best knowledge sharing approach that will help them get a competitive advantage in the industry. The aforementioned was achieved through the analysis of the data collected during the interviews and questionnaires.

In finding the effectiveness of the knowledge sharing methods and tools, challenges such as the lack of capacity of employees and the lack of management and uniformity of culture, tools and methods were revealed. These challenges pose a threat to effective knowledge sharing in the organisation. The results of this study reveal that the culture of the organisation affects how the employees interact with each other as well as how employees share and manage knowledge.

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