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# **Technical succession planning as a knowledge retention strategy for knowledge organisations**

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## Abstract

Knowledge workers are no longer limited to only one employer for a lifetime, but they have “boundary-less” careers, they proactively, consciously and independently build their careers by accumulating the relevant knowledge and skills that will propel their employability in the market. This makes it easy for knowledge workers to move from one job to the next and become independent of a single employer.

It is difficult for employers to retain knowledge workers given the high levels of mobility and increased competition for their skills, but the retention of their knowledge is critical. Given this, technical succession planning appears to be highly relevant in the new world of work. It is defined by Rothwell (2010), as a form of succession planning that focuses on retaining organisational and professional knowledge to be used by the organisation in the future. It also refers to the transfer of knowledge from more to less experienced workers.

This research aimed to explore factors that impact knowledge sharing amongst knowledge workers and knowledge retention. The results showed that; consultants which are the knowledge workers that were considered for this study, engage in knowledge sharing out of autonomous motivation, the multigenerational make up of knowledge organisations does not negatively impact knowledge sharing, knowledge workers do not hoard their knowledge because they fear that they will lose the power that comes with holding that knowledge and the national and brand prestige of knowledge organisations fosters employee commitment, but it is short term commitment. The outcomes of this research highlight factors for consideration by knowledge organisations and experts when developing knowledge sharing and retention strategies.

## Keywords

Technical succession planning, knowledge workers, knowledge organisations, knowledge retention, skills retention.

## Declaration

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Name: Noma Ngubane

Date: 29 January 2014

Signature: .....  .....

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the research problem

### 1.1 Background to the research problem

This research study sought to investigate the impact of technical succession planning as a knowledge retention strategy for knowledge organisations. The study focuses on the people that own the knowledge on an individual and group level (Martins & Martins, 2011), referred to as knowledge workers in this study. The study does not focus on the processes of developing and then retaining knowledge.

The increased mobility of knowledge workers and increasing competition for their skills (Naidu, 2009) makes enquiry into how the knowledge and skills of these knowledge workers can be preserved and retained by knowledge organisations relevant and critical. Labour mobility is an even bigger issue in the South African context, which suffers from a poor education system that produces few graduates who have the skills that are required by companies. Moreover, once companies have found these individuals they often either leave the company or the country for better employment opportunities Breidenthal, (2013).

The challenge that knowledge organisations face with these highly mobile knowledge workers is that they invest in the development of these knowledge workers but stand to make a loss on their investment because when they leave, they take their knowledge, institutional memory and skills with them. Sieber (2008) conducted a study that explored this paradox, looking at how an employer can manage meeting their knowledge worker's development and growth needs while protecting the investment they have made in the development of their knowledge workers. Sieber noted that this is a challenge for employers as knowledge workers are highly mobile, and an additional challenge is that their development makes them

attractive resources to alternative employers, making it even easier for them to trade and transfer their skills from one organisation to the next, and even between industries. More importantly, staff turnover is even more costly for organisations when the difficult to quantify cost of the knowledge and skills lost are considered (O'Neill & Adya, 2007). O'Neill and Adya quoted factors that impede knowledge sharing as employee turnover and the unwillingness of individuals to share their knowledge.

Du Toit, van Staden and Steyn (2011) stated that if knowledge workers are as important to organisations as the literature suggests, it is then imperative for organisations to pay attention to issues that concern knowledge workers. This will enable organisations to formulate strategies that are aimed at preventing the loss of valuable knowledge when employees leave their organisations (Bessic & Naicker, 2013). Peña, (2013) suggested that organisations should be more concerned about the skills, ability and knowledge of the individuals that are leaving the organisations and how they can be retained, as opposed to being overly concerned about the turnover rate. He urged organisations to prepare and plan retention strategies for institutional knowledge loss to ensure organisational continuity.

## 1.2 Significance of the study

In a 2012 McKinsey publication entitled *The Global Company's Challenge*, Dewhurst, Harris and Heywood (2012) noted that many global multi-national companies find it difficult to deploy and develop talent in emerging markets, with most companies experiencing difficulties in tailoring effective recruitment, retention and training processes for. This is applicable to the South African market as South Africa is considered to be an emerging market, and relevant to the research report as the sample will include multi-national professional services organisations.

Technical succession planning appears to be an appropriate strategy to be used by knowledge organisations to retain organisational knowledge and key skills, as opposed to managerial succession planning which is focused on vertical movement of employees through promotability. Studies have shown that knowledge workers have become very mobile and when they leave an organisation they take their knowledge with them. Ling, Sandhu and Jain (2009) asserted that the challenge that knowledge organisations are faced with is that the organisations' asset is held in the minds of its knowledge workers, and worse, that knowledge is only available to the organisation at the discretion of the knowledge workers that possess it. In their studies, Sieber (2008), Jokinen, Brewster and Suutari, (2008), Seabele (2012) and Perotti, Wall and McLaughlin (2010) also noted that knowledge workers build their own careers to enable them to be mobile, and when they leave an organisation they take their knowledge and skills with them.

Knowledge workers are no longer limited to only one employer for a lifetime; instead they have "boundary-less" careers. They proactively, consciously and independently build their careers by accumulating the relevant knowledge and skills that will drive their employability in the market (Jokinen, Brewster & Suutari, 2008). This makes it easy for knowledge workers to move from one job to the next and become independent of a single employer. Donnelly (2009) supported this view when he spoke of knowledge workers as having a protean career, which is described as one in which the individual and not the organisation takes responsibility for the direction of their career.

Sieber (2008) and Naidu (2009) suggested that it is difficult for employers to retain knowledge workers given the high levels of mobility and increased competition for their skills, but the retention of their knowledge is critical, as knowledge retention is becoming a central challenge in many countries, as knowledge becomes a main asset of organisations, Levy (2011).

This study seeks to explore factors that appear to have an impact, positive or negative, on the level of knowledge sharing in organisations, in order to provide knowledge organisations with additional factors for consideration when formulating knowledge and skills retention strategies. Such strategies should enable organisations to retain knowledge and skills that can be used in the future to provide the organisations with a competitive advantage in the market (Dang & Umemoto, 2009). The study considered organisational and individual factors; the organisational factors are contextual while the individual factors are behavioural in nature.

Martins and Meyer (2012) stated that it is important to understand the organisational and behavioural factors that enhance and impede organisational knowledge retention to influence the organisational knowledge retention strategy of organisations. However their study was based on single a water utility which is a more technical field, while this study considered a number of knowledge organisations. Their study also only included respondents from a supervisory and more senior level, whereas this study included all levels within the organisation, given that the study also aimed to understand the impact of the generational differences that exist in the workplace.

### **1.3 Relevance to South Africa and usefulness to managers**

South Africa has a number of professional services firms, multi-national and local, which are also considered to be knowledge organisations. The 2009 Development Network Africa report on professional services firms in South Africa considered the country to have a well-developed professional services market when compared to other developing countries. In their study on the development of South African knowledge workers, van Staden & Du Toit (2011) stated that as studies have indicated that the future of organisations is dependent on the productivity of knowledge

workers, South Africa and managers need to focus on issues that impact its knowledge workers, especially as a country with such a high unemployment rate and skills shortage. Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) stated that South Africa is suffering from a brain drain as a result of a general skills crisis and the challenges faced with regards to retaining top talent. This study examined some factors that appear to have an impact on knowledge workers, with a focus on knowledge sharing and retention.

Knowledge organisations use knowledge as the key organisational resource; the loss of knowledge can be highly damaging for such organisations. Jones and Sallis (2013) stated that every five years the average business loses half of its knowledge through staff attrition, leading to a loss of expertise, knowledge, productivity, income, revenue and other organisations capitalising on ideas that were once theirs. Because of the serious consequences that knowledge loss can potentially have on knowledge organisations, this study sought to investigate factors that have not been widely investigated that have an impact on knowledge sharing, which leads to knowledge retention. Martins and Martins (2011) suggested that it is critical for organisations to find ways of retaining knowledge before those that hold that the knowledge leave, and organisations must identify factors that impact positively and negatively on knowledge retention to counter knowledge loss.

Studies show that the manner in which knowledge is shared and the factors that facilitate knowledge sharing are important in knowledge management (Liao, 2008). The importance of knowledge retention in today's knowledge organisations was further stressed by Levy (2011), who acknowledged that knowledge retention is becoming a key challenge as knowledge becomes a main asset of organisations. What makes this an even more pressing issue in knowledge organisations today is that a belief amongst economists and business forecasters exists that the growth of the overall economy will come from the creative or knowledge organisations and in the services sector (Joo, 2010). This makes further enquiry into the

impact of succession planning for knowledge and skills transfer relevant to address the knowledge sharing and retention issue, especially in knowledge organisations as they have a high knowledge focus (von Nordenflycht, 2010), and also because of the expected growth in the profession.

This study will focus on the transfer and retention of skills and knowledge. The intended study will look to provide insight into factors that knowledge organisations, specifically professional services firms, can look into when formulating their knowledge management strategies.

#### **1.4 Research problem**

As a result of increased labour mobility and skills and employee scarcity, this research explored the organisational and individual factors that foster or hinder knowledge sharing and skills transfer amongst knowledge workers. This is important as the increase in labour mobility and changing attitudes to work and organisational commitment is making managerial succession planning less relevant to today's economy, while making technical succession planning more relevant.

#### **1.5 Research objectives**

The research objectives were formulated to assess the impact of organisational and behavioural factors that impact knowledge retention in knowledge organisations.

### **1.5.1 Organisational factors**

#### ***1.5.1.1 To investigate the impact that key performance indicators (KPIs) have on knowledge sharing behaviour***

To investigate if the inclusion of knowledge sharing KPIs, as part of the metrics that knowledge workers are assessed on in the performance appraisal process, fosters better knowledge sharing behaviour, and if consultants that are measured on knowledge sharing only contribute because they are being measured on it.

#### ***1.5.1.2 To investigate the impact that the generational differences in the workforce have on knowledge sharing***

To investigate the impact that the existence and interaction of the different generations in the workplace has on hindering or fostering knowledge sharing. This is important as each of the generations have different work expectations and career goals and values (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

### **1.5.2 Behavioural factors**

#### ***1.5.2.1 To investigate if the fear of losing power through sharing knowledge leads to individualistic behaviour of knowledge workers that impedes knowledge sharing***

To investigate if knowledge workers have an individualistic culture which is driven by the fear of losing power when they share their knowledge and skills. This will be extremely relevant in the highly competitive professional services environment, where individuals focus on their individual career advancement.

#### ***1.5.2.2 To investigate if employee commitment to an organisation is influenced by the prestige of the company's brand***

To investigate the impact that the national and international prestige of a knowledge organisation's brand has on the level of commitment of its knowledge workers. Employee commitment will lead to the prevention of knowledge loss (Martins & Meyer, 2012) as knowledge workers will

remain, with their organisations keeping their knowledge and skills. The double benefit of retaining these individuals is that not only are their skills and knowledge preserved, but it also provides an opportunity for those individuals to share their skills and knowledge.

### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

The study has the following limitations because of time constraints:

- Only seven of the vast number of professional services firms were considered.
- The focus was on multi-national professional services firms and did not take into account professional services firms that were only based in South Africa.
- Only the Johannesburg offices of these organisations formed part of the study.
- The study was limited to 15 employees in each of the organisations.
- The study was limited to the defined research questions and did not consider other contextual or behavioural aspects that could impact knowledge sharing and retention.
- Unavailability of the selected research organisations and participants could lead to a change in the sample size and secondary data being utilised where applicable.

### **1.7 Delimitations**

- The study only considered professional services organisations in the Gauteng Province and only in the Johannesburg area.
- Of the professional services organisations, only the management consulting business units were included in the study and not the entire organisations.

## 1.8 Assumptions

- The organisations that were included in the study had existing performance appraisal reviews.
- The knowledge retention strategies of the organisations that were involved in the study remained unchanged for the duration of the research project.
- The organisations had knowledge management structures in place.
- The organisations had knowledge management practitioners who were responsible for overseeing knowledge management matters.
- Once scheduled, interviews would take place as planned.
- If the selected research participants were not available due to unforeseen circumstances, secondary data could be utilised or a secondary research approach needed to be employed by the researcher.

## 1.9 Layout of the study

Chapter 2 will detail the literature review, which will discuss what has been published by other writers on the topic and the research objectives.

Chapter 3 will detail the purpose of the study supported by the research objectives and the research questions.

Chapter 4 will deal with the research methodology that was used to conduct the study.

Chapter 5 will discuss the results from the research based on the data and research objectives.

Chapter 6 will analyse and discuss the research results centred around the research objectives.

Chapter 7 will conclude the research study and recommendations will be provided.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

The theory that is reviewed in this research will discuss factors that appear to have an impact, positive or negative, on the level of knowledge sharing in organisations. The intention is to provide knowledge organisations with factors for consideration for retaining knowledge and skills that can be used in the future to provide them with a competitive advantage in the market (Dang & Umemoto, 2009).

Organisational and individual factors were considered; the organisational factors were contextual while the individual factors were behavioural. The first organisational factor will look at the key performance indicators that are used in the performance appraisal process to assess if they foster and encourage knowledge sharing. The second organisational factor to be discussed will be the impact that the generational differences that exist in knowledge organisations have on knowledge sharing. The first individual factor that will be discussed will be whether the fear of losing power through knowledge sharing leads to knowledge workers developing an individualistic attitude which disincentives knowledge sharing. The second individual factor to be considered will look at whether employee commitment, which in turn leads to employee retention and then to knowledge and skills remaining within the organisation (Nelson & McCann, 2010), is influenced by the prestige of the organisational brand.

### 2.2 Technical succession planning

Technical succession planning, as defined by Rothwell (2010), is a form of succession planning that focuses on broadening, deepening and retaining organisational and professional knowledge to be used by the organisation in the future. Rothwell also expanded on the definition of technical succession planning as referring to it as the transfer of knowledge from

more to less experienced workers. This study uses both definitions of technical succession planning.

Technical succession planning appears to be an appropriate strategy to be used by knowledge organisations to retain organisational knowledge and key skills, as opposed to managerial succession planning which is focused on vertical movement of employees through promotability. This is supported by studies that have shown that knowledge workers have become very mobile, implying that their career paths are not dependent on a single employer and that when they leave an organisation they take their knowledge with them (Sieber, 2008; Jokinen, Brewster & Suutari, 2008; Seabele, 2012; Perotti, Wall & McLaughlin, 2010).

### 2.3 Knowledge

The most commonly used classifications of knowledge are tacit and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be codified and stored in a number of formats. Stevens, Millage and Clark (2010) stated that this information can be transferred without losses.

Tacit knowledge is considered to be the most important form of knowledge as it is not or cannot be transferred and documented easily. It is knowledge that is in the individual's mind that is informed by their judgement and experiences. It was considered by Bessic and Naicker (2013) to be the most valuable knowledge, as it provides context to people's thoughts and experiences.

Doan, Rosenthal-Sabroux and Grundstein (2011) stated that explicit knowledge can be shared and transferred through documents, while tacit knowledge can be exchanged through human interaction. They did however state that both tacit and explicit knowledge are important and are interdependent, with Singh and Kant (2008) supporting that statement.

The tacit knowledge that is carried by highly mobile employees is considered to be an extremely valuable commodity (Dalkir, 2013). Dalkir went on to provide some characteristics of knowledge that distinguish it from other valuable commodities, i.e. that the use of knowledge does not consume it (if knowledge is transferred the owner does not lose it); that there is no shortage of knowledge however what is lacking is the ability to use it; and finally that the most valuable knowledge that organisations have is the tacit knowledge that is held by its employees.

Hofer-Alfeis (2008, p. 45) provided three classes of knowledge carriers and forms that exist in organisations:

- Individuals with their individual competencies;
- Groups or organisational units with distributed networked knowledge fitting together like puzzle pieces of complementary competencies, with some collective common knowledge acting as the “adhesive” between the pieces; and
- Information displaying described and more or less codified, i.e. defined and structured knowledge.

This study will focus on the first two sources or carriers of knowledge.

## 2.4 Knowledge workers

Drucker (1999), the pioneer of the study of knowledge workers, contrasted the manual worker’s and knowledge worker’s ability to move with the key organisational assets. He stated that employees who do manual work do not own the means of production and so their valuable experience is related to the means of production which is owned by the organisation. When manual workers leave an organisation they do not take the means of production with them, just the experience. On the other hand, knowledge workers own the means of production, which makes their knowledge

portable. When knowledge workers leave an organisation they take the means of production with them; their knowledge.

In their studies, Sieber (2008); Jokinen, Brewster and Suutari (2008); Seabele (2012); and Perotti, Wall and McLaughlin (2010) also noted that knowledge workers build their own careers to enable them to be mobile, and when they leave an organisation they take their knowledge and skills with them.

Jokinen, Brewster and Suutari (2008) asserted that knowledge workers are no longer limited to only one employer for a lifetime, but they have a “boundary-less” career. They stated that knowledge workers proactively, consciously and independently build their careers by accumulating the relevant knowledge and skills that will propel their employability in the market. This makes it easy for knowledge workers to move from one job to the next and become independent of a single employer. Donnelly (2009) spoke of a protean career, which is described as one in which the individual and not the organisation takes responsibility for the direction of their career.

In du Toit, van Staden and Steyn (2011), the research results revealed that most of the knowledge workers that participated in their research did not regard internal training provided by their organisations as important in gaining more knowledge. As a result, du Toit et al. concluded that knowledge workers prefer to take control of their own self-development, as they do not attach a lot of value to internal training provided by their organisations. Their findings showed that knowledge workers want autonomy and control of their careers and work tasks. Knowledge workers are also considered to be individuals that want to be valued for the knowledge that they own (Bessic and Naicker, 2013).

Froneman (2008) provided a contrast of the old and new career realities taken from Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2006). Table 1 below shows this contrast; the areas that are highlighted in blue are those that are in line with what the reviewed literature has shown regarding workers, in this case knowledge workers, showing that they are mobile, are in charge of their own careers and development, and are not bound to a single employer.

Old career realities	New career realities
Full-time permanent contracts	Part-time temporary contracts
Employment security	<b>Employment insecurity</b>
Once-off career choice	<b>Repeated changes in career</b>
Occupation for life	Several occupations
Organisation for life	<b>Several or no organisation</b>
Regular promotion	<b>Maintenance of employability</b>
Multi-level hierarchy	Delayed pyramid
Predictable job moves	<b>Unpredictable job moves</b>
Internal labour market	External labour market
Organisations manage careers	<b>Individuals manage careers</b>
Organisations develop people	<b>People develop themselves</b>

**Table 1: The old and new career realities (Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield (2006) quoted in Froneman (2008))**

## 2.5 Knowledge organisations

Wickramasinghe and Von Lubitz (2007) defined a knowledge-based organisation as one that values knowledge and integrates it into its business strategy, and most importantly sells it as a key part of its product and service offerings. A striking feature of knowledge organisations is that knowledge is the key organisational resource that gives the organisation its competitive edge. In the knowledge economy, a source of sustainable

competitive advantage and profitability is the manner in which an organisation creates and shares its knowledge, Tučková and Strouhal (2010). This was supported by Choi, Poon and Davis (2008), who stated that it is widely known that knowledge is a key strategic resource for a firm to retain a sustainable competitive advantage in the market. Knowledge provides organisations with a competitive privilege and equips them with the ability to resolve problems and gives them access to new business break throughs, making knowledge a key competitive resource (Alipour, Davabi, Mehrabi & Moshtaghi, 2010).

The focus of this study is on professional services firms (PSFs), because they are considered to be knowledge organisations as they are characterised as having high knowledge intensity, low capital intensity, and a professionalised workforce (von Nordenflycht, 2010).

Within the professional services industry the study was limited to management consulting businesses. Management consulting firms are considered to be knowledge organisations, as a major part of their business is concerned with selling knowledge and skills as the main service offering (Deragon, 2013). In Part 1 of his article, Deragon stated that management consultancies are regarded as factories for new knowledge for sale.

The definitions of knowledge organisations discussed above suggest that it is critical for knowledge organisations to retain knowledge and skills so as to remain competitive and profitable in the market - more so because talent in emerging markets is scarce, expensive and hard to retain (Dewhurst, Pettigrew and Srinivasan, 2012).

## **2.6 Knowledge sharing and retention**

Wu and Zhu (2012) stated that from reviewing the literature on knowledge sharing, there appears to be no single, uniform definition of knowledge sharing, with many researchers defining knowledge sharing from their own perspectives. They also noted that some researchers use knowledge sharing, knowledge retention and knowledge flows interchangeably. Foss, Husted and Michailova (2010) defined knowledge sharing as transforming individual knowledge into organisational knowledge.

This study will refer to knowledge sharing as the action of knowledge workers imparting and exchanging their knowledge and skills with each other, while knowledge retention will refer to the ability and action of organisations to keep knowledge within them, even when the individuals that held that knowledge have left those organisations.

One way to ensure knowledge retention is to retain the organisation's knowledge workers (Nelson & McCann, 2010), however this is getting difficult in the age of increased labour mobility and decreased commitment to the organisation in favour of one's career development (O'Neill & Adya, 2007).

It is important for organisations to identify which knowledge is valuable to be retained by the organisation as not all tacit knowledge can be retained within organisations (Martins & Meyer, 2012).

## **2.7 The role of key performance indicators (KPIs)**

Carleton (2011), in his work on how to motivate and retain knowledge workers in organisations, provided two principles of managing knowledge workers: emphasising professionalism and collaboration; and more importantly and related to this research, decreasing emphasis on individualised performance metrics and incentive schemes. KM Best

Practices, a website that focuses on producing knowledge management content with a spotlight on performance drivers that are not focused on the technology component of knowledge management, suggests that as best practice, organisations should develop appraisal, performance and promotion processes that foster knowledge sharing behaviour. KM Best Practices collects its data through conducting in-depth interviews with executives from knowledge organisations that are thought of to be the best in the world.

Studies have been conducted to evaluate the role that trust and employee behaviour and attitudes play towards encouraging employees to freely share their knowledge (Holste & Fields, 2010; Singh & Kant, 2008; Staples & Webster, 2008).

However little was found by the writer on the role that the key performance indicators (KPIs) used in the performance appraisal process play in knowledge organisations to foster a culture of knowledge sharing. The writer sought to investigate if the inclusion of knowledge sharing KPIs, as part of the metrics that knowledge workers are assessed on in the performance appraisal process, fosters better knowledge sharing behaviour. The writer also investigated if consultants that are measured on knowledge sharing only contribute because they are being measured.

Ling, Sandhu and Jain (2009) suggested that because the reward systems used in many consulting firms are linked to client delivery, billability and utilisation, and not on the quantity and quality of knowledge sharing, it becomes a less important part of the performance appraisal of employees. The results from their study showed that respondents identified, as one of the factors that impede knowledge sharing, the lack of a system that recognises people that share knowledge, as well as one that identifies the people with whom knowledge must be shared. They went on to suggest that perhaps the best way to foster knowledge sharing is to link it with rewards and performance appraisals, because people do what they are measured on - not what they are told to do.

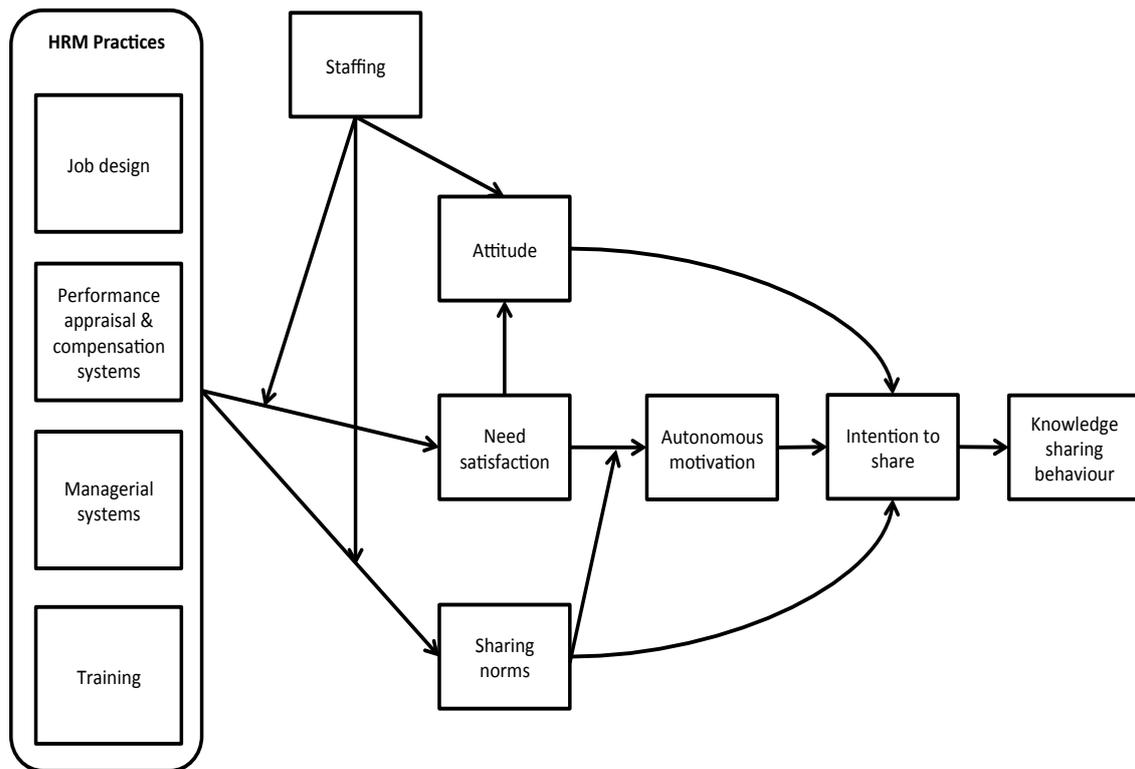
In addition to that, the knowledge sharing metric in the performance appraisal should form a significant part, citing Ernst and Young and CapGemini office in St Louis as organisations that do this well and foster knowledge sharing by not promoting individuals who do not engage in knowledge sharing activities. Buckman Laboratories also fosters proactive knowledge sharing amongst its employees by not considering individuals who do not participate in knowledge sharing for promotion. The World Bank sought to make better use and sharing of the vast amount of information that was contained in its documents and the tacit knowledge of its employees, amongst other objectives. One of the areas that they addressed to foster knowledge sharing was by including knowledge sharing in the performance evaluation system. By implementing this and other initiatives they were able to achieve operational improvements and increase employee satisfaction. The Buckman Laboratories and World Bank examples were retrieved from KM Best Practice case studies.

Gagné (2009) developed a model that assesses the motivation for knowledge sharing that incorporates elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT). TPB is considered useful in assessing the knowledge sharing behaviour in organisations. The theory states that there are three factors that influence intentions:

- The attitude toward the behaviour which determines if an individual views the behaviour favourably or not.
- Social norms regarding the behaviour. This is linked to the social pressures that influence an individual to perform the behaviour or not.
- The beliefs about one's control over the behaviour. This aspect considers the availability of the required skills, resources and opportunities to perform the behaviour.

SDT defines two types of motivation, the first being autonomous motivation in which individuals partake in an activity of their own volition, and secondly, controlled motivation in which individuals partake in an activity out of pressure, which could be driven by rewards or fear of punishment. Gagné continued to state that there might be more value in focusing on autonomous motivation than controlled motivation because it is not easily influenced by physical rewards.

What is relevant to this research objective from Gagné's model is that it also includes Human Resource Management principles that impact organisational knowledge management. The HRM practice to note in their model is performance appraisal and compensation systems. Gagné, (2009) suggested that performance appraisals that include an assessment of knowledge sharing behaviour and also provide feedback on how the individual has performed on the knowledge sharing aspect, should lead to improved knowledge sharing behaviour. This research will seek to explore this suggested outcome by assessing if knowledge workers that are measured on knowledge sharing activities participate in them purely because they are being measured on them (controlled motivation), or if they do so out of autonomous motivation.



**Figure 1: Model of Knowledge-Sharing Motivation (Gagné, 2009)**

### 2.8 Generational differences in the workforce

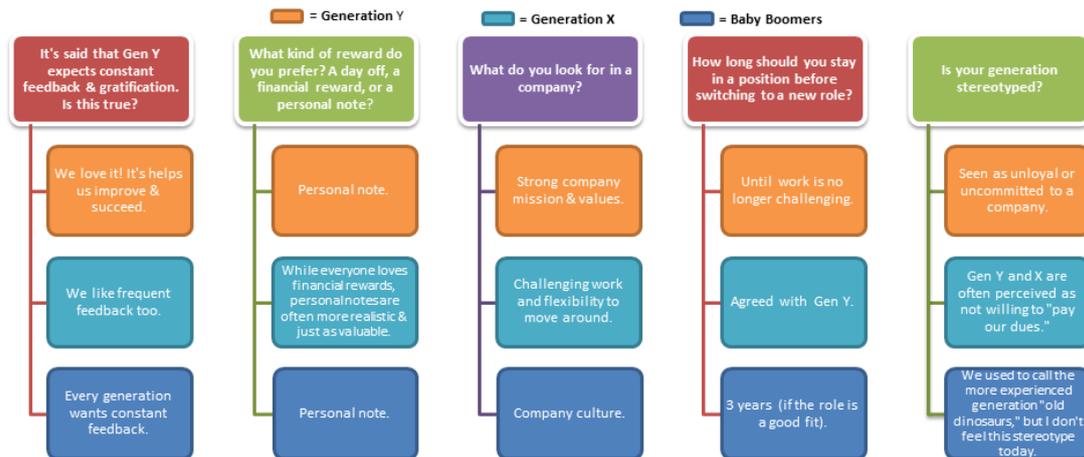
The make-up of today's workforce is more complex than it has ever been as it is composed of a number of generations (Meister & Willyerd, 2010), with Baby Boomers born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X born between 1965 and 1980, and Generation Y born between 1981 and 2000 (Haynes, 2011). Black (2010) stated that the different generations seem to not like the characteristics of each of the generations and that conveyors of knowledge need to recognise, analyse and address this to cater to the needs of each of the generations.

The Baby Boomer generation is characterised by having a strong focus on work and its commitment and loyalty, while Generation X is independent and has more commitment to its own careers than to an organisation. As a result of their independence they are considered to be disloyal to their organisations. Generation Y is technologically advanced and is more concerned with jobs that better the world; they want their contribution to be recognised. The various characteristics of the different generations,

accompanied by different values and work ethics, could possibly cause challenges to knowledge sharing amongst the different generations (Stevens, 2010).

LaManna (2013) provided a summary of responses provided by SAP employees at its Multi-Generational Panel Discussion. The discussion involved the participation of Generation X, Generation Y and the Baby Boomer Generation, who were asked questions to ascertain the different generations' experiences, perspectives and work values. The responses of the different generations showed areas where they have similar and different views. What is relevant to this research is that one of the questions asked was whether each of the generations thought that their generation was stereotyped. Generation X and Y's feedback stated that their generations are viewed as having no commitment to their organisations, however they stated that this stereotype is not true. What they seek is a challenging work environment; when the work environment ceases to be challenging they change jobs or opt to further their studies. The Baby Boomers stated that they do not experience a lot of stereotypes and they enjoy the diversity that exists in today's workforce. This suggests that the older generation could be passing judgement onto the generations after them, while those generations do not engage in this kind of behaviour. This could have an impact on how the different generations interact and share knowledge and skills with each other.

## 5 Questions For Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers About The Work World



**Figure 2: A comparison of the perspectives of different generations about the workplace (LaManna, 2013)**

Stevens (2010) provided three reasons why organisations should be concerned about knowledge sharing; an increase in the number of individuals that are retiring resulting from a maturing workforce; the reduction in the number of skilled employees in the labour market; and labour mobility.

Baby Boomers are retiring and organisations need to implement knowledge transfer strategies that will ensure their valuable knowledge is left in the organisation (Calo, 2008; Stevens, 2010). An additional challenge is added when Generation X and Generation Y leave their organisations sooner than expected (Peña, 2013). Peña also noted that organisations must pay attention when considering the knowledge transfer behaviour between the different generations, stating that by 2018 employers may have a workforce that is composed of five generations as a result of seniors staying in employment for longer due to better health and tough economic conditions.

Different approaches are needed for knowledge sharing and retention as organisations continue to lose employees due to retirement as well as other reasons. According to (Hofer-Alfeis, 2008) it is the knowledge and skills that are lost when employees leave their organisations is the real issue, rather the individual that is leaving. This makes knowledge retention an important organisational issue.

The intended research will investigate if the existence and interaction of the different generations in the workplace hinders or fosters knowledge sharing. This is important as each of the generations have different work expectations and career goals and values (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

### **2.9 Individualistic behaviour of knowledge workers**

Renzl (2008) in a study that showed that there is a relationship between management trust and the knowledge sharing behaviour of employees, showed that when employees have trust in management their level of knowledge sharing increases, as trust in management reduces the fear that employees have of losing their unique value when they share their knowledge. Renzl stated that employees may hoard their knowledge because they fear that they will lose their unique value within their organisation, which could possibly result in reducing their chances for promotion and increasing the chances of those with whom they have shared their knowledge.

This study aimed to investigate if employees in the capacity of knowledge workers may not willingly share their knowledge, as they fear that they will lose power as that knowledge will no longer be unique to them. This is further reinforced by the notion that the reluctance to share knowledge that one deems valuable comes naturally to individuals (Liao, 2008), making it important to understand an individual's propensity to share or not to share their knowledge (Siemsen, Roth & Balasubramanian, 2008). The knowledge and skills that knowledge workers hold give them a personal

competitive advantage in the workplace, especially if it is knowledge and skills that are highly valued by the organisation and as a result are rewarded with favourable performance appraisals, superior status, protection and personal perks such as promotions and bonuses (Wang & Noe, 2010). In their study that looked at understanding the factors that influence knowledge sharing between employees, Wang and Noe stated that this could create a disincentive for knowledge workers to share their knowledge as it becomes common and can be used by their colleagues. Wu and Zhu (2012) referred to this as the core competence losing risk.

Given that Bessic and Naicker (2013) described knowledge workers as individuals that want to be valued for the information that they hold, this study will investigate if indeed knowledge workers have an individualistic culture which is driven by the fear of losing power if they share their knowledge and skills. This will be very relevant in the highly competitive professional services environment, where individuals focus on their individual career advancement.

Nelson and McCann (2010) suggested that knowledge hoarding may not be as a result of the fear of losing power, but may be fostered by an organisational culture and HR practices that reward competitive, individualistic behaviours that are likely to encourage knowledge hoarding. Lam and Lambermont–Ford (2010) provided a point of view similar to Nelson and McCann (2010), suggesting that knowledge hoarding behaviour may be prevalent in organisations in which knowledge hoarding is not explicitly prohibited, suggesting that knowledge hoarding behaviour will be higher in organisations that do not measure employees on knowledge sharing as part of their performance appraisal, and in organisations that do not explicitly inform their employees that they are required to actively participate in and contribute to knowledge sharing activities.

Argyris (1991) described some characteristics of professional consultants as being extremely driven individuals that set high performance standards for themselves. He quoted one of the consultants that he interviewed as having said that he, along with his consultant colleagues, are extremely motivated to excel at their work in the quickest time and they want to be the best at what they do. This suggests that knowledge workers have a highly competitive nature about them. Argyris commented on how these consultants are always comparing themselves against each other and on how they secretly compete with each other rather than doing so openly, terming them productive loners. According to Argyris, productive loners are people who prefer to contribute individually.

It will be useful to investigate if individualistic behaviours are driven by the fear of losing knowledge at all, as opposed to other factors that have been suggested by Lam and Lambermont–Ford (2010) and Nelson and McCann (2010), and to see if knowledge workers exhibit the productive loner behaviour of preferring to work as individuals.

## **2.10 Employee commitment**

Employer branding was defined by Ipsos MORI, a United Kingdom-based research house, as how an organisation is perceived internally by its existing employees and externally by potential employees. The perception created by the employer brand influences people to join or stay with an organisation during recession and boom times. Most importantly, it is suggested that a strong employer brand assists organisations to attract and retain high quality employees (Martin, Gollan & Grigg, 2011). Employer brands have become more relevant and important given the high competition that exists in the labour market (Hughes & Rog, 2008). Attracting and retaining employees is influenced and dependent on how potential employees perceive the organisation, as well as the perceptions of existing employees on whether they view the organisation as one in

which they wish to remain and contribute positively to (Sitlington & Marshall, 2011).

However Sitlington and Marshall's 2011 study was focused on organisational effectiveness after downsizing or restructuring, and not specifically on retaining knowledge workers so as to foster knowledge retention within knowledge organisations, which is what this study focused on to address one of the research questions.

It is important to note that employer branding is not limited to tangible offerings made by the employer, but also extends to intangible offerings (Edwards, 2009). This suggests that there is possibly a psychological contract that exists that is based on what the organisation's brand has to offer. Edwards (2010) stated that it is important to consider the psychological contract when looking at elements that make up an organisation's brand.

In their study on the relationship between HRM practices and organisational commitment of knowledge workers, Martins and Meyer (2012) stated that their literature study revealed that little research has been conducted on knowledge retention with a behavioural focus, with most work being done on knowledge; knowledge management; knowledge retention with a focus on organisational challenges and solution driven knowledge retention initiatives; and the organisational behaviour discipline. One of the factors that they identified in their study that needed further research was the commitment of knowledge workers based on the national and international prestige of their organisation.

This research sought to investigate the impact that the national and international prestige of knowledge organisations has on influencing the level of commitment of its knowledge workers. This is relevant to knowledge retention as employee retention as a result of employee

commitment to the organisation will lead to a prevention of knowledge loss (Martins & Meyer, 2012). Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen and Moeyaert (2009) supported this view by stating that employee retention is key in preventing employee and organisational knowledge and skills loss, as well as in protecting the competitiveness of the organisation. Sandhya and Kumar (2011) stated that employees may remain with a company because of the company's brand. This study only considered the relationship that exists between the employee and the organisation, unlike Kinnie and Swart (2012) who considered three types of commitment: commitment to the organisation, commitment to the client, and commitment to the profession.

The writer has found little writing on the perceived prestige of the organisation's brand and employee retention, with most studies focusing on employer branding which is related to the efforts that organisations make so as to be considered a desirable employer for potential and existing staff through their value propositions (Jiang & Iles, 2011; Chung, 2010; King & Grace, 2010). The writer investigated this under researched factor to assess if the level of prestige of the brand of an organisation has a positive impact on the retention of knowledge workers.

In a study that used his 2004 Corporate Character Scale, Davies (2008) explored the role that the employer brand plays in influencing employee satisfaction, affinity, loyalty and perceived differentiation. He showed in the results of the study that a chic brand, which is characterised as one that is elegant, prestigious and snobby, was perceived by employees to be a factor that they use to differentiate organisations and that such a brand fosters employee commitment to an organisation. He made a comparison of customer loyalty to a product or company brand with employee loyalty to the employer brand, and concluded that it is easier, less costly and happens more frequently that consumers switch from one brand to another, whereas it is more costly for employees to switch employers' brands, and they therefore only do this every couple of years. Davies'

sample for the study consisted of commercial managers, which he classified as a potentially mobile group.

This study also considered a highly mobile group called knowledge workers. His results show that managers who see their organisations as chic stay longer with those employers. This study investigated if the highly mobile group being considered (knowledge workers in the management consulting profession) exhibited similar results of staying longer with their employers as a result of the employer having a perceived prestigious corporate brand – particularly as knowledge workers are considered to more committed to their profession than to a particular organisation (O'Neill & Adya, 2007).

Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) provided a list of factors that came out of their research results that influence talent attraction, attrition, retention and emigration. What is relevant to this research is that the results of their study showed that a strong employer brand attracts top talent while a reputable employer brand influences employee retention.

## **2.11 Conclusion**

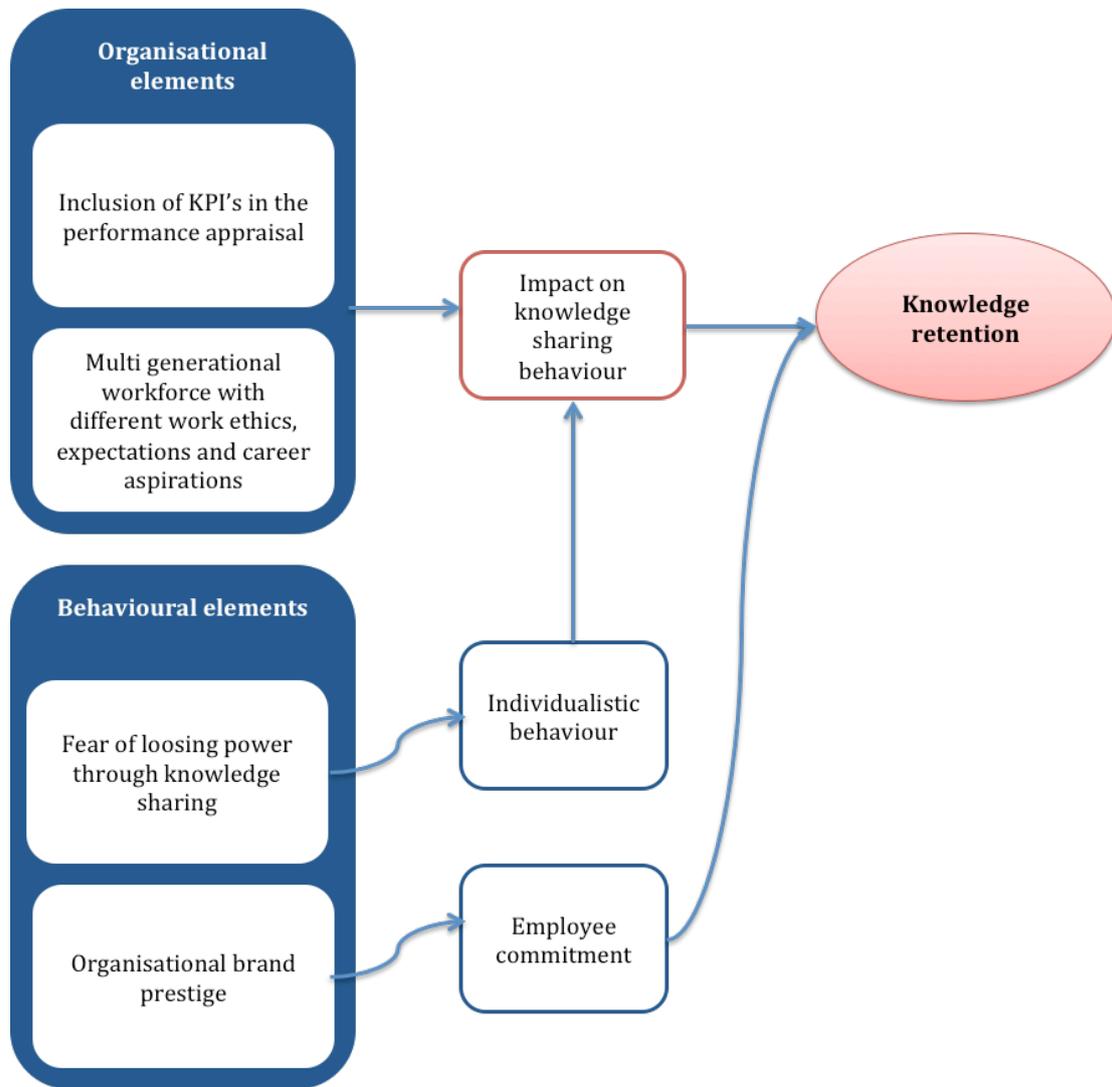
The literature reviewed in this chapter highlighted that knowledge organisations need to take into account that the world of work has changed from one where organisations were able to guide and influence the career development and paths of their knowledge workers, to one where it is the knowledge workers that are taking charge of their development, with decreased dependence on and commitment to a single organisation and increased labour mobility. The literature suggests that knowledge provides knowledge organisations with a competitive edge and the loss of this knowledge could have detrimental impact on business continuity and performance. This makes knowledge and skills transfer, as well as retention, key to mitigate this undesirable outcome.

As a consequence, knowledge organisations need to pay closer attention to factors that:

- impact their knowledge workers' attitudes towards knowledge sharing;
- influence their knowledge workers' propensity to share their knowledge and skills;
- affect knowledge sharing amongst the different generations that make up their workforce; and
- influence their knowledge workers' commitment to their organisations.

Based on the research objectives, this study investigated factors that appeared to require further investigation into their impact on knowledge sharing. The outcomes of this research were intended to highlight to knowledge organisations the factors that need to be considered when developing their knowledge retention strategies. Some of the areas have been researched but not in-depth, or they focused on a different context with a different focus when compared to this study.

KM Best Practice provided a document that lists tools and techniques that can be used to foster knowledge sharing and learning in organisations. The researcher extracted a few tools and techniques that are related to some of the research objectives - the table can be found in appendix 1. The researcher has also provided a visual depiction of the relationships that the study will explore in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Research model**

## Chapter 3: Research questions

Increased labour mobility and skills and talent scarcity, coupled with changing attitudes to work and organisational commitment, are making managerial succession planning less relevant in today's knowledge economy. What has become more relevant is knowledge and skills retention (technical succession planning) to help organisations protect their institutional memory and key skills loss. Skills and knowledge retention help protect the organisation's competitive edge and business continuity.

The research questions were developed using the research objectives already highlighted in chapter 1. The research questions sought to gain insight into the impact that organisational and behavioural factors have on knowledge sharing and retention amongst knowledge workers, specifically in knowledge organisations.

### 3.1 Organisational factors

#### 3.1.1 Do the key performance indicators that are used in the performance appraisal process foster knowledge sharing behaviour amongst knowledge workers?

This research question aimed to investigate if organisations that have knowledge sharing KPIs, as part of the variables that knowledge workers are assessed on in the performance appraisal process, have better knowledge sharing behaviour. Gagné (2009) stated that performance appraisals that include an assessment of knowledge sharing behaviour can influence knowledge sharing behaviour positively by enhancing sharing norms.

### **3.1.2 What is the impact of generational differences on knowledge sharing?**

This research question investigated what impact the existence and interaction of the different generations in the workplace has on hindering or fostering knowledge sharing amongst knowledge workers. This is important for multi-generational organisations as each of the generations have different work expectations and career goals and values (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008).

## **3.2 Behavioural factors**

### **3.2.1 Does the fear of losing power through knowledge sharing lead to knowledge workers developing an individualistic attitude that disincentives knowledge sharing?**

This research question investigated if knowledge workers have an individualistic culture which is driven by the fear of losing power when they share their knowledge and skills. This will be very relevant in the highly competitive professional services environment, where individuals focus on their individual career advancement.

### **3.2.2 Does the national and international brand prestige of knowledge organisations encourage employee commitment to the organisation?**

This research question investigated the impact that the national and international prestige of a knowledge organisation has on the level of commitment of its knowledge workers. Employee commitment will lead to a prevention of knowledge loss (Martins & Meyer, 2012) - as knowledge workers remain with their organisations, their skills and knowledge stay within those organisations. The double benefit to retaining the individuals is that not only are their skills and knowledge retained, but it also provides an opportunity for those individuals to share their skills and knowledge.

## Chapter 4: Research methodology

This chapter provides the detail of the research methodology that was used to carry out the study. The chapter is segmented into the research approach, type of study, research design and scope, with each of these sections accompanied by the author's reasoning for the selected methods. The latter part of the chapter covers the population that the sample was selected from, the unit of analysis for the study, the sampling aspects, the tools and approach that were used for data analysis, and finally the limitations that are inherent in the selected research approach.

### 4.1 Selected research approach

A deductive research approach was used in this study. This uses a top down approach that involves testing theoretical propositions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

#### 4.1.1 Reason for choosing a deductive approach

A deductive approach aims to explain causal relationships between variables (Saunders & Lewis, 2012), making it appropriate for this study as it was aimed at investigating the impact that technical succession planning has on knowledge retention based on the defined research questions. The alternative research approach defined by Saunders and Lewis (2012) is inductive research, which would have been less appropriate for this study as it moves from specific observations and seeks to develop general theories from those observations. This study sought to arrive at specific answers to the specified research questions and not general theories, thus a deductive approach would not have been useful in answering the research questions.

## **4.2 Type of study**

The study is exploratory in nature. Exploratory studies provide insight and understanding into the research objectives and questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

### **4.2.1 Reason for choosing an exploratory type study**

Knowledge retention has been widely researched however technical succession planning as a knowledge retention strategy has not, so the writer sought to explore this relationship. The literature that was consulted by the researcher indicated that the proposed research questions have not been addressed in the context of knowledge retention and knowledge workers. The researcher conducted an extensive literature review to assess what had been done academically on the topic as a first step. The researcher then went and formulated research questions based on the outcomes of the literature review. It is these questions that the study sought to explore. The exploratory nature of the study was selected to bring to light information that was not known by the writer or appeared to be under researched in the existing literature, using the research questions.

## **4.3 Research design**

The study made use of a qualitative research design as it was considered by the writer to be more suitable for studying human behaviour and attitudes, as it is difficult to study them through quantitative methods. It would have been challenging to analyse the research results using mathematical techniques as they are concerned with behaviours, feelings and beliefs, which made quantitative research inappropriate for the study.

#### **4.3.1 Reason for choosing a qualitative research design**

The objective of the research was to gain an understanding into the drivers of knowledge sharing amongst knowledge workers in knowledge organisations. A qualitative design provided in-depth insight into the behaviours, attitudes and drivers of the research subjects - knowledge workers - with regard to their knowledge sharing behaviours. Knowledge sharing is based on behaviour and is influenced by an individual's beliefs, attitudes towards knowledge sharing, values and characteristics; this made a qualitative design more appropriate. A qualitative design allowed the researcher to understand the depth, complexity and richness of the research objectives; quantitative research would not have allowed for this as the writer would have been limited to statistical measurement and analysis and would only have been able to focus on hard science.

#### **4.3.2 Data capturing method**

The research strategies that the researcher chose were guided by the research questions, research objectives, the extent of existing knowledge and the amount of time available to the researcher (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Based on this the study employed the following research strategies or methods to gather data:

##### **4.3.2.1 Questionnaire survey**

A self-designed questionnaire survey was used to gather information from knowledge workers at different levels of seniority within their organisations. The questionnaires were structured in such a way that all participants were asked the same questions, in the same order (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The survey was designed and distributed online using Survey Monkey, so that it would be easier to widely distribute and to also enable the researcher to monitor the response rate, which was done on a daily basis. The researcher sent out reminder e-mails at points when the response

rates were low. Using an online survey also made it easier and cheaper to collect the responses than if it was a paper-based survey.

The survey questions were formulated to explore the themes identified in the analysis of the literature reviewed and included questions that responded to the research objectives. The questions were designed such that the research participants would be able to understand them in the way that the researcher intended them to. A Likert scale was used for measurement to get a view of the knowledge workers' agreement to the research questions.

The survey questionnaires were sent out to the respondents with a covering letter informing them what the survey was about, stating that their responses would be kept anonymous, explaining how the responses will be used, and including the contact details of the researcher and the research supervisor if respondents needed any clearance or additional information. The questionnaire was composed of five sections.

The first section covered the knowledge workers' gender, age, the number of years they had been working in management consulting, and the number of years they had been working for their current employer. The second to fifth sections were composed of three questions each, which were formulated to address all the research objectives. The questions were formulated based on the research objectives as well as the consulted academic literature.

The second section addressed research objective one, which sought to solicit if knowledge workers were being measured on knowledge sharing in the performance appraisal process, to assess if that fosters knowledge sharing, and to see if knowledge workers only share their knowledge because they are being measured on it. Gagné (2009) suggested that performance appraisals that include an assessment of knowledge sharing

behaviour should lead to improved knowledge sharing behaviour. Ling, Sandhu and Jain (2009) suggested that the knowledge sharing aspect of a performance appraisal should form a significant part of the assessment.

1. I am measured on how much I contributed to the knowledge storage portal as part of the performance review process
2. I contribute to knowledge sharing only because knowledge sharing forms part of my performance review
3. The weighting of my knowledge sharing contribution forms a negligible part of my performance appraisal

The third section addressed research objective two, which sought to solicit what impact the existence of multi-generational workforces have on knowledge and skills sharing. Stevens (2010) suggested that it is important for organisations to be concerned about knowledge sharing amongst the different generations because retirement is on the rise as a result of a maturing workforce, i.e. the older and more experienced generations should be interacting with, and passing their knowledge and skills onto, the younger and less experienced generations.

1. In my organisation older and more experienced employees freely share their knowledge and skills with less experienced employees
2. There is good, open communication between senior leaders and employees in my organisation
3. My opinions about work matter significantly to my senior co-workers.

The fourth section addressed research objective three, which sought to solicit if knowledge workers develop an individualistic attitude as a result of fearing that they may lose power by participating in knowledge sharing, as that knowledge will no longer be unique to them. Renzl (2008) stated that individuals may not willingly share their knowledge as they fear that they will lose power since that knowledge will no longer be unique to them;

more so if they are rewarded for possessing that knowledge (Wang & Noe, 2010). Argyris (1991) provided some characteristics of consultants that suggest that they are highly competitive individuals who prefer to contribute individually.

1. It is easy for me to get the resources and information that I need to do my job well from my colleagues
2. I prefer to work as an individual
3. I am hesitant about sharing what I know so that I remain competitive in the workplace

The fifth section addressed research objective four, which sought to solicit if the national and international brand of an organisation fosters employee commitment, which in turn leads to knowledge retention. Martin, Gollan and Grigg (2011) suggested that strong employer brands attract and retain high quality employees. Davies (2008) showed that his research participants stated that they regarded a chic brand, which is one that is considered to be elegant, prestigious and snobby, as one that is differentiated and as such fosters employee commitment to that organisation. A study by Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) showed that a strong employer brand attracts quality employees while a reputable employer brand influences employee retention.

1. The national and international prestige of my employer encourages me to stay with the organisation
2. I am positive that having my current employer's name on my resume will lead to better career opportunities.
3. I am likely to look for another job outside the company in the next three years

#### *4.3.2.2 Interviews*

As interviews are suited for exploratory studies, the writer incorporated semi-structured interviews into the research with two knowledge management experts and a talent strategist. The interviews were conducted after the collection and analysis of the questionnaire survey responses. The purpose of the interviews was to verify the findings from the questionnaire survey to ensure validity and reliability by making use of triangulation. The interviews were also conducted to get clarity on any ambiguous findings from the survey responses. The interviews were held with two knowledge management specialists and a talent strategist, who had worked as knowledge management experts or talent management experts within consulting firms. The interview respondents had a combined over 30 years of experience in knowledge and talent management and a combined 16 years of working within knowledge management and talent management in the management consulting environment.

Semi-structured interviews allow for more in-depth probing and additional information gathering that may be relevant to the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The interviews did allow the writer to ask additional questions, especially at the end of the interview. In instances where the respondents introduced a point that did not form part of the interview questions but was relevant to the research, the researcher made a note of it. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in the manner in which questions are asked based on the person being interviewed. The researcher was able to conduct all the interviews face-to-face, and a recording device was used in the interviews with the consent of the interviewees to ensure that the writer captured all the relevant and important points from the interview. The recordings came to good use after the interview when the writer needed to confirm a point or where the writer was unable to capture all the points during the interview.

The semi-structured interviews were guided by the research objectives and were based on questions that were very similar to those that were asked in the survey, as the purpose of the interviews was to gain expert views to assess if they were in line with the survey responses. This was done to confirm areas in which the writer required clarity and insight from an expert who works or has worked in the field.

The interview questions had five sections. The first section covered the experts' gender, experience in knowledge management or talent management measured by the number of years in the profession, experience in the profession and specifically in management consulting firms, and lastly how long they had been working for the current employer.

The second section was concerned with getting the experts' views on research objective one, which sought to solicit if the inclusion or exclusion of knowledge sharing KPIs in the performance appraisal process of knowledge workers fosters knowledge sharing. This objective also sought to investigate if knowledge workers only share their knowledge because they are measured on it.

1. Are consultants in your organisation measured on how much they contribute to the knowledge storage portal as part of the performance review process?
2. Has your experience been that consultants contribute to knowledge sharing only because they are measured on it? Why is this so?
3. Have you noted that the weighting of the knowledge sharing contribution metric in the performance appraisal process informs how much individuals participate in knowledge sharing activities? How so?

The third section was concerned with getting the experts' views on research objective two, which sought to solicit what impact the existence of multi-generational workforces have on knowledge and skills sharing.

1. Have you found that in consulting firms older and more experienced employees freely share their knowledge and skills with the younger and less experienced employees?
4. What challenges have you noted come with having a multi-generational workplace when it comes to knowledge and skills sharing?
5. From working in this industry have you noted any consulting firms that design different knowledge sharing approaches to cater to the different generations? Are you of the view that there is value in doing this?

The fourth section was concerned with getting the experts' views on research objective three, which sought to understand if knowledge workers develop individualistic attitudes as a result of fearing that they may lose power by participating in knowledge sharing, as that knowledge will no longer be unique to them.

1. Do consultants make it easy for their colleagues to get the resources and information that they need to do their job well?
2. As much as consultants work in a team based environment have you noted behaviour that may suggest that they actually prefer to work as individuals? Elaborate.
3. What have you observed as factors that drive knowledge hoarding behaviour amongst consultants?

The fifth section was concerned with getting the experts' views on research objective four, which sought to solicit if the national and international brand of an organisation fosters employee commitment which will in turn lead to knowledge retention.

1. Do consulting firms use brand prestige to attract and retain knowledge workers?
2. Have you observed that consultants choose certain employers so as to open up better future career opportunities from having worked for a well-regarded consulting firm?
3. From your experience what is the average turnover rate of a consultant?

The researcher sent the interview respondents the research questions accompanied by the consent letter and a brief summary that provided the rationale for the research project. This was done to ensure that the participants understood what the research project was about and trying to achieve. This was also done in the interest of time to ensure that the participants were familiar with the questions beforehand.

The interviewees were asked to indicate if they had a venue preference to ensure that they were in an environment that they were comfortable in. An active attempt was made to try and start each interview in the same manner. All three interviews were based on the same questions that were asked in the same order, however there were instances where the respondents, in answering one question, mentioned points that were relevant to another question.

#### **4.3.3 Pre-testing**

The questionnaire survey was piloted to three knowledge workers to ensure ease of understandability, such that the questions could be answered correctly as well as to ensure that the online survey instrument

functioned correctly. Saunders and Lewis (2012) suggested that it is important to do pilot testing for both web-based and paper-based questionnaires, adding that the pilot should be conducted with individuals who are similar to those that the researcher has selected to include in the sample. For this reason the researcher piloted the survey to three knowledge workers, all of whom were able to complete all the questions in the survey. The only issue that was reported was that two of the organisations did not allow the participants to enter the website, however they were able to access it when they used their personal Internet connections. This issue was not related to the functioning of the tool or the understandability of the questions. The pilot respondents also easily understood the covering letter.

#### 4.4 Scope

##### 4.4.1 Scope and reasoning

The study only included professional service firms in the Johannesburg area as the writer had time constraints.

The study was limited to management consulting firms that conformed to the following criteria:

- Ranked in the top 10 of the Vault Best Consulting Firm: Management Consulting Survey (see appendix 2)
- Ranked in the top 15 of the Vault Best Consulting Firms: Prestige Survey (see appendix 3)
- Firm had to have international operations
- Firm had to have a strong South African footprint

The Vault survey is a global survey with the rankings being done by consultants that work in the industry. Based on the criteria, the following professional services firms focusing on the management consulting business units of these organisations were intended to be included in the study: KPMG Consulting, Accenture, Deloitte Consulting, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Ernst & Young, McKinsey and Company, and Bain and Company.

#### **4.5 Population**

The population for this research was knowledge organisations in the professional services industry, with a specific focus on the management consulting business units. Wickramasinghe and von Lubitz (2007) defined a knowledge based organisation as one that values knowledge, integrates it into its business strategy, and most importantly sells it as a key part of its products and service offerings. Professional services firms are regarded as knowledge firms as their key assets are knowledge, and their main - and for some their sole - service offering for sale is knowledge (von Nordenflycht, 2010; Deragon, 2013).

#### **4.6 Unit of analysis**

The unit of analysis for this study was factors that influence knowledge workers' (in this case management consultants) behaviour towards knowledge sharing.

#### **4.7 Sampling**

##### **4.7.1 Sampling technique**

The study was qualitative in nature and as a consequence made use of non-probability sampling. A sample is a subset from a larger population Zikmund (2011) which needs to be appropriate based on the research questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Because of time limitations the writer

did not extend the study beyond firms that were based in the Johannesburg area.

The writer made use of purposive sampling to select the organisations to be included. As is done in purposive sampling, the writer used personal judgement to select those organisations that were best to help answer the research questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The type of purposive sampling that was used was heterogeneous, as the sample included experienced and inexperienced knowledge workers. Where the researcher had challenges getting feedback from the organisations regarding whether they were willing to participate or not, she contacted individuals in their own capacity to ask for their consent. Purposive sampling was still applied as those individuals were from the organisations that were outlined in 4.4.1.

#### **4.7.2 Sample size**

The writer intended on having a sample of 50 individuals to include in the study from each of the selected organisations as outlined in section 4.4.1. The researcher intended having 48 questionnaire surveys completed and then holding interviews with two individuals that were knowledge management or talent management practitioners in each of the organisations. The writer was aware that because of the nature of the industry that is highly time constrained, a number greater than fifty participants in each of the seven selected organisations would have been difficult to obtain. In total the sample size was intended to be three hundred and fifty respondents, however as the researcher sent out requests for participation the feedback received was unfavourable and indicated to the researcher that the sample size needed to be reduced. The researcher reduced the sample size to fifteen and was able to get a sample size of fifty-six respondents from four organisations. The four organisations were Accenture, Bain & Company, Ernst & Young and KPMG.

As the type of purposive sampling that was used in the study was heterogeneous, the sample included experienced and inexperienced consultants from entry level to senior management, while one of the respondents was very senior in their organisation being at Partner level. When broken down the respondents were from the following levels: Analysts, Junior and Senior Consultants, Managers, Senior Managers and a Partner.

## **4.8 Data analysis**

### **4.8.1 Questionnaire survey analysis**

Data analysis makes meaning of the raw data collected. The data collected from the questionnaire surveys and interviews were in the form of qualitative text.

The responses were reduced to themes for simplification of analysis and interpretation and the research objectives formed the themes that the data were grouped into. From the research objectives the researcher formulated four research questions, each of which had three sub questions. The sub questions asked under each research question were grouped into the four research objectives or themes.

In analysing the data the researcher looked to uncover relationships that existed based on the data collected in response to the research questions. The survey data collection tool, SurveyMonkey, has an analysis function built into it, therefore when the writer exported the data from the tool to Excel for detailed analysis, SurveyMonkey had already produced graphs. In order to analyse specific relationships and outcomes, however, the writer did have to change the graphs and form her own tables.

#### 4.8.2 Interview response analysis

The interviews were recorded, with the consent of the participants, and notes were taken during the interview. Soon after each interview the researcher would play back the recordings and go through the notes taken to ensure that all relevant points were noted and where something was missed the researcher added this to the notes. The interview responses were not analysed graphically as their purpose was to confirm the survey results and for the interviewees to provide their views on the questions based on their personal experiences. Where there were instances where the respondents in answering one question mentioned points that were relevant to another question, the researcher simply reallocated those answers to the right theme or research objective.

#### 4.9 Hurdles encountered in data collection

The writer set out to have seven organisations participating in the study as per the criteria discussed in section 4.7, however the writer experienced some difficulties in getting all the organisations to agree to participate. Some of the organisations provided lack of resources, time constraints and confidentiality concerns as reasons for not participating. One of the organisations said that it does not participate in external studies at all.

To overcome this challenge the writer selected to approach individual employees from those organisations in their personal capacity as knowledge workers. The researcher intended to hold the interviews with a Knowledge Management or Talent Management specialists from each of the selected organisations, however because some of the organisations were not responding positively to partake in the study, the writer opted to interview specialists who were not necessarily from the organisations that were selected for the study, but rather individuals who had experience in those roles in the professional services.

Not all of the participants completed the survey fully, which could have been a result of running out of time, they did not know how to move onto the next page or they changed their mind about participating in the research.

During the interview with Respondent 1 there were two instances of interruption by the Respondent's assistant, however the interruptions were brief and did not compromise the quality of the interview.

Interview Respondent 2 sometimes spoke very softly and spoke some responses under her breath so the recording was unable to capture these. The researcher captured those points in the notes that she was taking during the interviews.

During the third interview the recorder stopped recording halfway into the interview so that data was not captured in audio. The researcher was also making notes during the interview and so had recorded the responses on the interview questionnaire.

## **4.10 Validity and Reliability**

### **4.10.1 Validity**

Pre-testing for the survey was conducted via a pilot test to ensure that content validity was achieved with the research questions meeting the research objectives. Construct validity was also tested to ensure that the questions being asked actually collected the intended data based on what the study intended to explore (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The researcher made use of triangulation by using two types of data collection methods: a questionnaire survey and expert interviews. Triangulation assists in confirming that the collected data is indeed telling the researcher what the researcher thinks it is. The two sources of data

need to confirm each other and provide converging evidence to confirm the credibility and validity of the results.

Because the study was conducted in only one sector of professional services instead of all types, there was a possibility of not achieving external validity as the results may not fully generalisable. However the questions were formulated in a way that would allow for the results to be generalisable to other types of professional services firms and to other knowledge workers.

#### **4.10.2 Reliability**

Reliability could possibly be compromised by subject selection bias, which results in the selection of research participants who are not representative of the population (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). To minimise this the researcher managed to get four organisations to participate as opposed to getting participants from a single organisation. The participants were informed that their identity and that of their organisations would be kept secret. This was done to make the respondents feel comfortable answering the questions honestly without fear of exposure.

#### **4.11 Ethics of the study**

When conducting primary research, as this study did, it is important to take into consideration ethical issues to ensure that the researcher conducts themselves in an appropriate manner when dealing with the research participants (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The researcher took into consideration ethical concerns by doing the following:

- The e-mail that was sent to the survey and interview participants contained a consent letter which explained what the research was about, as well as why those participants were selected. It provided an estimate of how long the survey and interviews were expected to

take to complete. The survey consent letter can be found in appendix 4.

- The e-mail informed the participants that their participation was purely voluntary and they could withdraw at any time.
- The survey participants were also informed that their identities as well as that of their organisations would be kept confidential. This was achieved by not requesting the particulars of the individual and organisation, as well as by aggregating the responses into a single survey.
- The survey participants were informed that by completing the survey they were consenting to participating.
- The interview participants were asked to sign the consent letter and were also informed of the recording and how it would be used. The interview consent letter can be found in appendix 5.
- Both the survey and interview consent letters included the researcher's and the research supervisor's contact details if the interviewees had any concerns or questions.

#### **4.12 Limitations of the research**

- Qualitative research cannot be used to make generalisations about the larger population as can be done with quantitative research. This limits the usefulness of the study to other knowledge organisations
- The study only included international knowledge organisations, which may limit the usefulness of the study to South African knowledge organisations. The limitation could possibly come from local knowledge organisations facing different challenges with their knowledge workers that are not addressed by the study.
- The purposive nature of the sampling technique means that the organisations selected to participate in the study have structures in place to answer the research questions. Some knowledge organisations, especially Small - Medium Enterprises (SMEs), do

not have strong knowledge management practices, mainly because of budgetary constraints (Lee & Lan, 2011), and so the research outcomes may not be readily relevant and used by them until they build knowledge management structures. However the study will still be relevant in aiding them develop knowledge management capabilities.

- The researcher was not able to reach the desired sample size of seven organisations and getting 15 respondents from each of the organisations because of time constraints faced by the researcher and the participants.

## Chapter 5: Results

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the results of the study. The research sought to investigate four research objectives which were then translated into the research questions that were discussed in Chapter 3.

Research objective one: to investigate the impact that the key performance indicators (KPIs) have on knowledge sharing behaviour.

Research objective two: to investigate the impact that the generational differences in the workforce have on knowledge sharing.

Research objective three: to investigate if the fear of losing power through sharing knowledge leads to individualistic behaviour of knowledge workers that impedes knowledge sharing.

Research objective four: to investigate if employee commitment to an organisation is influenced by the prestige of the company's brand.

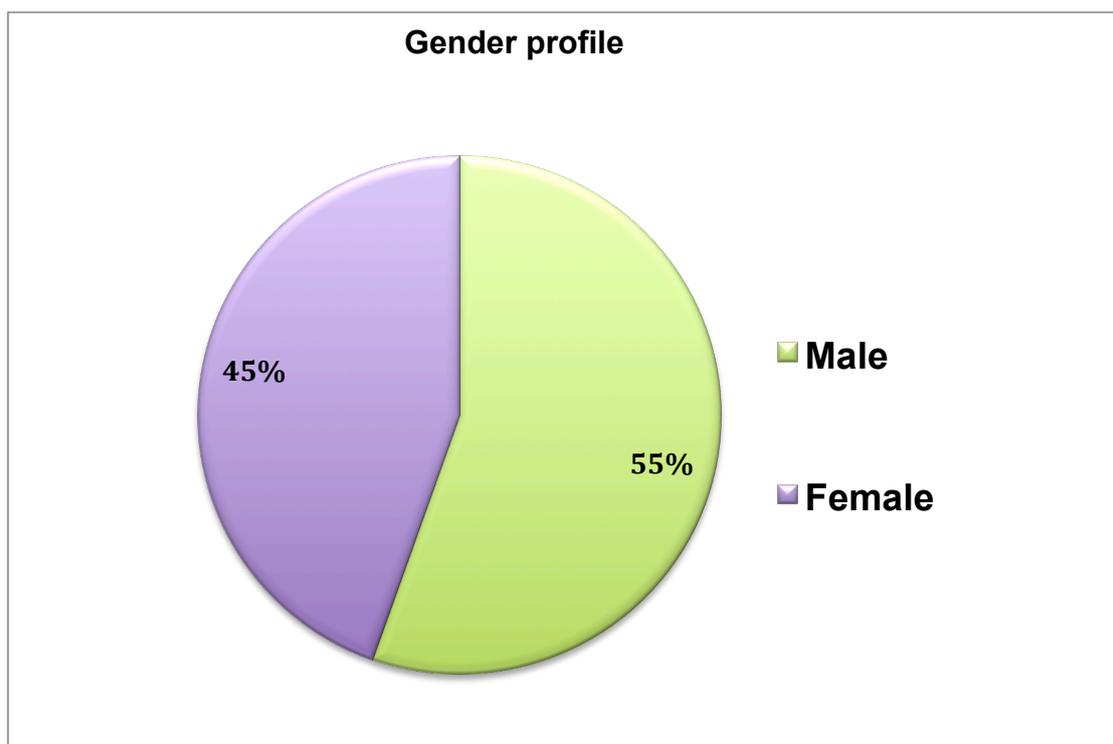
The data was collected using two collection methods. The primary collection method used was a questionnaire survey that was sent out to the research subjects - knowledge workers. The secondary research method used was three expert interviews. The interviews were made up of closed and open-ended questions.

### 5.2 Description of the sample

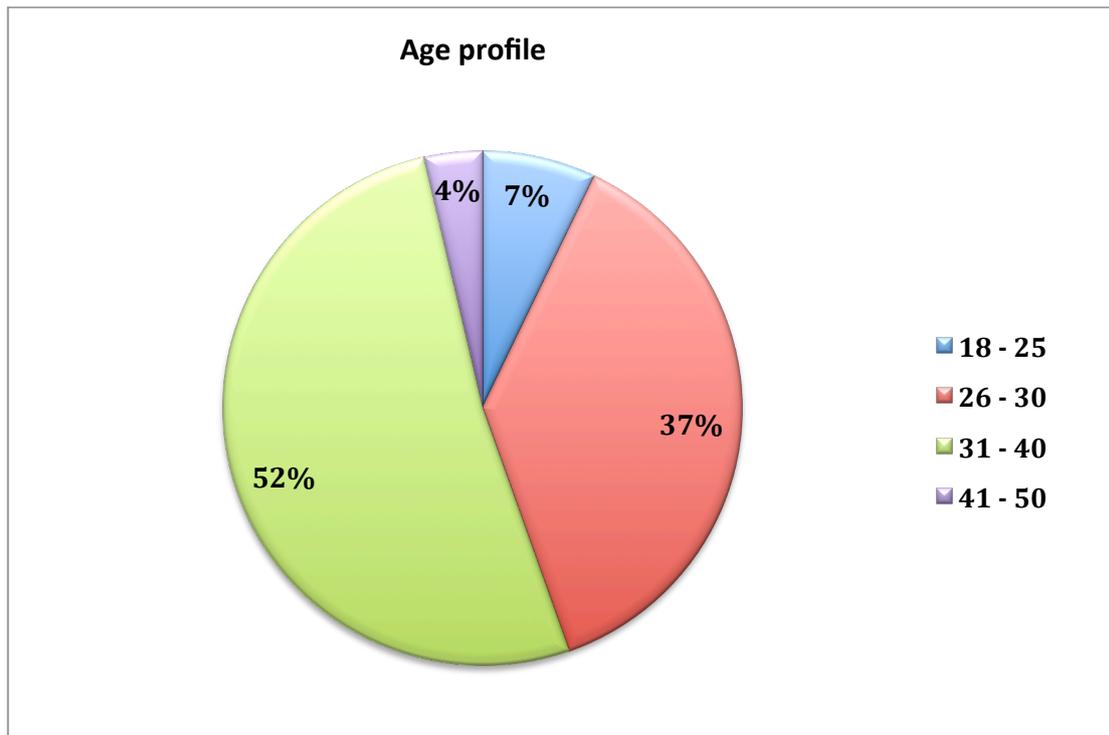
The sample was heterogeneous and was composed of experienced and inexperienced consultants from entry level to senior management. One of the survey respondents was very senior in their organisation at Partner level. The respondents were from the following levels in their respective organisations; Analysts, Junior and Senior Consultants, Managers, Senior

Managers and the single Partner. The interview participants were knowledge experts and talent management experts that had worked in the profession for over three years and that had experience working in a management consulting environment.

Figures 4 and 5 below show the age and gender profile of the survey participants. The participants were mainly male and the age profile of the majority was 26 – 40 years.



**Figure 4: Gender profile of participants**

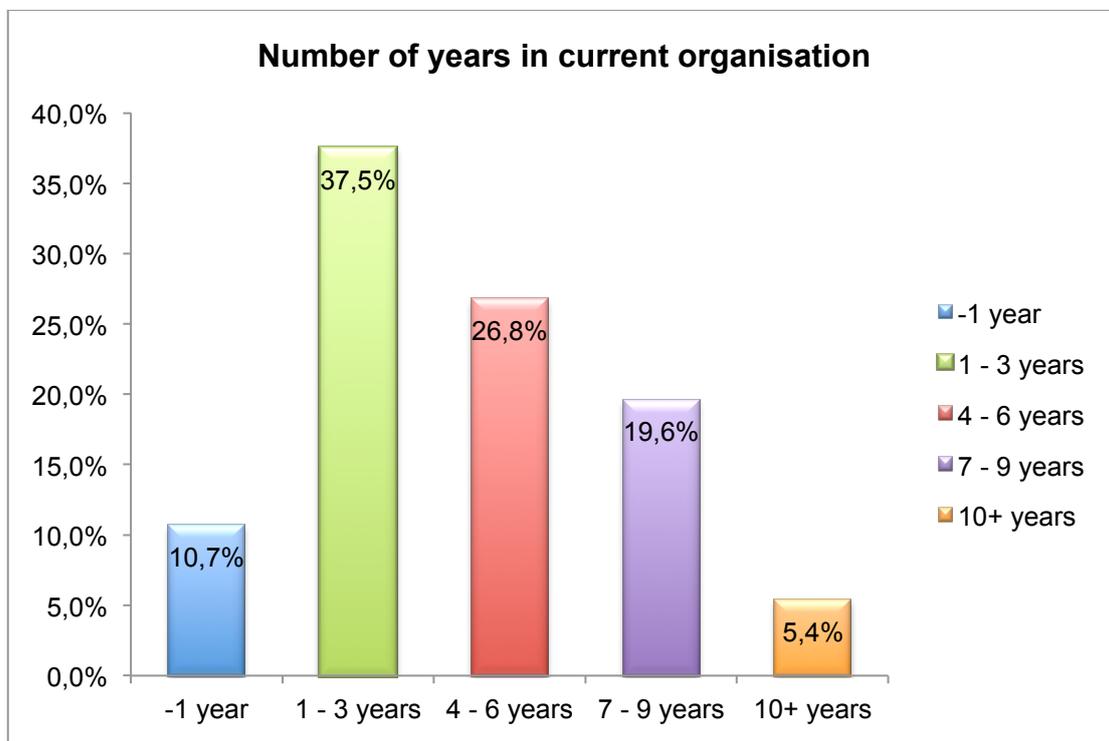


**Figure 5: Age profile of participants**

The participants were also asked questions about the number of years that they had been with their organisation, as well as their experience in the management consulting profession. The results are depicted graphically in Figure 6 and Figure 7 below. The majority of the respondents had been with their organisation between 1 – 9 years, with the larger portion of that majority being with their organisation for 1 – 3 years followed by those who had been with their organisation for 4 – 6 years. As part of section one the respondents were asked about their tenure in the Management Consulting profession. Most respondents had been in the profession for 1 – 9 years with the majority being 4 – 6 years followed by 7 – 9 years. There was also a sizeable number of respondents (10.7%) that had been in the profession for ten years or more.

The researcher was pleased to get such a profile of respondents as they gave credibility and reliability to the data collected. Having respondents that had been in their organisation for a good number of years leads one to reasonably deduce that those respondents would have been exposed and

experienced the knowledge and talent management, as well as the retention strategies and approaches, of their organisations; someone who has been with an organisation for less than a year could possibly not provide well-informed responses. Having a sample of respondents that had been in the Management Consulting profession for a number of years also reasonably leads one to deduce that these individuals have good experience working as knowledge workers in knowledge organisations, and as such they have formulated ideas about knowledge, knowledge sharing and retention. They also understand or at least are aware of their own thoughts and perceptions of knowledge sharing and its importance, and also understand their own knowledge sharing behaviour and motivators.



**Figure 6: Number of years in current organisation**



**Figure 7: Number of years in Management Consulting**

The researcher held three face-to-face interviews.

#### **Respondent 1's profile**

Role	Talent strategist
Gender	Male
Experience in knowledge management / talent management	Over 10 years
Experience in knowledge management / talent management within management consulting	Six years
Number of years at current employer	Six years
Organisation name	Respondent requested this be kept confidential

### Respondent 2's profile

Role	Currently works in the research department of a management consulting firm. Previously worked in Knowledge Management and Research for a different consulting firm.
Gender	Female
Experience in knowledge management / talent management	Over 10 years
Experience in knowledge management / talent management within management consulting	Three years
Number of years at current employer	Over 10 years
Organisation name	Respondent requested this be kept confidential

### Respondent 3's profile

Role	Independent Knowledge Consultant
Gender	Female
Experience in knowledge management / talent management	Over 10 years
Experience in knowledge management / talent management within management consulting	Over 10 years
Number of years at current employer	The respondent has been an independent consultant for her own company for two years
Organisation name	i-innovate

## 5.3 Results for research objective one: to investigate the impact that the key performance indicators (KPIs) have on knowledge sharing behaviour

### 5.3.1 Survey respondents

Respondents were asked questions that were designed to gauge if they were being measured on knowledge sharing as part of their performance appraisal. The respondents were asked to state to what level they agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed or felt neutral regarding the following statements. The corresponding graphical depiction of the results can be found in Figures 8, 9 and 10.

- I am measured on how much I contributed to the knowledge storage portal as part of the performance review process
- I contribute to knowledge sharing only because knowledge sharing forms part of my performance review
- The weighting of my knowledge sharing contribution forms a negligible part of my performance appraisal

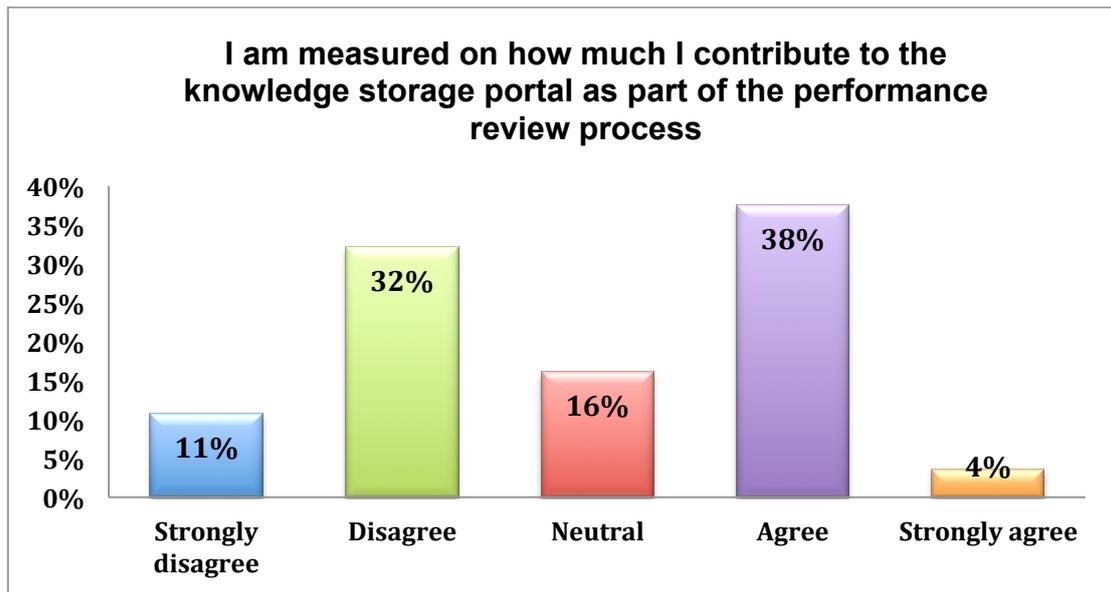
The results to statement one were mixed, with 32% of respondents indicating that they are not measured and 38% indicating that they agree that they are measured on contributing to knowledge sharing as part of the performance review process. A number of consultants were not sure on whether they are measured on knowledge sharing in their performance reviews; this was indicated by 16% of respondents that selected neutral to answer the question.

An indisputable majority of the respondents disagreed that they only contribute to knowledge sharing because they are being measured on it. Respondents that strongly disagreed with the statement followed the majority. Such results imply that consultants genuinely engage in knowledge sharing, however there were 4% and 2% of respondents who

agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the statement, indicating that some individuals only share because they are being measured.

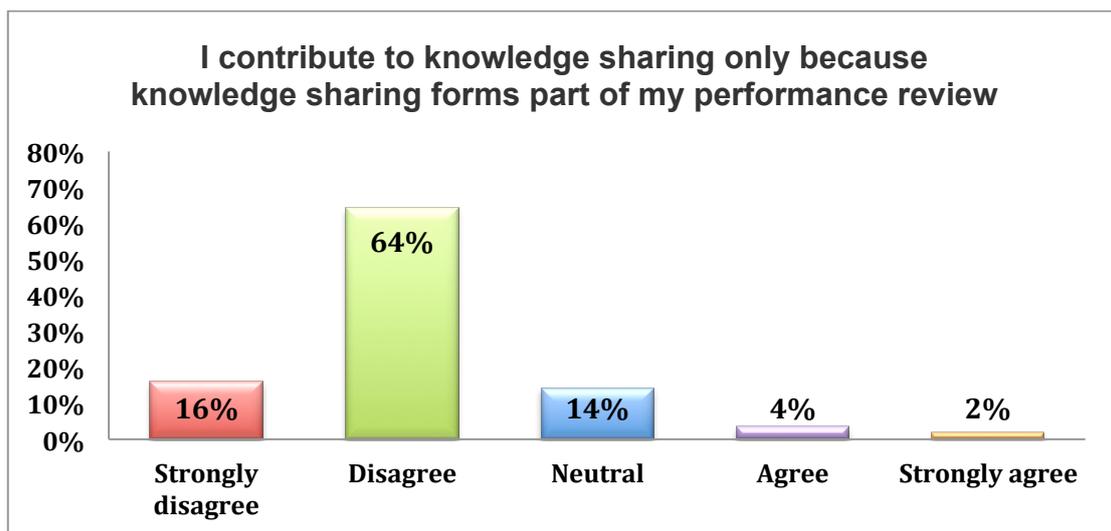
When asked if knowledge sharing forms a negligible part of the review, the majority (46%) of the respondents agreed to this statement. The results of this question also produced mixed results, with a sizeable percentage of respondents also strongly agreeing, being neutral and disagreeing with the statement. This is consistent with the mixed results depicted in Figure 8 which related to whether individuals are measured on knowledge sharing in their performance reviews.

In investigating if consultants only participate in knowledge sharing activities because they are being measured on the results, the consultants that stated that they are measured on knowledge sharing or were neutral to statement one, do not do so because they are being measured. This is seen by the results of statement two where those respondents either responded with neutral, disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. Even those that stated that they are not measured on knowledge sharing the majority of them stated that they were neutral, disagreed or strongly disagreed to statement two, table 5.3.2. Showing that they also willingly participate in knowledge sharing.



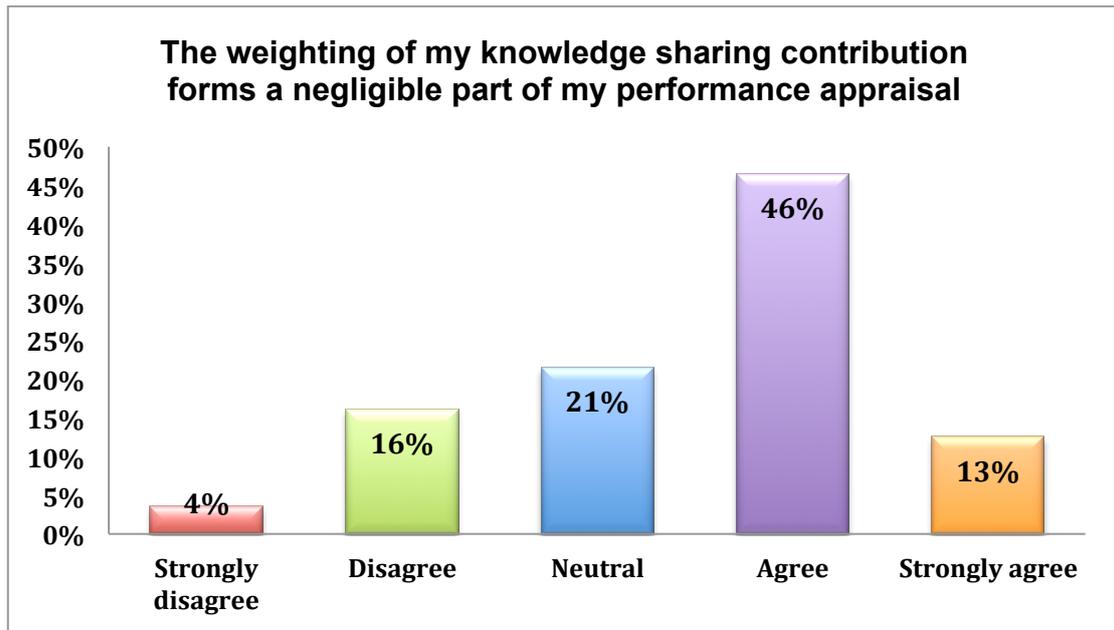
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
6	18	9	21	2	56	0

**Figure 8: Are consultants measured on knowledge sharing in the performance review process?**



Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
9	36	8	2	1	56	0

**Figure 9: Do consultants only contribute to knowledge sharing because they are being measured on it?**



Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
2	9	12	26	7	56	0

**Figure 10: How sizeable is the weighting of knowledge sharing in performance appraisals?**

I am measured on how much I contribute to the knowledge storage portal as part of the performance review process	I contribute to knowledge sharing only because knowledge sharing forms part of my performance review
Agree	Neutral
Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Neutral	Disagree
Agree	Disagree
Neutral	Strongly disagree
Agree	Neutral
Agree	Neutral
Strongly agree	Disagree
Agree	Disagree
Neutral	Neutral
Agree	Disagree
Agree	Strongly disagree
Neutral	Strongly disagree
Neutral	Disagree
Agree	Disagree
Neutral	Neutral
Agree	Agree
Agree	Disagree
Agree	Agree
Agree	Strongly disagree
Agree	Disagree
Agree	Disagree
Neutral	Disagree
Neutral	Disagree
Neutral	Neutral
Agree	Disagree
Agree	Disagree

**Table 5.3.1 Individuals that are measured on knowledge sharing do not do so purely because they are being measured**

I am measured on how much I contribute to the knowledge storage portal as part of the performance review process	I contribute to knowledge sharing only because knowledge sharing forms part of my performance review
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Neutral
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Strongly disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Strongly disagree	Disagree
Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Strongly disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Disagree	Neutral
Disagree	Strongly disagree
Disagree	Disagree
Strongly disagree	Disagree

**Table 5.3.2 Individuals that are not measured on knowledge sharing still do contribute to knowledge sharing**

### 5.3.2 Interview results

#### Respondent 1:

To question 1 the respondent stated that because his organisation is knowledge based there is a strong culture of collaboration and learning, and consultants share their knowledge freely. However individuals are not measured on knowledge sharing activities unless they have, as part of their objectives for the year, set information that they want to contribute to the knowledge exchange, then they are measured on whether they have delivered on that or not. Certain levels, specifically the expert level in their

organisation, would have to publish a number of papers in a year and they would be measured on that.

To question 2 the respondent stated that because the general organisational culture is collaborative, individuals share their knowledge of their own accord and willingness. The respondent highlighted that individuals in his organisation are eager to answer questions and share their views and not necessarily because they are being measured. The example provided was that the respondent could pose a question on how to implement a measurement framework for learning and individuals would start populating with ideas of how to go about implementing that and suggesting articles and books that the respondent could consult.

To question 3 the respondent stated he had no direct experience on this aspect, however he felt that it would help if the weighting of knowledge sharing were higher, especially because consultants at the respondent's organisation take their performance very seriously. Another point brought up by the expert was that if the requirement for knowledge sharing was explicitly articulated and publicised individuals would partake in knowledge sharing more and deliver on it.

## **Respondent 2**

To question one the respondent stated that there is a knowledge sharing KPI that consultants at her organisation are formally measured on as part of their performance review, however this measure is only introduced at the more senior levels.

To question two the respondent stated that whether individuals contribute to knowledge sharing purely because they are being measured on it depends on the individual, seniority level and personality. The respondent could not give a direct response to this question.

To question three the respondent stated that she definitely believed that if the weighting of the knowledge sharing KPI was higher there would be higher participation in knowledge sharing. She stated that a weighting of 5% is not enough.

### **Respondent 3**

To question one Respondent 3 stated that consultants in her past organisation were measured on knowledge sharing and even in her independent consulting work she includes knowledge sharing KPIs for consultants.

To question two Respondent 3 stated that it depends on the culture of the organisations; if they force consultants to contribute to knowledge sharing then they will contribute only because they are being measured on it. If the culture of the organisation is collaborative and innovative and it is about making people successful in what they do, then knowledge sharing will happen automatically and organically and consultants will not share because they think that their knowledge sharing behaviour will be rewarded or punished.

To question 3 Respondent 3 stated that the weighting is generally medium to low because organisations do not understand the value of their intangible capital - in this case knowledge - so they assign the wrong weighting and value to the tangible things that offer more value, especially in today's economy. Her answers suggest that if the weighting was higher there would be higher levels of knowledge sharing.

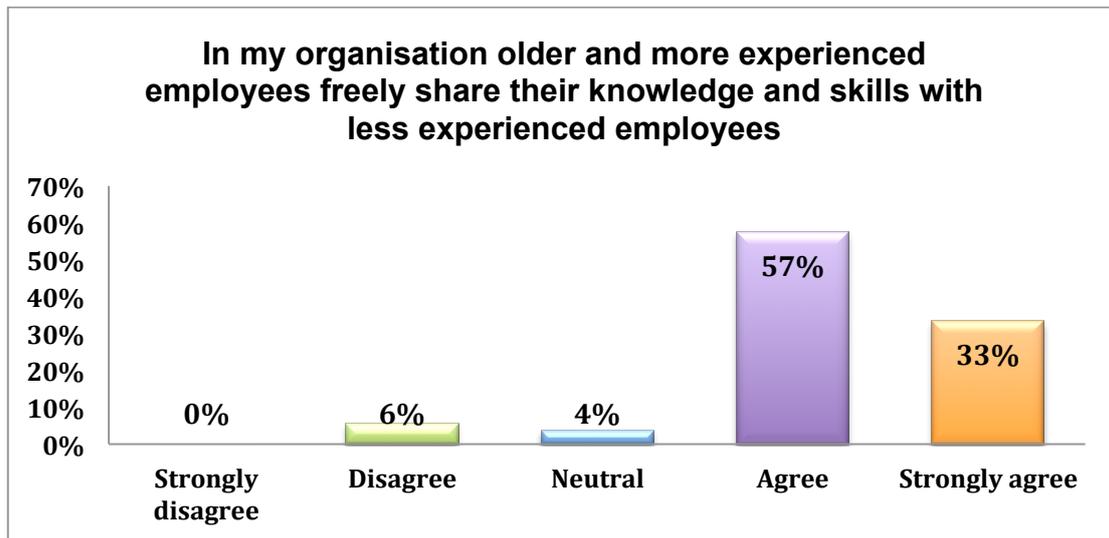
## 5.4 Results for research objective two: to investigate the impact that the generational differences in the workforce have on knowledge sharing

### 5.4.1 Survey results

Respondents were asked questions that were designed to gauge if consultants experience challenges with the multi-generational make-up of their organisations with regards to knowledge and skills sharing. The respondents were asked to state to what level they agreed, disagreed or felt neutral regarding the following statements:

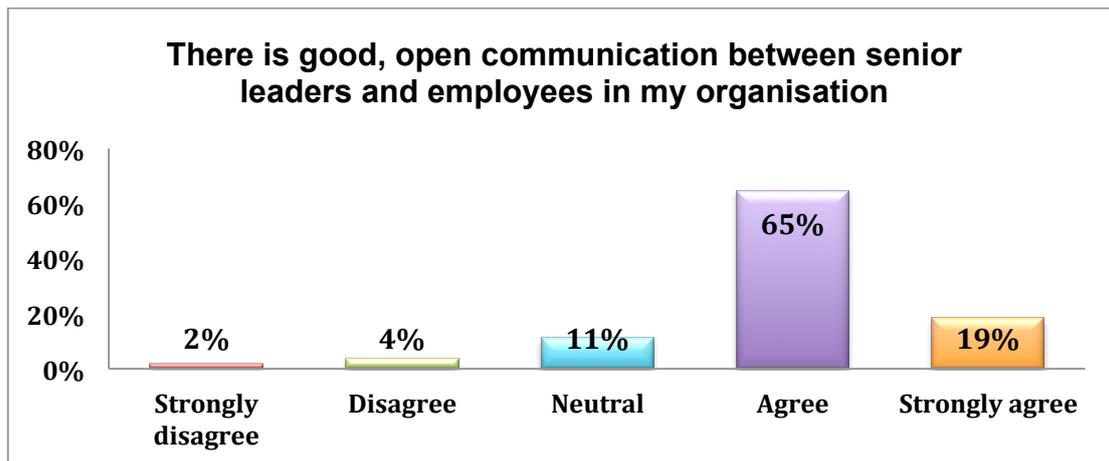
- In my organisation older and more experienced employees freely share their knowledge and skills with less experienced employees
- There is good, open communication between senior leaders and employees in my organisation
- My opinions about work matter significantly to my senior co-workers

Respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the first two statements, stating that there is good interaction, sharing of knowledge skills and communication between the different generations specifically from the older generation to the younger generation. To the third statement 76% of the respondents agreed to the statement. These results appear to suggest that the multi-generational composition of knowledge organisations, specifically management consulting firms, does not appear to create a divide between the different generations. There appears to be good interaction and collaboration amongst different generations.



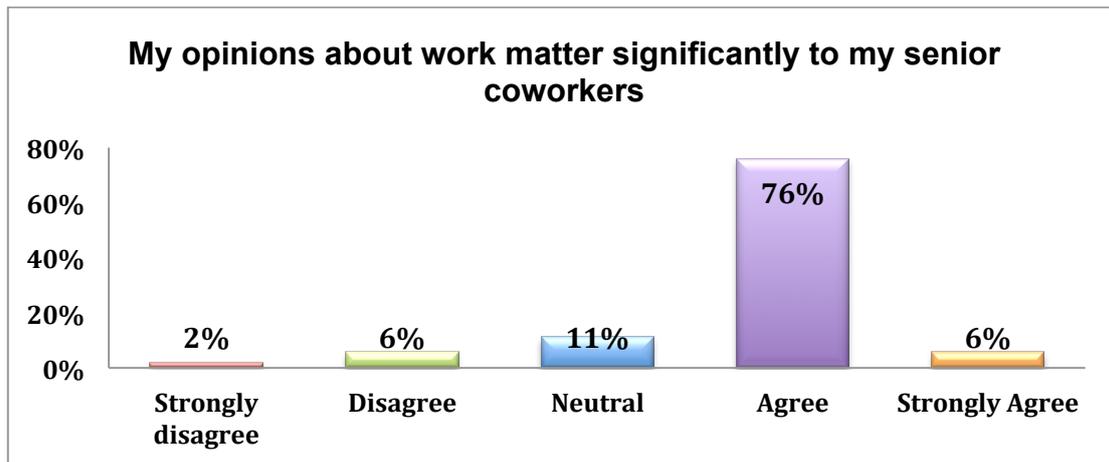
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
0	3	2	31	18	54	2

**Figure 11: Level of knowledge sharing amongst the different generations**



Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
1	2	6	35	10	54	2

**Figure 12: Openness of communication between different generations**



Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
1	3	6	41	3	54	2

**Figure 13: Do the opinions of employees matter significantly to their senior co-workers**

What is interesting to note when the results are broken down further is that the older generation of age group 41 – 50 either agreed or strongly agreed to the statements under this research objective, while the individuals that selected neutral, disagree or strongly disagree were from Gen X and Gen Y. Tables 13.1 – 13.4 show this breakdown.

My age group is	In my organisation older and more experienced employees freely share their knowledge and skills with less experienced employees	There is good, open communication between senior leaders and employees in my organisation.	My opinions about work matter significantly to my senior co-workers
41 – 50	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree
41 – 50	Strongly agree	Strongly agree	Strongly Agree

**Table 13.1 The older generation freely shares their knowledge**

<b>My age group is</b>	<b>In my organisation older and more experienced employees freely share their knowledge and skills with less experienced employees</b>
31 – 40	Neutral
31 – 40	Disagree
26 – 30	Disagree
26 – 30	Disagree
31 – 40	Neutral

**Table: 13.2 Age groups that did not think that older and experienced employees share their knowledge with less experienced employees**

<b>My age group is</b>	<b>There is good, open communication between senior leaders and employees in my organisation.</b>
31 – 40	Neutral
26 – 30	Disagree
31 – 40	Neutral
31 – 40	Disagree
26 – 30	Strongly disagree
31 – 40	Neutral
26 – 30	Neutral
31 – 40	Neutral
18 – 25	Neutral

**Table 13.3 Age groups that did not think that there is good communication between employees and senior leaders**

<b>My age group is</b>	<b>My opinions about work matter significantly to my senior co-workers</b>
31 – 40	Neutral
26 – 30	Neutral
26 – 30	Neutral
31 – 40	Disagree
26 – 30	Strongly disagree
26 – 30	Neutral
31 – 40	Neutral
26 – 30	Disagree
31 – 40	Disagree
31 – 40	Neutral

**Table 13.4 Age groups that did not think their opinions matter to their co-workers**

#### 5.4.2 Interview results

##### **Respondent 1**

The respondent stated that because knowledge is an integral part of their organisational culture, individuals share their knowledge amongst themselves very freely. What is different is the way in which knowledge is shared; the older generation is extremely comfortable with sharing their knowledge through mentoring and coaching, which the organisation has a very strong culture of, but is somewhat averse to using the new collaboration tools. The respondent's organisation has run courses to educate the older generation about the newer collaboration tools.

To the second question the respondent stated that it is more how knowledge is shared in terms of tools that becomes a challenge. The respondent noted that as a generalisation the older generation is more comfortable using the more traditional tool and ways, while the younger generation is more inclined to using the newer tools.

To question three the respondent stated that it is less complicated to have a common platform that all people have access to also allow for mentoring and reverse mentoring. If different platforms are offered based on generational differences it would complicate the process and stifle growth.

##### **Respondent 2**

The respondent stated that her experience has been that the older generation freely share their skills with the younger generation. She stated that she does not think that the older generation feels threatened by sharing their knowledge; they actually get a kick out of sharing their knowledge.

To question two the respondent stated that the older generation generally prefers to have face-to-face interaction and they appear to be technology averse, while the younger generation want to do things now and faster. However, depending on the personality and seniority level, some of the older generation are very comfortable with using new technology for knowledge sharing.

To question three the respondent stated that she could not comment on this as she has been with her organisation for many years and so she is familiar with the way things are done in her organisation. She added that her organisation is going through a transition from using older technology to newer technology, and all individuals have to switch over to the new technology because it is a global rollout and the organisation does not cater for individual preferences.

### **Respondent 3**

To question one the respondent stated that whether individuals share their knowledge or not depends on the organisational culture more than on the generational differences. She supported this by stating that if individuals feel that they are coming to work to contribute to be repaid with an opportunity to work, grow and learn, then this problem will not exist. She gave an example to say that some organisations rehire retirees back into the organisation as consultants, but this is highly risky as those individuals could leave at any time. Organisations that do this do it to get past the risk of not engaging in knowledge sharing, however this does not help the situation as that knowledge still stays with those individuals. Looking at the younger generation she stated that they may not be open to learning. She used Gen Y as an example, stating that they are a very confident generation and they do not think that they need to learn anything. She did state, however, that it depends on people.

From her experience she has noted that the 80:20 rule applies; 80% of individuals will participate in knowledge sharing while 20% will not. When the researcher read out research objective three to Respondent 3, which sought to investigate if the fear of losing power through knowledge sharing led to consultants hoarding their knowledge, she stated that this was a generational thing - the older generation holds onto their knowledge as they fear that they may lose their jobs. She stated that this happens in organisations that have not coached their employees to see knowledge sharing as an asset and not as a way that one can lose power.

To question 2 Respondent 3 stated that time, environment, opportunity, and understanding the value attached to sharing knowledge are barriers to knowledge sharing. If the organisation does not provide the right environment for knowledge sharing, even when there are individuals that have an interest and are eager to participate in knowledge sharing, if the environment does not enable this it will not take place.

To question three Respondent 3 stated that she has seen the introduction of social media platforms to knowledge sharing so as to cater for the younger generation. She felt very strongly that knowledge sharing is not about technology or generational differences, but about the people and getting them to engage in knowledge sharing.

## **5.5 Results for research objective three: to investigate if the fear of losing power through sharing knowledge leads to individualistic behaviour of knowledge workers that impedes knowledge sharing.**

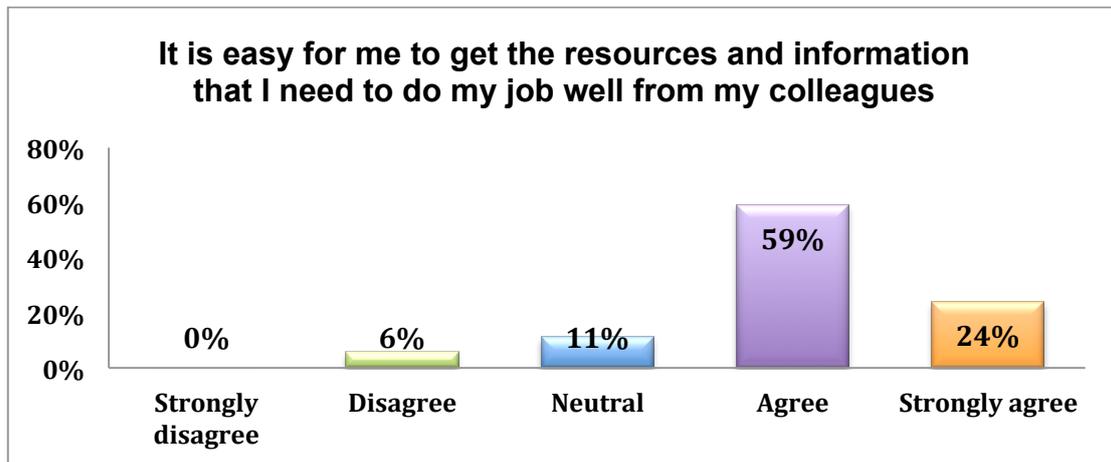
### **5.5.1 Survey results**

Research objective three sought to investigate if knowledge workers developed an individualistic attitude resulting from the fear that if they share their knowledge they will lose the perceived power that comes with holding that knowledge. The respondents were asked to state to what level

they agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed or felt neutral regarding the following statements, the corresponding graphical depiction of the results can be found in Figures 14, 15 and 16.

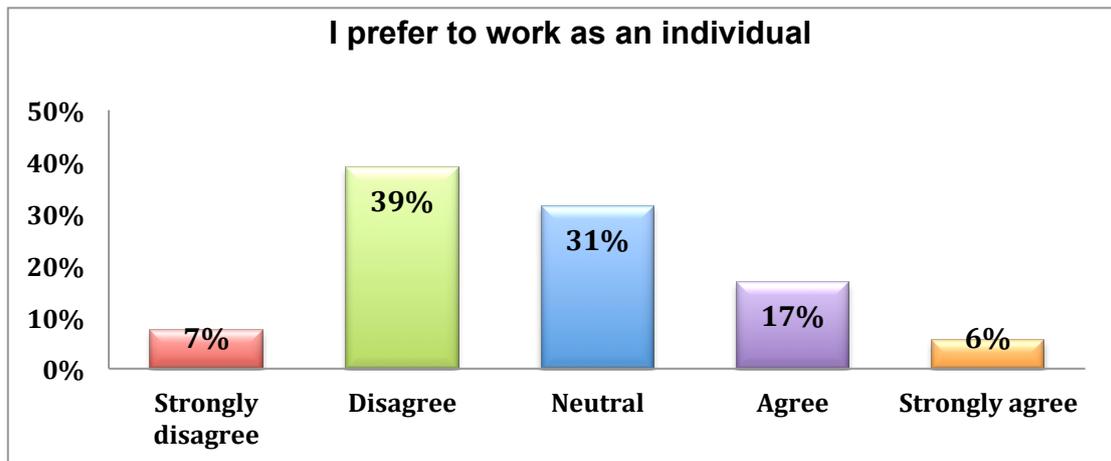
- It is easy for me to get the resources and information that I need to do my job well from my colleagues
- I prefer to work as an individual
- I am hesitant about sharing what I know so that I remain competitive in the workplace

To the first statement the majority of the respondents agreed that their colleagues make it easy for them to get the information that they require to do their job well, with 87% of them agreeing and strongly agreeing with this statement. Statement two had mixed responses - although the majority disagreed that they prefer to work as individuals, the majority was followed very closely with 37% of the respondents stating that they were neutral about this, implying that they prefer to work as individuals and in teams. 17% of the respondents agreed that they prefer to work as individuals. The results show a distinct disagreement with statement three, at 89% respondents. The majority strongly disagreed that they hoard their knowledge so as to remain competitive in the workplace.



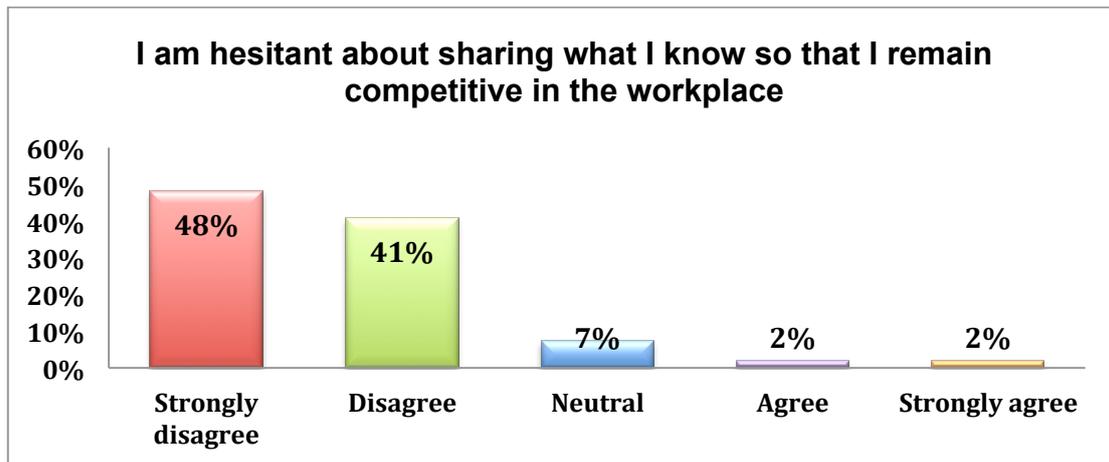
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
0	3	6	32	13	54	2

**Figure 14: Willingness to share resources and information**



Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
4	21	17	9	3	54	2

**Figure 15: Do consultants prefer to work as individuals?**



Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
26	22	4	1	1	54	2

**Figure 16: Do consultants hoard their knowledge to protect their competitiveness?**

### 5.5.2 Interview results

#### Respondent 1

To question 1 the respondent stated that it is not the norm for individuals in his organisation to hoard their knowledge because the organisational culture fosters collaboration and learning. If individuals are asked to help they do, and they make it easy for each other to get the information and resources they require.

To question two the respondent stated that some individuals do prefer to work as individual contributors and some are team players. The individual contributors generally do not succeed in a team environment as they do not like to share knowledge and they feel threatened by sharing their knowledge.

To question 3 the respondent stated that knowledge hoarding takes place as a result of individuals fearing that they will lose the power they hold by carrying that knowledge, when people feel threatened, and if there is

competition where individuals feel that if they share their knowledge it will enable those that they have shared with to get to the next level faster than them. However the respondent did note that this is an exception in his organisation.

### **Respondent 2**

The respondent stated that consultants in her organisation freely share their knowledge and collaborate, although some individuals still store documents in their personal share drives instead of using SharePoint.

To question two the respondent stated that she has not noted behaviour that suggests that consultants prefer to work as individuals; she has noticed that the consultants work well together and complement each other's skills and competencies. However she stated that it also depends on the type of assignment. She went on to say that there may be an odd individual that highly regards their skills and may prefer to contribute as an individual, however the consulting environment does not allow for that as a client employs the organisation and not individuals.

To question three the respondent stated that from her experience consultants may not share their knowledge because they do not have the time to share as they move from one project to the next very quickly.

### **Respondent 3**

To question one Respondent 3 stated that in her past organisation consultants did share their information easily to make it simple for their colleagues to do their job. She also said that this behaviour is dependent on how organisations manage their knowledge. If there was an individual that was in charge of knowledge management they would ensure that it was applied and would engage with people to keep reminding them about its importance.

To question 2 Respondent 3's response was that it is in the DNA of consultants to prefer to work as individuals because they have pride and confidence in themselves and their abilities. However she stated that great consultants are comfortable with working as individual contributors as well as individual contributors. She used herself as an example, stating that when working in a team environment she does prefer to have a task assigned to her so that she can have a level of responsibility for that and she gets gratification when she contributes to the final outcome of the assignment and delivers on her individual contribution.

To question three Respondent 3 stated that she has observed the following as factors that hinder knowledge sharing: the fear of losing power as an individual may have worked in a department for a long time and they have become somewhat indispensable; consultants may not share knowledge because they do not take into consideration what they may learn from each other; and consultants may not understand what their organisation's value proposition is from making the sale to delivery to documenting lessons learned, and because they do have this understanding they may not deliver on all elements. Another factor that limits knowledge sharing as explained by Respondent 3 is that consultants may not know and understand the value of knowledge because their organisation does not teach it to them.

## **5.6 Results for research objective four: to investigate if employee commitment to an organisation is influenced by the prestige of the company's brand**

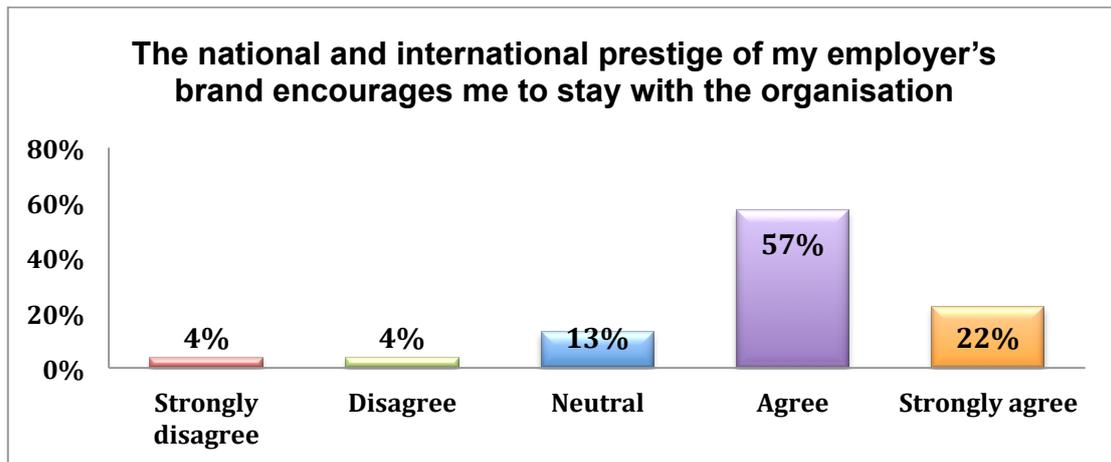
### **5.6.1 Survey results**

Respondents were asked questions that were designed to gauge if the national and international prestige of their organisations attract and encourage them to stay in those organisations. The respondents were asked to state to what level they agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed or felt neutral regarding the following statements. The

corresponding graphical depiction of the results can be found in Figures 17, 18 and 19.

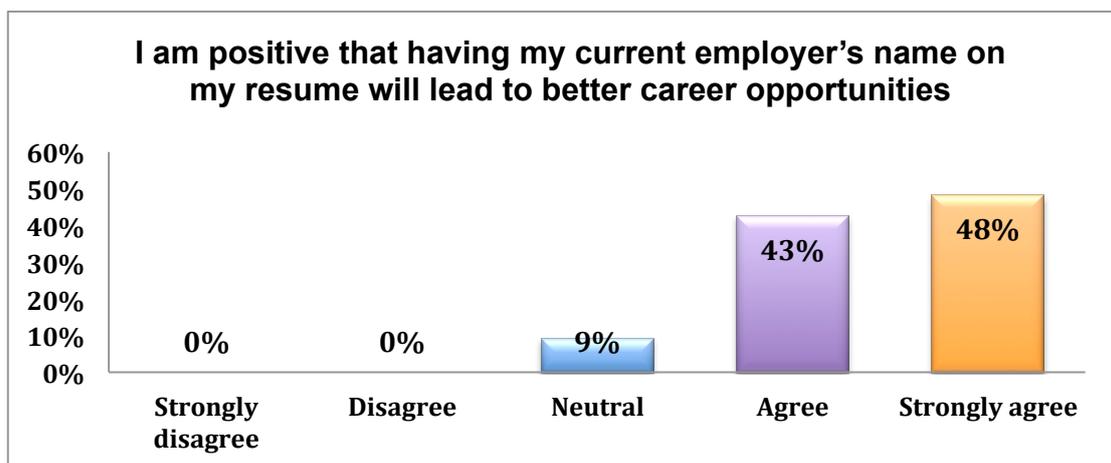
- The national and international prestige of my employer encourages me to stay with the organisation
- I am positive that having my current employer's name on my resume will lead to better career opportunities
- I am likely to look for another job outside the company in the next three years

A distinct majority of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the first two statements, showing that consultants are attracted and committed to organisations that offer prestigious brands. This also shows that consultants believe that having a strong employer brand on their resume will give them an edge in the labour market by opening up more opportunities to them. However in response to the third statement the majority of respondents indicated that they are likely to look for opportunities outside of their organisation within three years. The results to statement one and statement three under this research objective suggest that although the prestige of their organisations' brands encourage them to stay within those organisations, that commitment is not long term.



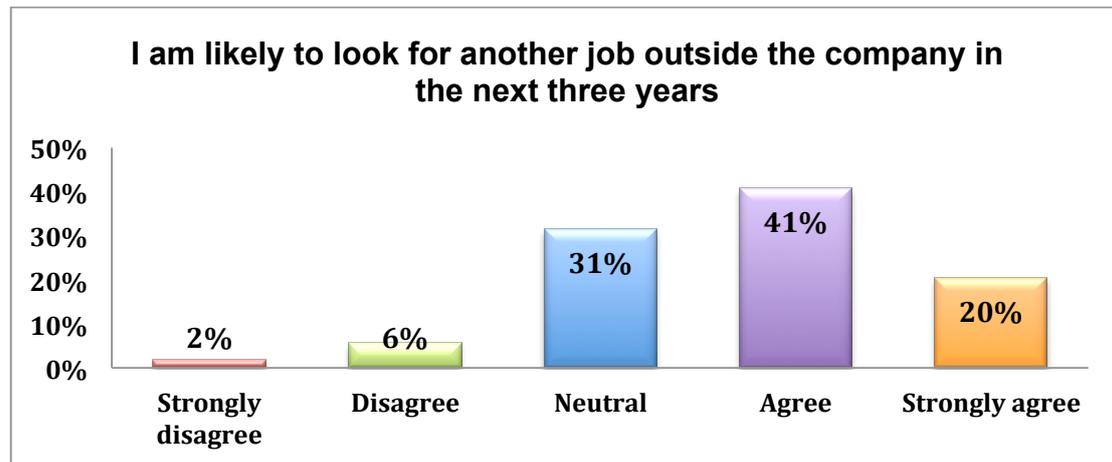
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
2	2	7	31	12	54	2

**Figure 17: Does the prestige of an organisation's brand influence employee commitment?**



Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
0	0	5	23	26	54	2

**Figure 18: Do employees join organisations with strong brands to build their resumes for future opportunities?**



Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total number of responses	Skipped questions
1	3	17	22	11	54	2

**Figure 19: Likelihood of consultants changing jobs in three years**

### 5.6.2 Interview results

#### Respondent 1

To question one respondent 1 stated that his organisation definitely uses branding to position itself in the market as a strong global brand to attract and retain its consultants.

To question two the respondent agreed that consultants definitely join his organisation in order to have association to the organisation's brand. The respondent noted that prospective employers and their competitors regard his organisation as a nursery for talent.

To question three the respondent stated that the average turnover rate is between three to five years as a result of the competitors seeing the organisation as a nursery for talent from which they can poach talent. When asked as an extension of question three if the turnover rate impacts the organisation, the respondent stated that it erodes the organisation's diversity pipeline, especially at the Manager and Senior Manager level.

## **Respondent 2**

To question one the respondent stated that consulting firms do use the prestige of their organisational brand to attract and retain consultants. She went on to add that it is important for some consultants to be part of a prestigious organisational brand, while for others it may be the compensation package that is more important. However according to the respondent knowledge management and sharing should not be done for financial gain. She stated that belonging to one of the big four audit, tax and advisory companies has some advantages for consultants.

To question two the respondent stated that she has noted that consultants do chose consulting firms that have prestigious brands in order to open up better career prospects outside of those organisations. She added that consultants should be doing this.

To question three the respondent stated that from her observation the turnover rate in the industry is around three years. When probed further she stated that it appears to be the younger generation that turns more.

## **Respondent 3**

To question one Respondent 3 agreed that consulting firms do use the prestige of their brand to attract and retain employees.

To question two Respondent 3 stated that consultants do select organisations with strong brands so as to open up future career prospects. She said this happens as consultants “like money” and they are attracted to the international experience that those organisations could possibly offer, as well as the type of assignments that the consultants may get exposure to in those well-regarded consulting firms.

To question 3 Respondent 3 stated that she has noted that the average turnover rate is about 2.5 to three years, stating that at 3.5 years the organisation would have made a return on its investment.

## Chapter 6 Discussion of results

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research results from Chapter 5 in more detail. The researcher will link the results back to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The research questions, surveys questions and interview questions were informed by the research objectives and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The results were gathered from consultants, knowledge workers, and interviews were held with a Talent Strategist and two Knowledge Management specialists.

### 6.2 Research objective one

To investigate the impact that the key performance indicators (KPIs) have on knowledge sharing behaviour.

This research objective was formulated to investigate if organisations that have knowledge sharing KPIs as part of the variables that knowledge workers are assessed on in the performance appraisal process have better knowledge sharing behaviour, and most importantly if those individuals only contribute because they are being measured.

The results showed that 32% of respondents indicated that they are not measured, while the majority (38%) indicated that they are measured on contributing to knowledge sharing as part of the performance review process. The key results of this research objective was that the majority of respondents disagreed that they only contribute to knowledge sharing because they are being measured on it. This majority included individuals that stated that they are measured on knowledge sharing and individuals that stated that they are not measured on knowledge sharing. Such results imply that consultants do not engage in knowledge sharing activities purely because they are being measured on it. The 4% and 2% of respondents who agreed and strongly agreed respectively to statement two indicates

that there are individuals who form a minority that only participate in knowledge sharing purely because they are being measured on it.

Of the three interviewed experts, Respondent 3 agreed that her experience from her past organisation has been that consultants were measured on knowledge sharing contributions. Respondents 1 and 2 only had set knowledge sharing KPIs for individuals that were at a certain level of seniority or following a particular career path in their organisations. Respondent 1 and 3 had similar views on whether consultants only contribute because they are being measured, stating that the organisational culture plays a large role in this; if the culture is collaborative and embraces knowledge sharing and innovation then individuals will share their knowledge willingly. Respondent two stated that it depends on the consultants' personality and seniority level within the organisation.

The results from the survey respondents and expert interviews appear to partly support Gagné (2009), who stated that performance appraisals that include an assessment of knowledge sharing behaviour can influence knowledge sharing positively by enhancing sharing norms. The experts stated that if the weighting of the knowledge sharing KPI was higher, individuals would participate more in knowledge sharing. These results also support Ling, Sandhu and Jain (2009), who stated that the knowledge sharing metric should form a significant part of the performance appraisal. Ling et al. stated that the challenge faced by consulting firms is that the quality and quantity of knowledge sharing forms a less important part of the performance appraisal, as delivery, billability and utilisation are regarded as more important measures by consulting firms.

The experts stated that if the weighting were set at a higher level they believed that there would be more knowledge sharing. However Ling et al.'s statement that states that individuals need to be measured on knowledge sharing because individuals do what they are measured on not what they are told is not fully supported by the results. The majority of

consultants disagreed that they only contribute to knowledge sharing because they are being measured on it. The experts also put forward a similar response. This shows that consultants' contribution to knowledge sharing is driven by autonomous motivation and not controlled motivation (Gagné, 2009), as a combined 80% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they share their knowledge purely because they are being measured.

The interviewed experts and Ling et al. (2009) suggested that if the weighting were higher there would be higher levels of knowledge sharing, however the results from the consultants show that they do not contribute purely because they are being measured on knowledge sharing, and the majority of those that were being measured stated that the weighting of the contribution was low. This suggests that a large majority of the respondents contribute to knowledge sharing out of autonomous motivation, implying that even if they were not being measured they would still contribute to such activities.

### **6.3 Research objective two**

To investigate the impact that the generational differences in the workforce have on knowledge sharing.

This research objective sought to investigate what impact the existence and interaction of the different generations in the workplace has on hindering or fostering knowledge sharing amongst knowledge workers.

The results from the survey suggest that the multi-generational composition of consulting firms does not appear to create a divide between the different generations; there appears to be good communication, interaction and collaboration amongst the different generations, with the older generation freely sharing their skills and knowledge with the younger, less experienced generations. However some Gen X and Gen Y

consultants felt that their opinions about work were not well regarded by the older and more experienced consultants. This suggests that perhaps the older generation is willing to share their knowledge however they are not interested in listening to, and do not highly regard the views of, the younger generations. Stevens (2010) asserted that because the different generations have different work ethics and values this could cause challenges to knowledge sharing amongst the different generations. The results from the survey show that there is good communication amongst the different generations.

From the experts, Respondent 1 stated that is it more about how knowledge is shared rather than whether it is being shared amongst the different generations that becomes a challenge. The respondent stated that as a generalisation, the older generation is more comfortable with using the more traditional tools and ways, while the younger generation is more inclined to use the newer tools. Respondent 2 was of the same view, noting that the older generation may be more comfortable with face-to-face interactions while the younger generations want things to get done quicker and are more comfortable with the newer technology. However she did state that this also depends on the individuals' personalities.

In line with the SAP Multigenerational Panel discussion reported on by LaManna (2013), Respondents 1 and 2 stated that the older generation embraces having to share their knowledge and skills with the younger generation, with Respondent 1 stating that the older generation in his organisation participate in mentoring and coaching and are highly regarded in the organisation for that. Respondent 2 stated that it is as if the older generation gets personal fulfilment from engaging in knowledge sharing. The survey results also support this, with table 13.1 showing that age group 41-50 strongly agreed that the older generation in their organisation shares their knowledge and skills freely with the younger generation. This age group also agreed and strongly agreed that there is good

communication between senior leadership and employees. Interview Respondent 3 stated that she has experienced that some organisations hire back retirees as consultants so as to get around the risk of those individuals not having engaged in knowledge sharing while they were still in the organisation. Her statement supports Pena (2008), who stated that by 2018 workplaces may be composed of five generations. If the practice noted by Respondent 3 that some organisations are rehiring retirees as consultants then this is likely to be the case.

The survey and expert interview results do not indicate that the multi-generational make-up of the workforce impedes knowledge sharing; the challenge is centred more on how knowledge is shared. The other challenge appears to be that although the older generation embrace the multi-generational workforce and impart their knowledge and skills onto them, the younger generation does not feel that the older generation respects and values their opinions about work.

The expert interviewees disagreed that there would be any value to organisations offering different knowledge sharing approaches to accommodate the different generations' preferences. This is in disagreement with Black (2010), who stated that because the different generations seem to not like the characteristics of each of the other generations, the conveyors of knowledge need to cater to the needs of each of the generations. Interview Respondents 1 and 2 stated that there needs to be a common platform on which knowledge is shared, with Respondent 1 stating that this would allow for mentoring and reverse mentoring amongst the different generations. Respondent 2 stated that their organisation does not cater for individual preferences and everyone had to use the same platform, while Respondent 3 strongly stated that knowledge sharing is not about technology or generational differences, but about the individuals.

#### 6.4 Research objective three

This research objective sought to investigate if knowledge workers have an individualistic culture that is driven by the fear of losing power when they share their knowledge and skills. This is very relevant in the highly competitive professional services environment, where individuals focus on their individual career advancement.

83% of the survey respondents stated that their colleagues make it easy for them to get the information and the resources that they need to do their job well. This was supported by 89% of respondents who disagreed and strongly disagreed that they are hesitant to share their knowledge so that they remain competitive in the workplace. Such results contradict Wang and Noe (2010), who asserted that knowledge workers may hoard knowledge that gives them a personal competitive advantage in the workplace, especially if it is knowledge and skills that are highly valued by the organisation and as a result are rewarded favourably. Wu and Zhu (2012) referred to this as the core competence losing risk.

The survey results showed that the respondents did not suffer from the core competence losing risk and participated in knowledge sharing without fear. However from the expert interviews, Respondents 1 and 3 stated that consultants may hoard their knowledge as they fear that they will lose power, with Respondent 1 stating that some consultants view knowledge as power. Respondent 1 also stated that consultants may engage in knowledge hoarding as they may feel threatened, especially in a very competitive environment where they may feel that if they share their knowledge those that they have shared that knowledge with will progress much faster than they will. This is in line with Nelson and McCann (2010), who stated that knowledge hoarding may not be a result of the fear of losing power, but may be fostered by an organisational culture and HR practices that reward competitive, individualistic behaviour that are likely to

encourage knowledge hoarding. Renzl (2008) also made a similar statement, saying that employees may hoard their knowledge because they fear that they will lose their unique value within their organisation, which could possibly result in reducing their chances for promotion and increasing the chances of those with whom they have shared their knowledge. However Respondent 1 did highlight that this is an exception in his organisation as the general culture is collaborative and individuals that do not engage in knowledge sharing and those that prefer to contribute as individuals do not succeed in the consulting environment.

Interview Respondent 3 provided assertions that are in line with Argyris,, (1991) who stated that consultants may be productive loners and prefer to contribute as individuals. Respondent 3 stated that it is in the DNA of consultants to want to contribute as individuals because they have pride and confidence in themselves and in their abilities. This was also supported Bessic and Naicker (2013) who stated that knowledge workers want to be valued for the knowledge that they own.

She did add, however, that consultants do this because they want to feel a sense of responsibility and contribution. She also stated that great consultants are comfortable with working as individuals and in a team environment. Also in line with Argyris, (1991) is Respondent 1's statement that consultants in his organisation take their performance very seriously. Argyris stated that consultants are highly driven and they set high performance standards for themselves.

The interview respondents highlighted the following as factors that impede knowledge sharing:

- Competition - they feel that those that they have shared knowledge with will advance faster than them.
- They fear loss of power.
- Individuals may not fully appreciate what they can learn from each other.
- Individuals may not understand their organisation's value proposition from making the sale, delivering on the project and documenting and sharing lessons learnt.
- Organisations assign a small weighting to knowledge sharing.
- Organisations make knowledge capturing and sharing an after-hours job and so individuals are discouraged to engage in it.
- When individuals share their knowledge they may be confused with being arrogant and that they think they know it all.
- The consulting environment generally does not allow time for individuals to engage in knowledge sharing after each engagement because consultants are quickly placed onto new projects. This is in line with Ling et al. (2009), who stated that consulting firms have reward systems that are based on client delivery, billability and utilisation, and not necessarily on knowledge sharing. This is also a result of organisations not understanding the value of their intangible assets and how to measure them.

#### **6.5 Research objective four**

To investigate if employee commitment to an organisation is influenced by the prestige of the company's brand.

This research objective sought to investigate the impact that the national and international prestige of a knowledge organisation has on the level of employee commitment. Employee commitment will lead to a prevention of knowledge loss (Martins & Meyer, 2012) as knowledge workers remain

with their organisations, and thus their skills and knowledge remain within those organisations. The added benefit to retaining the individuals is that not only are their skills and knowledge retained, but it also provides an opportunity for those individuals to share their skills and knowledge. A combined 79% of the survey respondents stated that the prestige of their organisation's brand encourages them to stay within their organisation. This is in line with Davies (2008), who stated that a chic brand encourages employee commitment. Martin, Gollan and Grigg (2011) and Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) agreed that a strong employer brand assists organisations to attract and retain high quality employees. Sitlington and Marshall (2011) also put forward a similar assertion, stating that attracting and retaining employees is influenced by how potential employees perceive the organisation, and if existing employees view the organisation as one in which they wish to remain and contribute positively to.

Respondent 3 provided a similar view while answering question one under research objective two, where she stated that individuals need to feel that they are coming to work to contribute to be repaid with an opportunity to work, grow and learn.

However the results for statement 1 were highly contradicted by the responses to statement 3, which asked the consultants to what level they agreed or disagreed that they are likely to leave their organisation within three years. An astounding combined 92% of the survey respondents stated that they are likely to leave their current organisation within three years, with 20% of the 92% answering the statement with a neutral. This shows that although the brand's prestige attracts consultants to those organisations, it does not necessarily foster employee commitment for long tenures. The expert interviews also supported this; Respondent 1 stated that the average turnover rate of consultants is three to five years, Respondent 2 stated three years and Respondent 3 stated 2.5 to three years.

This is in line with Sieber (2008), Jokinen, Brewster & Suutari (2008), Seabele (2012), Perotti, Wall and McLaughlin (2010), and O'Neill and Adya (2007), who stated that knowledge workers build their own careers to enable them to be mobile and become independent of a single organisation. Jokinen, Brewster and Suutari (2008) claimed that knowledge workers have a “boundary-less” career, stating that knowledge workers proactively, consciously and independently build their careers by accumulating the relevant knowledge and skills that will propel their employability in the market. This makes it easy for them to move from one job to the next and become independent of a single employer. Donnelly (2009) referred to this as a protean career in which the individual not the organisation takes responsibility for the direction of their career. The results for research objective four and specifically to questions 2 and 3 support these views.

The results for statement 2 show that 91% of consultants consider that because they work for a prestigious brand it will provide them with better career prospects. This shows that consultants are attracted to employer brands that will help them build their career capital, which will make them attractive to other employers and make their mobility easier. Du Toit et al. (2011) stated that knowledge workers prefer to take control of their own self development.

All the interview respondents stated that their observations had been that consultants are attracted to consulting firms that are well regarded in the industry and those that have prestigious brands, in order to open up rich career prospects and make them attractive employees in the market. Respondent 2 stated that these consultants should be doing this and making good use of their organisation's brand. Respondent 2 also highlighted a crucial point based on the high turnover rate of consultants stating that organisations need to adjust their recruitment strategies and

realise that offering the younger generation a “join us for life” value proposition might not be attractive to that particular group.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter is a conclusion to the research and will discuss the findings of chapter 5, the discussion of chapter 6 and the contribution of the results to literature. Recommendations for knowledge organisations and knowledge and talent management will be highlighted. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research.

### 7.2 Research findings

#### 7.2.1 Research objective 1

##### *7.2.1.1 Results for research objective 1*

The results for research objective one show that some consulting organisations do not formally measure knowledge sharing in their organisations, as a combined 59% of respondents stated that they strongly disagreed, disagreed or were neutral on whether they are measured on knowledge sharing or not. However, regardless of this, those that stated that they are measured appear to do so of their own will and do not do so purely because they are being measured. The same was true for respondents who stated that they are not measured. The results showed that these individuals do contribute to knowledge sharing even though they are not formally measured on it. The experts were of the view that whether individuals contribute to knowledge sharing purely because they are being measured is dependent on what the general organisational culture is, as well as on the individual's personality and seniority level. A majority of respondents stated that the weighting for knowledge sharing is very low. This was supported by the interview experts' responses as well. The experts stated that if the weighting of the knowledge sharing KPI were higher it would encourage higher levels of knowledge sharing.

### *7.2.1.2 Contribution to literature*

The reviewed literature suggests that the inclusion of knowledge sharing KPIs fosters higher levels of knowledge sharing (Gagné, 2009), however the results from the survey suggest that individuals do not contribute to knowledge sharing purely because they are being measured. This implies that whether consultants are measured on knowledge sharing or not, they will still contribute to such activities. Interview Respondent 1 stated that because his organisation is a learning organisation where knowledge is an integral part of the business, the general culture is highly collaborative. Respondent 3 had a similar view, stating that if the culture of the organisation is collaborative and innovative, knowledge sharing will happen organically.

The interviewed experts had similar views to Ling, Sandhu and Jain (2009), who suggested that the knowledge sharing KPI should have a higher weighting to foster higher levels of knowledge sharing. However Respondent 3 stated that the weighting of the KPI should be higher not because she felt that it would foster higher levels of knowledge sharing, but because organisations need to start realising and unlocking the value of its intangible assets - in this case knowledge. A majority of the consultants agreed that the weighting of the knowledge sharing KPI was low, however this did not seem to impact their willingness to share their knowledge. This suggests that the consultants that made up the sample were mostly individuals that understood the value of knowledge sharing and contribute to knowledge sharing activities out of autonomous motivation, which is what Gagné (2009) suggested that organisations must focus on as opposed to controlled motivation.

In conclusion:

- Consultants contribute to knowledge sharing out of autonomous motivation not because they are being measured, and so it may not be a necessity to include knowledge sharing KPIs in an attempt to improve knowledge sharing activities.
- The culture of the organisation plays a large role in fostering knowledge sharing. If the culture values knowledge and is collaborative and innovative, knowledge sharing will happen organically.
- Increasing the weighting of the knowledge sharing KPI may not be necessary as consultants contribute to knowledge sharing out of autonomous motivation.
- The knowledge sharing KPI should be introduced and should carry a high weighting so organisations can unlock and realise the value of knowledge.

## **7.2.2. Research objective 2**

### **7.2.2.1 Results for research objective 2**

This research objective sought to investigate what impact the existence and interaction of the different generations in the workplace has on hindering or fostering knowledge sharing amongst knowledge workers. The results of the survey showed that there appears to be open communication and sharing of knowledge and skills amongst the different generations, as well as mutual respect for each of the different generation's opinions. However there was a slight indication that the older generation does not highly regard the views and opinions of the younger generations. The experts' views were that the organisational culture determines how the different generations interact with each other. Their views were also that although the different generations prefer using different ways to engage in knowledge and skills sharing, it is not

necessary for organisations to develop different approaches to accommodate for the different knowledge sharing preferences because ideally everything should be on a common platform.

#### *7.2.2.2 Contribution to literature*

The literature suggests that the different generations appear to not like the characteristics of each of the other generations, and that knowledge managers need to recognise, analyse and address this to cater to the needs of each of the generations (Black, 2010). However the interviewed experts were of a different view, stating that there should be common knowledge sharing platforms that are utilised by all generations. Respondent 1 stated that this would allow for mentoring and reverse mentoring. Stevens (2010) suggested that the various characteristics of the different generations could cause challenges for knowledge sharing, however Respondent 3 stated that knowledge sharing is not about technology or the different generations, but about the people and getting them to participate. The results from the survey also show that there are no great generational issues that impact knowledge sharing, apart from the older generation needing to pay more attention to and take the views of the younger generations seriously.

In conclusion:

- The generational composition of consulting firms does not impede knowledge sharing and pose barriers to the different generations interacting and sharing their knowledge and skills with each other.
- The younger generation feels that the older generation does not regard their views highly.

### 7.2.3 Research objective 3

#### 7.2.3.1 Results for research objective 3

This research objective sought to investigate if knowledge workers have an individualistic attitude that is driven by the fear of losing power when they share their knowledge and skills. The survey results show that this is not the case, as consultants stated that it is easy for them to get the resources and information that they need to do their jobs well from their colleagues. The consultants also stated that they do not engage in knowledge hoarding from a fear that they will lose their competitiveness in the workplace. What is important to note is that the results to whether consultants prefer to work as individuals suggest that some consultants do prefer to work as individuals, while others do not. Interview respondent 3 stated that great consultants are able to work as individuals and in teams.

Some of the factors suggested by the experts for knowledge hoarding are listed below:

- Competition - consultants may feel that those that they have shared knowledge with will advance faster than them.
- They fear of loss of power.
- Individuals may not fully appreciate what they can learn from each other.
- Individuals may not understand their organisation's value proposition from making the sale, delivering on the project and documenting and sharing lessons learnt.
- Organisations assign a small weighting to knowledge sharing.
- Organisations make knowledge capturing and sharing an after-hours job so individuals are discouraged to engage in it.
- When individuals share their knowledge they may be confused with being arrogant and that they think they know it all.
- The consulting environment generally does not allow for time for individuals to engage in knowledge sharing after each engagement or project, because consultants are quickly placed onto new

projects. This is in line with Ling et al. (2009), who stated that consulting firms have reward systems that are based on client delivery, billability and utilisation, and not necessarily on knowledge sharing. This is also a result of organisations not understanding the value of their intangible assets and how to measure them.

#### **7.2.3.2 Contribution to literature**

The literature suggests that individuals may engage in knowledge hoarding because they fear that they may lose the power that they believe comes with that knowledge and their unique value to their organisations (Renzl, 2008; Wang & Noe, 2010; Wu & Zhu, 2012). These views are supported by Bessic and Naicker (2013), who described knowledge workers as individuals that want to be valued for the knowledge that they hold. The results show that the consultants freely share their skills and knowledge in the workplace and do not fear that they will lose their competitiveness when they share what they know with their colleagues. This is in contradiction to what the reviewed literature suggested.

In conclusion:

- Consultants freely share their knowledge without fear of losing power or their competitiveness in the workplace.
- Consultants prefer to work as individuals and in teams.
- Consultants that prefer to work as individuals generally do not do well in the consulting environment (Respondent 1).
- Accomplished consultants are able to work as individuals and in a team environment (Respondent 3).

#### **7.2.4 Research objective 4**

##### **7.2.4.1 Results for research objective 4**

This research objective sought to investigate whether the national and international prestige of a knowledge organisation encouraged employee commitment to those organisations. The survey results showed that consultants are attracted to prestigious organisational brands and they do

believe that the prestige of their organisation's brands encourages them to stay with the organisation. However the results also showed that this commitment to the organisation is short term as the consultants indicated that they are likely to leave their organisation within three years. This could be because the consultants select organisations with prestigious brands so as to add this to their career capital portfolio to allow them to become attractive employees in the market for other organisations to be attracted to them. This is seen in the consultants' responses that stated that they believe that having their employer's brand on their resume will lead to better career prospects. The experts stated the average turnover rate of consultants is between 2.5 – 5 years. With such a high turnover rate, technical succession planning is key for knowledge and skills retention.

#### *7.2.4.2 Contribution to literature*

The reviewed literature suggests that a strong and prestigious organisational brand attracts employees and also helps retain those that are already in those organisations (Davies, 2008; Martin, Gollan & Grigg, 2011; Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009; Sitlington & Marshall, 2011). However the results from the consultants were that although they believed that because of the prestige of the brand of their organisation they were encouraged to stay in their organisation, the results also showed that the majority of consultants were not intending to stay with their organisation for more than three years. Nevertheless this same result supports the literature that highlights labour mobility and that consultants are now taking control of their own careers and development to make themselves more employable (Sieber, 2008; Jokinen, Brewster, & Suutari, 2008; Seabele 2012; Perotti, Wall & McLaughlin, 2010; O'Neill & Adya, 2007; Donnelly, 2008). The short commitment periods support the research problem statement that because of the high levels of labour mobility, managerial succession planning is not as relevant in the new world of work. Supporting Rothwell's technical succession planning as being more relevant.

In conclusion:

- Although consultants are attracted to prestigious organisational brands and they believe that the brand's prestige encourages their commitment to stay with the organisation, the commitment is short term as they do not intend to be with their organisations for more than three years.
- Labour mobility is a reality in the consulting environment and is evident in the short number of years that the consultants stated that they would remain with their organisation.
- Consultants choose prestigious organisational brands so as to add them to their career portfolios, which will make them more attractive to other employers.

### **7.3 Recommendations for knowledge organisations and knowledge and talent management specialists**

The reviewed literature and the research results highlight the relevance of technical succession planning as a knowledge and skills retention strategy in the new world of work where knowledge workers are taking control of their careers and are not bound to a single employer. Some of the factors that the reviewed literature had suggested encourage knowledge sharing amongst knowledge workers were not supported by the results. The researcher's results showed additional factors that should be taken into consideration when knowledge organisations and knowledge and talent management specialists develop their talent attraction and retention strategies, as well as their knowledge sharing strategies.

- The culture of the organisation plays a larger role in fostering knowledge sharing. If the culture values knowledge and is collaborative and innovative, knowledge sharing will happen

organically. Knowledge organisations need to provide the right environment, allow consultants time to contribute to knowledge sharing instead of making it an after-hours task, provide the right opportunities for knowledge sharing, and attach value to knowledge sharing to foster the right organisational culture.

- Consultants contribute to knowledge sharing out of autonomous motivation not because they are being measured, and so it may not be necessary to include knowledge sharing KPIs in an attempt to improve knowledge sharing activities.
- Increasing the weighting of the knowledge sharing KPI may not be necessary as consultants contribute to knowledge sharing out of autonomous motivation.
- A knowledge sharing KPI should be introduced to the performance appraisals and should carry a high weighting so that organisations can unlock and realise the value of knowledge, not because they want to use controlled motivation to make consultants contribute more to knowledge sharing.
- The younger generation feels that the older generation does not regard their views highly. If organisations pay attention to this aspect they could see higher commitment levels from the younger generations.
- Organisations need to develop value propositions that are in-line with the new world of work. For example a value proposition that offers a job for life is unlikely to be attractive to highly mobile and autonomous knowledge workers, however offering consultants attractive, non-organisational specific training programmes is likely to attract them as this would give them an opportunity to build their personal portfolios.
- Consultants are attracted to prestigious organisational brands and they believe that the brand prestige encourages their commitment to stay with the organisation.

- Generally consultants have short-term commitments to a single organisation (2,5 – 3 years).
- Labour mobility is a reality in the consulting environment and retention strategies must be developed to mitigate the risk that comes with it.
- Consultants are more concerned with building their career portfolios in the labour market rather than in a particular organisation.
- Knowledge organisations and experts should pay attention to the factors that impede knowledge sharing that were identified by the interviewed experts as listed below:
  - Competition - consultants may feel that those that they have shared knowledge with will advance faster than them.
  - They fear of loss of power.
  - Individuals may not fully appreciate what they can learn from each other.
  - Individuals may not understand their organisation's value proposition from making the sale, delivering on the project and documenting and sharing lessons learnt.
  - Organisations assign a small weighting to knowledge sharing.
  - Organisations make knowledge capturing and sharing an after-hours job and so individuals are discouraged to engage in it.
  - When individuals share their knowledge they may be confused with being arrogant and that they think they know it all.
  - The consulting environment generally does not allow for time for individuals to engage in knowledge sharing after each engagement or project because consultants are quickly placed onto new projects.
  - Consulting firms generally do not have reward systems that are based on client delivery, billability and utilisation and not necessarily on knowledge sharing.

- Organisations do not understanding the value of their intangible assets and how to measure them and as a result neither do their employees.

#### 7.4 Recommendations for future research

Based on the research findings and limitations of this research the following can be considered for future research:

- Only seven of the vast number of professional services firms that make up that industry in South Africa were considered. A larger pool of knowledge organisations could provide results that could be more generalisable.
- The same study could be conducted and only focus on professional services firms that have their headquarters in South Africa. This study only considered multi-national professional services firms.
- The study was limited to the defined research questions and did not consider other contextual or behavioural aspects that could impact knowledge sharing and retention, such as the interaction of the different racial groups which this study did not consider. Future research can also look at whether gender differences play a role in knowledge sharing. The respondents to the survey of this study were mostly male.
- Interview Respondent 2 stated that she has noted that it is the younger generation that contributes to higher levels of turnover, therefore a study can be conducted to explore if this is the case and to gauge what factors contribute to this. This would help organisations formulate retention strategies that would appeal to this group.
- Investigating if indeed managerial succession planning is not relevant in today's world of work.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: IS KM Tools and Techniques Extract

Tool/Technique	Useful for.....	How do..... to	Pros and Cons/Potential benefits and barriers	Related research objective / outcome
<b>After Action Review</b>	<p>Reflecting on a project or activity which has reached a key stage.</p> <p>Making “tacit” knowledge explicit during the life of a project or activity and making sure it is captured.</p> <p>Keeping projects on-course as you review each stage and reflect on current position and future actions.</p>	<p>Quick discussion at the end of short project or at key stages of a longer one, reflecting on progress and plans.</p> <p>Can use a structured evaluation or impact assessment exercise which enables all individuals involved to learn from and reflect on what has happened, summarise new knowledge and decide what actions to be taken before moving on to the next stage of the project.</p>	<p>Organisational culture can make it difficult to admit where things didn't go according to plan.</p> <p>It can be difficult sometimes to allow time for reflection.</p>	<p><b>Research objective 2</b> <b>Generational differences</b></p> <p>This could address the younger generation's need for speedy feedback.</p> <p>Assists in transforming tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge.</p>
<b>Community of Practice</b>	<p>Bringing together a network of individuals with common challenges or working on similar projects who need to explore new ways of working, identify common solutions and share good practice and ideas.</p> <p>A valuable vehicle for developing, sharing and managing specialist knowledge and avoiding reinvention of the wheel.</p>	<p>Facilitate online and offline collaboration - face-to-face events and provision of on-line collaboration spaces and technologies, egg using Web 2.0 technologies (see section on Technology approaches.</p>	<p>It may be a challenge to obtain permission to actively participate.</p> <p>It can be difficult to assign value to CoPs and CoPs can take a long time to show results.</p> <p>The success of CoPs relies on participant interest which may be difficult to perpetuate without people identifying a genuine benefit to themselves for participation.</p>	<p><b>Research objective 2</b> <b>Generational differences</b></p> <p>Provides an opportunity for employees from the same and different generations to interact with each other and share their tacit knowledge and skills.</p>
<b>Embed in organisational HR</b>	<p>Encouraging KM behaviours and overall cultural change</p>	<p>Appropriate rewards and incentives for knowledge sharing behaviour within ALL roles</p> <p>Actively reward knowledge sharing (e.g. incentivise finding and adapting solutions from without the organisation)</p> <p>Encouraging low-cost experimentation and sharing of “failure” without stigmatising</p> <p>Build in knowledge sharing as part of performance review (e.g. consider maintenance of organisational</p>	<p>Needs commitment from senior management and HR to add to job descriptions and expected competencies</p> <p>Needs recognition of relevant attributes/competencies</p> <p>However, embedding HR aspects and making it “how we do things around here” will encourage wide scale cultural change</p>	<p><b>Research objective 1</b> <b>Including knowledge sharing in the performance appraisal metrics</b></p> <p>This will foster knowledge sharing and make knowledge sharing an integral part of the employees' work and practices.</p>

		personal information e.g. white pages/phone book, active involvement in networking groups, evidence of importing new solutions and processes, etc.)		
<b>Gone well/not gone well exercise</b>	Evaluating an event or other activity which is to be repeated where it would be useful to quickly identify what can be improved for next time.	Use these questions to focus a quick debrief and/or feedback at the end of an event in a quick and easy way.	Good for giving immediate feedback	<b>Research objective 2 Generational differences</b>  This could address the younger generation's need for speedy feedback.
<b>Knowledge Cafe</b>	Keeping up-to-date with relevant issues in a constantly changing environment.  Getting a better understanding of the perspectives of colleagues and dealing with topics where debate is required in order to build consensus.  Informal learning from discussion with your peers.	Bring people together in an informal context and setting where they can have an open, creative conversation on topics of mutual interest which will help with making more informed decisions, validating new ways of working or devising new ideas.	Obtaining time/space to do this may be problematic.  Should be done regularly for maximum benefit.	<b>Research objective 2 Generational differences</b>  Provides an opportunity for employees from the same and different generations to interact with each other and share their tacit knowledge and skills.
<b>Knowledge Exchange/Exit interviews</b>	Occasions when there is risk of losing knowledge because of a staff member leaving an organisation or a team or project	Use a structured process to capture an individual's knowledge, experiences and contacts before they move on.  Where possible, put the individual leaving into a mentoring/training role for the duration of their notice period.	Can be difficult to capture in a useful way – requires active focus on synthesising and dissemination	<b>Knowledge retention</b>  This will assist organisations to capture the knowledge and skills of individuals that are exiting the organisation.
<b>Knowledge market place</b>	Connecting someone who needs to know with sources for that knowledge, including documents, and people who have knowledge, skills and experiences which can help them	Facilitate events or technology platforms to enable connections between individuals who have identified gaps in their knowledge and those who have relevant knowledge and expertise which they can share.	Up-to-date details enable un-connected people to call on/offering assistance  Requires pro-actively keeping white pages/profiles up to date.	<b>Research objective 2 Generational differences</b>  Provides an opportunity for employees from the same and different generations to interact with each other and share their tacit knowledge and skills.
<b>Leading Practice - identifying and sharing</b>	Helping organisations to think about how new and different ways of doing things might be used in their own improvement work – providing a tool for adaptation, discussion and	Capturing and disseminating widely for re-use by others details about practices etc. which have been proven to work well, produce results and therefore can be regarded as “models” – for	Providing the information in appropriate formats that are accessible, searchable and usable can be difficult.  Can vastly reduce waste in terms of time and resources.	<b>Research objective 2 Generational differences</b>  Provides an opportunity for employees from the same and different generations to

	<p>experimentation.</p> <p>Helping to raising the performance of poor performers closer to that of the best.</p> <p>Minimising re-work or unnecessary duplication of effort caused by use of poor methods or reinventing wheels.</p> <p>Saving costs through better productivity and efficiency.</p>	<p>adoption or adaptation to local circumstances.</p>	<p>Sharing and having your/your team's output be a model of success can be a good incentive.</p> <p>Can be a source of innovation.</p>	<p>interact with each other and share their tacit knowledge and skills.</p>
<b>Narrative case study</b>	<p>Sharing experience with others in an easily accessible way.</p> <p>Linking with storytelling/Tacit knowledge transfer.</p>	<p>Record a case study in narrative form, explaining actions and consequences, outlining where, why and how things went well or might have been done differently.</p>		<p><b>Knowledge sharing</b></p> <p>Assists in documenting and sharing case knowledge and tacit knowledge.</p>
<b>Peer Assist</b>	<p>Direct knowledge transfer from individuals to others. Underpinning new policy and/or practice with evidence and experience of what has been done previously or elsewhere.</p>	<p>Organise a workshop or set of workshops designed to gain knowledge and insight from people working in a similar field but in a different team or organisation.</p> <p>Involve people with relevant experience from other teams/organisations in project teams.</p>	<p>Sourcing the most appropriate "peer" may be difficult.</p>	<p><b>Research objective 2 Generational differences</b></p> <p>Provides an opportunity for employees from the same and different generations to interact with each other and share their tacit knowledge and skills</p>

## Appendix 2: Vault 2013 and 2014 Best Management Consulting Firms

### Management Consulting

Consultants across the nation rate the top firms in their practice areas.

[See Methodology](#)

Management Consulting

2014 Rank	2013 Rank	Change	Company
1	1	—	<a href="#">McKinsey &amp; Company</a>
2	3	▲	<a href="#">The Boston Consulting Group, Inc.</a>
3	2	▼	<a href="#">Bain &amp; Company</a>
4	5	▲	<a href="#">Deloitte Consulting LLP</a>
5	6	▲	<a href="#">Accenture</a>
6	4	▼	<a href="#">Booz &amp; Company</a>
7	8	▲	<a href="#">PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (Consulting Practice)</a>
8	9	▲	<a href="#">Ernst &amp; Young LLP (Consulting Practice)</a>
9	NR	—	<a href="#">KPMG LLP (Consulting Practice)</a>
10	NR	—	<a href="#">IBM Global Business Services</a>

## Appendix 3: Vault 2013 and 2014 Most Prestigious Management Consulting Firms

### The Best Consulting Firms: Prestige

Consultants across the nation rank the companies they consider to be the most prestigious in their industry.

[See Methodology](#)

2014 Rank	2013 Rank	Change	Company
1	1	—	McKinsey & Company
2	2	—	The Boston Consulting Group, Inc.
3	3	—	Bain & Company
4	4	—	Booz & Company
5	5	—	Deloitte Consulting LLP
6	NR	—	Booz Allen Hamilton
7	6	▼	PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (Consulting Practice)
8	7	▼	Ernst & Young LLP (Consulting Practice)
9	12	▲	IBM Global Business Services
10	8	▼	Accenture
11	11	—	KPMG LLP (Consulting Practice)
12	10	▼	Oliver Wyman
13	14	▲	A.T. Kearney
14	13	▼	Mercer LLC
15	NR	—	Gartner, Inc.

#### Appendix 4: Interview consent letter

Good day,

I am conducting research on factors that foster or impede knowledge sharing amongst knowledge workers. As a knowledge worker you are asked to participate by completing this survey. This will help us understand your views, from your experience of working as a knowledge worker, on the influencers of knowledge sharing behaviour amongst knowledge workers. To complete it should take no more than 10 minutes of your time. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty.

All data will be kept confidential, no respondent name or organisation name will be mentioned in the results.

By completing the survey, you indicate that you voluntarily participate in this research. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

Noma Ngubane (Researcher)

Andre Vermaak (Supervisor)

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(079) 922 6585

(083) 308 0235

#### Survey Link

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Noma\\_Ngubane\\_MBA\\_Research](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Noma_Ngubane_MBA_Research)

## Appendix 5: Interview consent letter

I am conducting research on knowledge retention in knowledge organisations, and am trying to find out more about the factors that influence or impede knowledge workers from sharing their knowledge amongst themselves.

Our interview is expected to last about an hour. The interview is to help us understand your views, from your experience of working with knowledge workers, on the influencers of knowledge sharing behavior guided by the research questions.

Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without penalty. All data will be kept confidential. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are provided below.

**Researcher name**

Noma Ngubane

**Email**

[nngubane19855@gmail.com](mailto:nngubane19855@gmail.com)

**Phone**

079 922 6585

**Signature of researcher:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Research Supervisor Name**

Andre Vermaak

**Email**

[andrepv@mweb.co.za](mailto:andrepv@mweb.co.za)

**Phone**

083 308 0235

**Signature of participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_