Knowledge Sharing among Academics in Institutions of Higher Learning

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of a new economy has been viewed by many for latest developments where knowledge has become a valuable asset and resource. Since things have changed rapidly in this new economy, the concern is not just what you learn, but also how you can apply what you learn quickly and capture what you have learned. In many ways, knowledge sharing is seen as one of the academic institutions' natural activities. The academic number of conferences, seminars, workshops and publications far exceeds any other signifying the eagerness, profession and kindness of academics to share knowledge. This paper aimed to identify the current state of knowledge sharing activities among academic staff in Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs), to point out the important knowledge sharing activities for academics, to find out the most important technologies that are used in developing and gaining knowledge sharing. In addition, it is also aimed at understanding general attitude towards of academics knowledge sharing, to ascertain knowledge sharing motivators and to determine the possible factors that, in their opinion, pose barriers in knowledge sharing activities among academics in IHLs. The overall findings revealed that Knowledge sharing is vital to the success of knowledge management practices in all organizations, inclusive of IHLs and effective knowledge sharing among academics is essential for IHLs.

Keywords
Knowledge sharing, Institutions of Higher Learning, Academic staff

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It has become a norm to refer to today's economy as a knowledge-based economy. In many developed countries today, competition is not based so much on cost alone, but more on the production and development of knowledge-based products and services (Kamal et al., 2007).

On the other hand, understanding the concept of knowledge has been a quandary because of the shortage of theories on the subject (Willem, 2003). It occurs mainly because of its intangible nature, which makes it very difficult to identify quantity. In addition, organizations can find it difficult to operate knowledge effectively. Within the generally knowledge management area, an important area that requires more attention is knowledge sharing. Sharing of knowledge is entrenched in the knowledge-processing area where knowledge is generated and used (Shapira et al., 2005). Successful knowledge management approaches should emphasize the importance of knowledge sharing to attain highest results for organizations.

The literature thus far pointed evidence that the foundation of knowledge management is knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is very essential in knowledge-based organizations like IHL due to the fact that most of the employees are knowledge workers. This study aims to identify the current state of knowledge sharing activities among academic staff in IHLs, to point out the important knowledge sharing activities for academics, to find out the most important technologies that are used in developing and gaining knowledge sharing. In addition, it is also aimed at understanding general attitude of academics towards knowledge sharing, to ascertain knowledge sharing motivators and to determine the possible factors that, in their opinion, pose barriers in knowledge sharing activities among academics.

2.0 KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Knowledge sharing is an important unit of the knowledge management system in an organization (Sohail & Daud, 2009) . In 2002, Holsapple and Joshi described the operational objective of KM as

to "ensure that the right knowledge is available to the right processors, in the right representations and at the right times, for performing their knowledge activities (and to accomplish this for the right cost)". It is crucial to be highlighted here that knowledge sharing and knowledge management are not equivalent. Knowledge sharing ensures the knowledge is available and delivered in the nick of time. Furthermore, by providing dynamic solutions to customers, knowledge sharing may save time and improve the quality.

It is difficult to define knowledge sharing. Many researchers defined it based on their opinions. According to Fengjie et al (2004), sharing of knowledge is the main part in the subject of knowledge management. Choi and Lee (2003), pointed out that knowledge sharing becomes a factor to obtain and maintain a competitive advantage, and improve business performance while Willet (2002) mentioned it as non-neutral exchanged of information but very influencing the distribution of power, working relationships, models of influence and changes how individual identify their responsibilities. Ultimately, Lee et al. (2000) defined knowledge sharing as activities of transferring or disseminating knowledge from one person, group or organization to another.

Haas (2006) argued that even though researchers have increased awareness of knowledge sharing in organizations over the years, moderately little research has focused on the performance implications for task units within organizations. Providing the effective strategies in support knowledge-sharing actions is truly fundamental, however it is only realizable by understanding the factors that make the knowledge transfer process easy (Chaudhry, 2005). He added that knowledge sharing is the main key to the success of all knowledge management strategies. Hsiu-Fen (2006) explored this component and came out with this explanation; "knowledge sharing is the act of capturing, organizing, reusing, and transferring experience-based knowledge that reside within the organization by making it available to others in the business". According to Jones et al. (2006), changing employee attitudes determine the the promotion of knowledge sharing within an organization. Hsiu-Fen (2006) stated that one of the vital characteristics of knowledge sharing is that it is capable in generating new ideas and developing new business opportunities through socialization and learning process of knowledge workers. Besides, knowledge sharing can be referred as the transfer of information combined with the skill and experience of the team or organization to benefit. According to Argote and Ingram in 2000, organizations that are able to share knowledge effectively are more likely to survive than others.

Knowledge sharing concept is in relation to the process of transforming information and intellectual resources combined with experience and skills into enduring value. People are connected with the knowledge they require in times when they needed it the most. In corporate world, the secret to attain competitive benefit is through managing the knowledge well.

Knowledge sharing is aimed to do something useful with knowledge. Improving knowledge sharing is made in two dimensions: one dimension is managing the existing knowledge including the development of knowledge repositories (memos, reports, articles, and reports), and knowledge compilation. Another dimension is managing knowledge-specific activities, that is, knowledge acquisitions, creation, distribution, communication, sharing and application (Stenmark, 2001).

According to Fengjie et al. (2004), the complete and appropriate process of knowledge sharing can be described as: one contributes a part of his knowledge; others get the knowledge, all members add their own understanding into the dough and transform it into their individual knowledge. In the process of sharing knowledge, the willingness of two or more parties to share their knowledge is required. The communication between the knowledge owner and acquirer of knowledge are essential to ensure the process of knowledge sharing which is done successfully (Hendriks, 1999).

Thus, it can be concluded that knowledge sharing is vital to the success of knowledge management practices in all organizations, inclusive of IHLs. Knowledge sharing is capturing, gathering, organizing, analyzing, and sharing the knowledge of academics that exist in the IHLs and making that knowledge available to other academics in IHLs. Effective knowledge sharing is essential for the organization to benefit from the knowledge its employees have generated. It is a compulsory factor for almost all organizations, communities, and societies. The benefits of knowledge sharing to organizations are very clear. Organizations may use this asset to improve their performance by giving employees better access to knowledge and helping them using the knowledge to increase productivity and performance. Failure making a full use of knowledge sharing could cause organization serious problems. Whereas enabling efficient knowledge sharing in organizations is not a simple job.

3.0 KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN IHLs

According to Kamal et al. (2007), sharing of knowledge is very essential in knowledge-based organizations like IHLs due to the fact that most of the employees are knowledge workers. The knowledge sharing in an educational system

ensures that academic staff is updated from time to time with the latest knowledge. Institutions of Higher Learning indeed play a fundamental role on knowledge creation. The implicit knowledge created by academics is embedded in their minds and constitutes the storehouse of an educational institution's intellectual capital. Ismail and Yang (2006) mentioned that "the higher learning institutions are no longer just providing knowledge to the students, but also manage and blend together the existing knowledge as references for the next generation" (p.1).

Instead of creating new patterns of knowledge management, it is better to acknowledge the existing KM in Institutions of Higher Learning for further progress. IHLs and their staff also are required to recognize and respond to their changing role in a knowledge-based society (Yang & Ismail, 2008). In evaluating the challenges faced by IHLs in implementing KM, Davenport's four types of KM objectives was used as a lens to view higher education institutions: the creation and maintenance of knowledge repositories, improving knowledge access; increasing of knowledge of the environment and to estimate knowledge. Generally, there are three basic possibilities of how IHLs may apply KM ideas (Abdullah et al., 2007). Initially, the knowledge management in aspects of student courses and others in relation to the academia programme. Second, the knowledge management for decision support in improving the internal document management and exploitation as well as to raise the information and knowledge dissemination level up. Finally, ways to make use of the qualitative changes in the educational process. Generally, collaboration in IHLs may involve categories of people as listed below:

- **Academics or lecturers**: they play important roles as teachers and designers of learning experiences, processes, and environments. They are responsible of transmitting intellectual content as well as inspiring the students

- **Researchers**: conduct research to search for new knowledge

- **Administrators**: manage all aspects of the public higher learning institution administration tasks such as financial management, security, students' registration and others.

- **The student**: They receive, accept, study, review and use study the knowledge at the public higher learning institution.

- **The sponsors**: the agent who are responsible in sponsoring or give the grants to the students or researchers in completing their studies or research works.

It is logical to assume that KM has something to give in controlling knowledge. The collection of people in IHLs businesses (Education and Study, Research and Development, and Services) can be classified into three groups; academics (tutors, lecturers, assistant lecturers, associate professors and professors), non-academics (administrators and technicians), and students. These groups of people with different backgrounds, skills, knowledge and experience will collaborate their efforts to fulfill the tasks which will then create a new environment; knowledge management.

According to Maponya (2004), knowledge management as it included in the business sector is becoming more acceptable in the academic sector. After all, knowledge invented through research and teaching in universities should be relevant to the labor market. University is critically associated with the preservation of knowledge and ideas through these processes; teaching, research, publication, extension and services and interpretation (Ratcliffe-Martin et al., 2000). As a result, knowledge is ought to be promoted as a business in the university and should remain as the focus of higher education institutions.

Gupta et al. in 2000 pointed out that since many organizations are facing the increasing competition, they begin to realize that there is a huge and largely untapped asset diffused around in the organization – knowledge. In today's world, knowledge is the most crucial asset of any organization particularly for the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs) and universities (Abdullah et al., 2008; Ruzaif & Shahizan, 2008). Maponya (2004) added that this realization not only occurs in business organizations but also among universities.

As what experienced by most of the large organizations, universities and other higher education institutions face similar challenges (Maponya, 2004). Examples of these challenges are financial problems, increment of public accountability, rapidly changing technologies, changing roles of the staff, students from different demographics as well as competing values (Naidoo, 2002).

According to Jillinda et al. (2000), IHLs have become appropriate places to practice KM principles to hold up their efficient and operational processes. Sharimllah Devi et al. (2007) mentioned that an institution with a broad-based approach to KM can lead to substantial improvements in sharing knowledge and growth benefits.

According to Ranjan and Khalil (2007), the main causes for applying knowledge management in Institutions of Higher Learning are:

- All IHLs possess modern information infrastructure.
- In all IHLs, knowledge sharing among academic staff, non-academic staff, students, courses, programs, placements and administration often taken place.
- No one should be afraid to publish any sorts of beneficial knowledge in an academic environment.
- Any IHLs are eagerly looking forward for good and continuous ratings in newspapers and business magazines for competitive advantage.
- Each institute wants to improve its information and knowledge sharing level and its internal documentation management
- IHLs require novel strategies to meet the increasing external and internal demands.

On the other hand, Mohayidin et al. (2007) pointed out that Institutions of Higher learning are suitable for the application of knowledge management by reasons of; (a) Institutions of Higher learning generally possess new information infrastructure, (b) sharing of knowledge with others is natural for academics, (c) the willingness of students is to obtain knowledge from available sources as fast as possible, and (d) normally a trusting atmosphere at Institutions of Higher learning, no neither hesitation or fear for publishing or otherwise disseminate her or his knowledge

4.0 KNOWLEDGE SHARING ACTIVITIES AMONG ACADEMICS IN IHLS

Knowledge sharing activities are meant to provide platforms for knowledge sharing which can be done internally and externally within Institutions of Higher Learning (IHLs). Since IHLs are actively pursuing these activities, all academics should use these opportunities to enhance their commitment towards attending, participating and give critiques for their contribution to the body of knowledge. Knowledge from previous initiatives is formed into explicit documents such as proceedings and reports in externalization. The proceedings and reports then can be accessed by combining them in journals and galleries of such occasions. Apart from that, the committee can also provide evaluation forms for activities taken place. For further enhancement, all comments and suggestions made via any tools (eg. evaluation forms, on-line guest books) are revised for actions in order to highlight any specific improvement to be done in the next process - Socialization.

Another fundamental and the best reason so far to attend knowledge sharing activities in IHLs is

networking with professionals from different backgrounds. During the activities, academics may get to know people in their profession from many geographic areas. They are also able to figure out legal changes on the other horizon. When academics participate in activities such as Web/Video conferences, PhD Colloquiums, symposiums and Public lectures, training programs, meetings in (university / faculty / group SIG), brown bag sessions, etc., they are able to choose among a number of session topics which will provide them with professional development opportunities and groom them as professionals. Despite from getting to observe the competition opportunities in the exhibit hall, the academics will be branding an academician as a professional and/or an expert in their industry too.

According to Sharimllah Devi et al. (2007, 2008, 2009), even though efforts have been taken by IHLs to promote the idea of KM implementation in Malaysian Institutions of Higher Learning, these efforts involved only a small number of the IHLs. They added that majority of knowledge management studies cited are carried out in the commercial sector, and very little has been done to investigate cultural aspects that facilitate KM implementation especially among the IHLs. Furthermore, Mohayidin et al. (2007) pointed out that "as knowledge service providers, many Malaysian universities were not utilizing knowledge to the fullest to improve their performance and this is because the data, information and knowledge available in the universities were not properly managed such that they could be efficiently shared and reused to generate new knowledge" (p.2). The purpose of this study is to identify the current state of knowledge sharing activities among academic staff in IHLs, to point out the important knowledge sharing activities for academics, to find out the most important technologies that are used in developing and gaining knowledge sharing, to understand general attitude towards of academics knowledge sharing, to ascertain knowledge sharing motivators and to determine the possible factors that, in their opinion, pose barriers in knowledge sharing activities among academics.

5.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Both primary and secondary data were collected for this research. The primary data was collected by distributing questionnaires to the academics in University Utara Malaysia (UUM). UUM is a public Institution of Higher Learning located n the northern region of Malaysia. The sample of this study was the academics that come from Public Institution of Higher Learning (PIHL). Those academics are different in terms of their academic designation: Tutor, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, and Professor. A total of 350

questionnaires were distributed to all academics in UUM. The sampling was based on convenience and 143 participants successfully responded, giving a response rate of 40.9%. The analysis of the survey results is presented based on a valid response of 143 academics of University Utara Malaysia.

Data collection for this study was undertaken during the month of February 2009. In gathering information pertaining to the study; a questionnaire was used as the main instrument for data collection in this study. a questionnaire was prepared divided into six sections as follows: Section 1 was not containing any personally identifiable questions. The demographic and background variables used in this study are gender, status, age, designation, years of work experience, years of service in current organization, and years of experience in knowledge management as academics in IHLs. This section adapted from Kamal et al. (2007). Section 2 contains questions that are targeted at knowledge sharing activities among academics. The respondents were given a list of fifteen knowledge sharing activities, those activities are the most common activities among academic in the world. The researcher collected these activates from literature review. Section 3 contains questions concerning knowledge sharing technologies. The respondents were asked to indicate the important current technologies that helped in developing and gaining knowledge sharing. The total numbers of technologies is nineteen. All questions were adapted from Syed and Fytton (2004). Section 4 contains questions that are targeted at general attitude towards knowledge sharing. The respondents were given a mix of positive and negative statements for understanding their general attitude towards knowledge sharing. The total numbers of statement were fourteen. Questions from one to five were adapted from Ting and Majid (2007), questions from five to seven were adapted from Kamal et al. (2007), and question eight to fourteen were adapted from Chowdhury (2005). Section 5 contains questions about knowledge sharing motivators. The respondents were asked to indicate the possible way that, in their opinion, pose knowledge sharing motivators. The total numbers of statements were six. All questions were adapted form Ting and Majid (2007). Section 6 contains questions that are related to barriers to knowledge sharing. The respondents were asked to indicate the possible factors that, in their opinion, pose barriers in active knowledge sharing by their colleague academics. The total numbers of statements were fifteen. All questions were adapted from Kamal et al. (2007).

All questions in this questionnaire used a five-point Likert-type scale. For section 2 and section 3 the scale was (NI= not important, QI = quite important, I = important, VI = very important, and MI = most

important). Whereas, the scale for sections 4, 5, and 6 was (SD= Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, and SA = Strongly Agree).

6.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1 Respondent's Profile and Background Information

Based on the demographics and other personal background information obtained, out of 143 respondents 55.0 % were males. The most of the respondents were married 83 %. 44 % of the respondents were 41 to 50 years old and 30 % were 31 to 40 years old. Most of the respondents were Lecturers position 38 %, following by Senior Lecturers 24 %, Associate Professor 24 %, Tutor 12 %, and Professor 1 %. The majority of respondents had experience more than 10 years experience 59 %, and 28 % of respondents had experience more than 20 years. In addition, 25 % of the respondents had less than 6 years experience in current organization, 26 % had 6 to 10 years, 18 % had 11-15 years, 12 % had 16-20 years, while 19 % had experience more than 20 years. Finally, the majority of responders had experience in knowledge management while 9 % did not have experience in knowledge management. Table 1 below gives respondents' demographic profile:

6.2 Knowledge Sharing Activities

The findings were presented in Table 2 show that the big major activity among the participating academics was 90.2 % ''very important'' or ''most important'' that were publishing books, journals, or other academic materials. However, 88.5 % "very important" or "most important" of the participating academics pointed out that discussing projects with peers within and/or outside organization which was a favorite activity. While 88.11 % ''very important'' or ''most important'' of the participating academics believed that attending/ participating in symposiums and public lectures, and sharing research findings were useful activities for them. As noticeable from results 49.9 % "very important'' or ''most important'' of the participating academics mentioned that attending briefings with peers with state or, federals agencies were important for them. On the whole, it appeared that the respondents were convinced that knowledge sharing activities were beneficial to all (average response of 4.1 for the fifteen items in this section).

Table 1: Respondents' Demographic Profile

Respondents' Profile	Classification	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	78	55
	Female	65	45
Status	Married	119	83
	Unmarried	24	17
Age	20-30	25	18
	31-40	43	30
	41-50	63	44
	Above 50	12	8
Designation	Tutor	17	12
	Lecturer	54	38
	Senior Lecturer	35	24
	Associate Professor	35	24
	Professor	2	1
Years of work experience	Less than 6 years	31	22
	6-10 years	27	19
	11-15 years	34	24
	16-20 years	11	7
	More than 20 years	40	28
Years of service in current organization	Less than 6 years	36	25
	6-10 years	38	26
	11-15 years	25	18
	16-20 years	17	12
	More than 20 years	27	19
Years of Experience in knowledge management	None	13	9
	Less than 1	14	10
	1- less 5	44	31
	5-less 10	54	38
	More 10	18	12

Table 2: Knowledge Sharing Activities for Academic (Percentage/ Frequency)

Activities	Number of responses (%)				
	NI	QI	I	VI	MI
Publishing books, journals, or other academic materials	4 (2.8)	2 (1.4)	8 (5.6)	34 (23.8)	95 (66.4)
Sharing articles in books, journals or magazines	4 (2.8)	27 (18.9)	0 (0.0)	24 (16.8)	88 (61.5)
Sharing of experience in seminars, workshops,	4 (2.8)	2 (1.4)	12 (8.4)	36 (25.2)	89 (62.2)
Attending /participating in Web/Video Conferences	5 (3.5)	5 (3.5)	11 (7.7)	71 (49.7)	51 (35.7)
Discussing projects with peers within and/or outside organization	5 (3.5)	1 (0.7)	9 (6.3)	53 (37.1)	75 (52.4)
Presenting in symposiums , Public lectures and conferences	4 (2.8)	1 (0.7)	13 (9.1)	60 (42.0)	65 (45.5)
Attending training programs	4 (2.8)	4 (2.8)	12 (8.4)	51 (35.7)	72 (50.3)
Attending/ participating in symposiums and Public lectures	3 (2.1)	5 (3.5)	9 (6.3)	54 (37.8)	72 (50.3)
Sharing research findings	4 (2.8)	5 (3.5)	8 (5.6)	45 (31.5)	81 (56.6)
Attending /participating in meetings in (university / faculty / group SIG)	4 (2.8)	5 (3.5)	13 (9.1)	58 (40.6)	63 (44.1)
Attending /participating in colloquium or brown bag sessions	13 (9.1)	10 (7.0)	28 (19.6)	45 (31.5)	47 (32.9)
Sharing teaching materials	3 (2.1)	17 (11.9)	29 (20.3)	56 (39.2)	38 (26.6)
Attending briefings with peers with state or, federals agencies	10 (7.0)	6 (4.2)	57 (39.9)	41 (28.7)	29 (20.3)
Reviewing and updating all courses and programs	3 (2.1)	11 (7.7)	22 (15.4)	65 (45.5)	42 (29.4)
Participating in others events for example competition	4 (2.8)	14 (9.8)	64 (44.8)	45 (31.5)	16 (11.2)

6.3 Knowledge Sharing Technologies

The respondents were asked how important were current technologies in assisting them to develop and gain knowledge. E-mail was said to be the most important of technologies in developing and gaining knowledge and 88.11 % of respondents cited it as either "very important" or "most important". While 86.01 % of the participating academics mentioned that Internet as either "very important" or "most important" could help academics for sharing knowledge. On the other hand, 83.3 % considered that Mobile phone technology could be good technology for academics to share knowledge Table 3 shows the important of knowledge sharing technologies for academician's by scoring form the highest intensity to the lowest intensity for to knowledge sharing

Technologies	Score
Email	88.1 %
Internet	86.0 %
Mobile Phone Technology	85.3 %
University Portal	81.1 %
Intranet	80.4 %
File / document management	79.0 %
Online information sources	73.4 %
Online Message Board	70.6 %
Digital Repositories (DR)	70.6 %
CD-ROMs	67.8 %
Multimedia technologies	67.8 %
Learning Object Repositories	66.4 %
Video / Web conferences	64.3 %
Learning Management System	64.3 %
Short Messaging Service (SMS)	62.2 %
Blogs	54.5 %
Online Chat	53.1 %
Communities of Practice (CoP)	37.7 %
Audio and video messages	37.7 %

6.4 General Attitude towards Knowledge Sharing

The respondents were given a mix of positive and negative statements for understanding their general attitude towards knowledge sharing. A big majority of the academics 95.8 % ''very important'' or ''most important'' that sharing knowledge with peers could benefit all academics (Table 4). Although a majority of the academics 88.1 % ''very important'' or ''most important'' that academics should voluntarily share information with their peers, many others did not express their opinion. The statement ''sharing is caring'' also yielded a somewhat similar trend where 79.1 % of the academics either ''very important'' or ''most important'' with it. On the other hand, an overwhelming majority of the academics rejected statements presenting knowledge sharing in a somewhat negative context. Some 85.6 % of the academics ''quite important'' or "not important" that knowledge sharing should be avoided

whenever possible. Similarly, a big majority of the academics 87.4 % ''very important'' or ''most important'' that they were willing to share information with peers could benefit all academics. However, 86.7 % ''very important'' or ''most important'' of the participating academics pointed out that knowledge sharing is good.

On the other hand, when they were asked to indicate their opinion on the statement that knowledge sharing seems to be an additional responsibility, only 23.1 % of the academics ''very important'' or ''most important'' to this stance. When the academics were asked to indicate the degree to which knowledge sharing must be compensated, 24.6 % of the academics ''very important'' or ''most important'' to this stance, which means that they considered knowledge sharing had to be voluntarily, while 28.0 % of the respondents either ''quite important'' or "not important" with this viewpoint. This fact does not provide any clear majority opinion on this attribute.

Table 4: General Attitude towards Knowledge Sharing (Percentage/ Frequency)

Activities	Number of responses (%)				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
I feel that it is important to share knowledge with other academics for the benefit of all.	4 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.4)	22 (15.4)	115 (80.4)
Academics should share knowledge with their peers only when approached.	30 (21.0)	61 (42.7)	25 (17.5)	15 (10.5)	12 (8.4)
Academics should voluntarily share their knowledge with peers.	3 (2.1)	5 (3.5)	9 (6.3)	76 (53.1)	50 (35.0)
I feel that ''sharing is caring''.	10 (7.0)	4 (2.8)	16 (11.2)	53 (37.1)	60 (42.0)
It is better to avoid sharing information with peers whenever possible	95 (66.4)	28 (19.6)	4 (2.8)	6 (4.2)	10 (7.0)
I am willing to share information with my colleagues.	7 (4.9)	6 (4.2)	5 (3.5)	38 (26.6)	87 (60.8)
My colleagues are willing to share information with me.	8 (5.6)	55 (38.5)	42 (29.4)	32 (22.4)	6 (4.2)
My colleagues are willing to share their lecture notes,	10 (7.0)	34 (23.8)	35 (24.5)	57 (39.9)	7 (4.9)

power point slides and other resources with me.					
Knowledge sharing is good.	9 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	10 (7.0)	32 (22.4)	92 (64.3)
Knowledge management implementation will not make any positive changes in the company.	88 (61.5)	28 (19.6)	16 (11.2)	10 (7.0)	1 (0.7)
Sharing knowledge reduces competitiveness among the peers.	36 (25.2)	24 (16.8)	44 (30.8)	30 (21.0)	9 (6.3)
Knowledge sharing is time consuming.	31 (21.7)	49 (34.3)	15 (10.5)	35 (24.5)	13 (9.1)
Knowledge sharing seems to be an additional responsibility.	19 (13.3)	52 (36.4)	39 (27.3)	23 (16.1)	10 (7.0)
Knowledge sharing must be compensated.	25 (17.5)	15 (10.5)	68 (47.6)	18 (12.6)	17 (11.9)

6.5 Knowledge Sharing Motivators

The findings presented in Table 5 show that 92.3 % of respondents ''very important'' or ''most important'' that the main motivator for knowledge sharing among the participating academics was the intention to learn from each other, In addition, 89.6 % of respondents ''very important'' or ''most important'' that the second knowledge sharing motivator was the desire to exchange or feedback. Certain self-centred reasons for knowledge sharing with other academics were less pervasive, where 46.2 % of the respondents said they share knowledge for receiving reward or recognition (average response of 4.0 for the six items in this section). Figure 4.14 shows how respondents were indicated to knowledge sharing motivators.

Table 5: Knowledge Sharing Motivators (Percentage/ Frequency)

Activities	Number of responses (%)				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
To learn from each other	3 (2.1)	1 (0.7)	7 (4.9)	53 (37.1)	79 (55.2)
To help others	7 (4.9)	0 (0.0)	9 (6.3)	62 (43.4)	65 (45.5)
As an exchange or feedback	3 (2.1)	1 (0.7)	11 (7.7)	59 (41.3)	69 (48.3)
Self satisfaction	7 (4.9)	10 (7.0)	15 (10.5)	56 (39.2)	55 (38.5)

To obtain reward or recognition	7 (4.9)	35 (24.5)	35 (24.5)	55 (38.5)	11 (7.7)
To cultivate image of expertise	4 (2.8)	10 (7.0)	31 (21.7)	59 (41.3)	39 (27.3)

6.6 Barriers to Knowledge Sharing

Table 5 shows academics' views on the barriers to the sharing knowledge. The barriers were arranged in ascending order of the mean value. One can see that to share knowledge, lack of IT system to identify the colleagues with whom I need to share my knowledge, colleague poor verbal/written communication and interpersonal skills, and lack of trust among staff in my university/college have been identified as the strongest barriers. In addition, lack of interaction between those who need knowledge and those who can provide knowledge and lack of rewards and recognition systems that would motivate people to share their knowledge were rated low in terms of barriers to knowledge sharing.

Table 6: Barriers to Knowledge Sharing by Scoring Mean

Barriers to Knowledge Sharing	Mean
There is general lack of time to share knowledge.	3.02
There is no IT system to identify the colleagues with whom I need to share my knowledge.	3.1
Colleague does not share the knowledge because of poor verbal/written communication and interpersonal skills.	3.11
There is a general lack of trust among staff in my university/college	3.13
Colleague in my university/college does not share knowledge because they think having knowledge portray them as powerful	3.13
There is lack of formal and informal activities to cultivate knowledge sharing in my university/college.	3.15
It is difficult to convince colleagues on the value and the benefits of the knowledge that I may possess.	3.16
Academician is reluctant to seek knowledge from their seniors because of the status fear.	3.19
Physical work environment and layout of work areas restrict effective knowledge sharing in my workplace.	3.27
Existing university/college culture does not provide sufficient support for sharing knowledge.	3.34
IT systems and processes are in place in my university/college to share knowledge	3.39
Colleague in my university/college does not share knowledge because of the fear of it being misused by taking unjust credit for it.	3.41
Retention of highly skilled and experienced staff is not a high priority in my university /college.	3.52

There is lack of interaction between those who need knowledge and those who can provide knowledge.	3.61
There is lack of rewards and recognition systems that would motivate people to share their knowledge.	3.69

7.0 CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This study was conducted to explore the current state of knowledge sharing among academics in an Institution of Higher Learning. Knowledge sharing is vital to the success of knowledge management practices in all organizations, inclusive of Institutions of Higher Learning. Effective knowledge sharing among academics is essential for Institutions of Higher Learning. This descriptive research discovered that the academics feel very powerfully about the signification of sharing of knowledge in IHLs. More efforts must be made and awareness must be created to guarantee that people understand the advantages of sharing of knowledge. On the whole, the academics showed a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing. It is interesting to see that although people don't consider knowledge sharing as an additional responsibility and time consuming activity.

On the other hand, a big majority of academics considered that mobile phone technology could be good technology for academics to share knowledge. Finally, this study also hopes to elicit ways and avenues on how to make wireless, mobile, interactive learning more accessible to all academics and students and perhaps at a cheaper cost. The development of better technologies and software on knowledge management and sharing would be able to accelerate the transfer of knowledge among academics. It would also help to improve the creation, sharing and application of organizational knowledge within and between institutions.

The issues moved up here require additional research. Since the survey was limited to one IHL, the outcomes might not be appropriate to all the IHLs. Thus, future research should consider larger sample size from different IHLs. In addition, more studies need to be carried out using other methodology such as interviews.

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