Mechanisms of Knowledge Sharing among Undergraduate Students in UiTM Johor

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Abstract

Studies on knowledge sharing among university students been have recognized as an important and interesting area of study in the academic world, (Wei, 2012). However, there are some elements that prohibit the knowledge sharing process. Ali Jolaee (2013) found that the lack of trust to share knowledge are cause of the lack of reliability on the knowledge resources and uncertainty. The objectives of this study are to identify other factors that may affect the knowledge sharing among undergraduates in UiTM Johor as an extension of the previous study on culture and behaviour factors as the mechanism for knowledge sharing. Total population of undergraduate Students from Faculty of Business Management is 1365 students. 11 per cent consisting of students from four different courses which is Marketing (362 students), Islamic Banking (335 students), Finance (532 students) and Investment (136 students) will be selected as the respondents and questionnaires will be subsequently distribute to selected class. This study will give benefits to the Education Policy, as stated in the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025. The study focuses on the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) concept. With the aims to produce knowledgeable students who are critical and creative in their thinking and can compete at the international level. This study proposed method of research that can be carried out by the future researchers on this topic.

Keywords: Knowledge sharing; culture; behaviours; trust; technology; undergraduate students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Students currently exposed to the variety of resources available that assists them in their learning development. Thus, with the embarking of this information simultaneously leads towards the Knowledge Sharing (KS) activities, especially when there is a high demanding in the education field. Ramachandran, S. D., et al, (2013) in Cronin and Davenport (2001; Goddard, (1998); Rowley, (2000)studies ascertained that higher education by nature has long been regarded as knowledge-intensive organisations since the functions of higher education are always based on the knowledge agenda, that is, knowledge production, codification, and distribution. Tippins(2003),in his study found that universities have traditionally be utilised as transfer mechanisms by providing students with a knowledge base. This will enable students to function and thrive upon graduation. Riege (2005), defined knowledge sharing as the cornerstone of many organizations. Through the centuries, KS has given benefits especially to both individuals and groups (Tohidinia, 2010). Walker (2002) stated that research has provided much evidence that KS collaborative learning results in reflection and learning. All participant benefit in terms of cognitive gains and positive learning outcomes (Rafaeli and Ravid, 2003). Despite growing recognition of the importance of knowledge influences on KS, unfortunately there is a lack of related empirical research in education field. Thus, this study attempts to discover the other factors than culture and behaviour that act as a mechanism affect the knowledge sharing among Undergraduate Students in UiTM Johor.

1.1. Problem Statement

The Deputy Director-General Of Education, Datuk Dr Amin Seninsaid that the transformation of the education curriculum in the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 focuses on the Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) concept which aims to produce knowledgeable students who are critical and creative in their thinking and can compete at the international level (Suhaila Osman, et al., 2014). Students are currently exposed to the variety of resources available that assists them in their learning development. Due this demand, students are encouraged to utilize a sharing concept in their learning style in order to fulfill the goal of Malaysia Education Plan, (Suhaila Osman, et al., 2013). Wei (2012) determined that students may embrace the mentality of hoarding knowledge with competitive advantage against other students. If their unwillingness to share knowledge with peers continues, it is very likely that this may become part of their personality and students may exhibit the same mindset as they continue their studies, or worst, at the workplace. It were supported by Alstyne (2005) when his study found that the lack of trust is an important factor as it is the key to positive interpersonal relationships in various circumstances which encourage knowledge sharing.

1.2. Research Questions

What are the other factors that may affect knowledge sharing among undergraduates in UiTM Johor as an extension of the previous study on culture and behaviour factors as the mechanism for knowledge sharing among undergraduates students in UiTM Johor?

1.3 Objectives

To identify other factors that may affect the knowledge sharing among undergraduates in UiTM Johor as an extension of the previous study on culture and behaviour factors as the mechanism for knowledge sharing among undergraduates students in UiTM Johor.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Knowledge Sharing (KS)

Knowledge sharing defined as the process of exchanging knowledge like skills, experience, and understanding
among researchers, policymakers, and service providers, (Tsui, 2006). Knowledge sharing is becoming increasingly important to ensure that practice and policy are based on sound evidence, not a fake. It was supported by Connelly and Kelloway (2003), knowledge sharing as a set of behaviours that involve the exchange of information or assistance to other. Knowledge sharing contains an element of reciprocity, information sharing can be unidirectional and unrequested. Wei et. al, (2012) in (Behnke, 2006) study refers to knowledge sharing as the dissemination or exchange of explicit or tacit knowledge, ideas, experiences or even skills from one individual to another individual student or group of students. In contrast, knowledge hoarding is the deliberate withholding of knowledge that would benefit others. In addition, Oosterlinck (2004) found that knowledge sharing assists students to receive additional feedback and improves their further research initiatives. Thus enabling undergraduate and postgraduate students to enhance their credibility to change the traditional culture of an organisation, which will ultimately assist them in obtaining a suitable job upon graduation.

2.2 Culture in Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge-sharing culture is necessary for undergraduate and postgraduate students as a learning process (Ma and Yuen, 2011). Studies done by Yang, J. (2007), culture is not genetically inherited, and cannot exist on its own, but is always shared by members of a society. Cultures defined as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another. Connelly and Kelloway (2003), in their findings stated that culture involves what people think, what they do, and the material products they produce. It is share, it is a social phenomenon. Meanwhile, Jervis (2006) claim that culture is that it is learned and transmitted from one generation to the next, rests on the human capacity to think symbolically. Language, perhaps the most important feature, is a symbolic form of communication. Muhammad Sabbir Rahman et. al., (2014) in their study discovered that culture is necessary for undergraduate and postgraduate students in their learning process (Ma and Yuen, 2011). Nevertheless, the success of knowledge sharing depends on the willingness and ability to share knowledge among the members of an organisation and the quality of communication and supporting environment (Lagerström and Andersson, 2003). In reply to that, Wei et al. (2012) and Yuen and Majid (2007) researched knowledge-sharing patterns among public and private university students within the Malaysian and Singaporean context.

2.3 Behaviours in Knowledge Sharing

Kim, S. and Lee, H. (2009) in Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) explained attitude toward a specific behaviour is as a person’s evaluation of that behaviour when deciding to perform it. Behavioural control is the person’s perception of the extent to which she or he has control over a specific behaviour and had a positive effect on intention to share knowledge. Lin and Lee (2004). This were supported by Ryu et al., (2003) when their studies found that people’s intention to share knowledge is a determiner of desired behaviour. According to Wei (2012), suggests that knowledge sharing behavior among university students as a number investigated variables. Nemati et al. (2002) discovered that students share explicit knowledge most of the time. It could be expressed by using written procedures, quantifiable data, and mathematical models. Parekh (2009), indicated that knowledge-sharing behaviour by an individual in an organisation can avoid reinventing research, reduce redundant work and reduce the extra cost of inventions for that particular organisation. Thus, the successful implementation of a knowledge-sharing culture in an academic institution can assist both undergraduate and postgraduate students to increase their credibility in problem-solving and analytical skills (Al-Hawamdeh, 2003; Hogberg and Edvinsson, 1998).

2.4 Technology use in sharing knowledge

While the human aspect is important, technological aspects also deserve consideration. Hendriks (1999) suggests that information and communication technology (ICT) may be helpful to enhance knowledge sharing. It could be done by lowering temporal and spatial barriers between knowledge workers, and improving access to information about knowledge. Cabrera and Cabrera, (2002) stated that modern information and telecommunication technology are available to support knowledge sharing across time and distance. However, it has limited value because it ignores when and how the quality of knowledge sharing will be enhanced. In line with that attitude towards the adaptation of new technology is a vital determinant to facilitate, encourage and support knowledge sharing among
students (Bhatt, 2001; Brazelton and Gorry, 2003; Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002; Han and Anantatmula, 2007; Kim et al., 2003; Riege, 2005). For this reason, Kim and Jarvenpaa (2008) highlighted the importance of technological aspects to enable knowledge-sharing activities in an institution. Muhammad Sabbir Rahman (2014) in Wangpipatwong (2009) also found that technological support, sharing information and degree of competition play significant roles in influencing knowledge-sharing behaviour among the university students. Yuen and Majid (2007) conducted research in Singapore and Wei et al. (2012) conducted a research in Malaysia to discover university students’ knowledge-sharing behaviour. Both surveys found that students extensively used the Internet as a tool to share significant information. Nevertheless, the rapid advancement in distance learning and networking technology has enabled students to exchange knowledge beyond time and space barriers of which they can learn effectively through sharing by questioning and explaining, Soller (2004).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A set of questionnaire will be used for data collection and the Business Management Undergraduates students will be the respondents in this study.

3.1 Proposed Research Framework

This study proposed few variables as indicated in Figure 1, below:

![Image of Figure 1: Basic research framework]

3.2 Quantitative research

This study proposed quantitative method to collect the data. According to Sibanda Nokuthaba (2009), the quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people.

3.3 Population

According to Uma Sekaran (2010), sampling begins with precisely defining the target population. Target population that been chosen normally depends on the objective of the research itself. The research will be conducted in UiTM Johor and focuses on the Undergraduate Students’ from the Faculty of Business Management.

3.4 Population size

The total population Undergraduate Students’ from the Faculty of Business Management is 1365 students. 11 percent from four different courses which is Marketing (257 students), Islamic Banking (338 students), Finance (552 students) and Investment (92 students) from the Faculty of Business Management will be selected as the respondents in this study and questionnaires will be subsequently distributed to selected classes.

3.5 Sampling technique

This study proposed Stratified Random Sampling to be used as the sampling design. This technique is chosen as the
population is made up from four different courses in the Business Management Faculty in UiTM Johor.

3.6 Data analysis
This study proposed SPSS Software Version 22.0 to analyse the data collected.

4.0 CONCLUSION
This study may give clearer more pictures on how Undergraduate students’ in UiTM Johor share their knowledge with their peers. This study also attempts to discover the behaviours of Undergraduate Students’ in UiTM Johor in their learning process. Furthermore, it will divulge on how Undergraduate Students’ in UiTM Johor use technology as an enabler in sharing knowledge via internet and system for their learning process. It is expected that the university’s management could encourage students to fully utilize any available resources for their learning development. At the same time, this study will provide a general understanding towards the management about the knowledge-sharing behavior of Undergraduate Students’ in UiTM Johor. This would be especially important to the academicians for selecting the appropriate learning approaches to encourage more interaction and knowledge sharing culture among students in the class. It is hoped that this study can be expanded to include students from other faculties in UiTM Johor so that the management of UiTM can learn more about the actual information culture that exists among the students during their learning process.

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