

Creativity Mediate the Relationship between Knowledge sharing and Organizational Citizenship Behavior; A case of Public Sector Universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Creativity

Knowledge sharing

Employees exchange knowledge when they are motivated, go beyond formal job description and engaged in organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). OCB is associated with the overall performance of institutions and enhance organizational effectiveness. These types of employee's behavior have important consequences in the workplace, leads to knowledge sharing and creativity. The current study mediates the relationship of KS and creativity in promoting OCBs activities, within public sector universities of Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa (KPK). To test a conceptual model data is collected from 306 faculty members, employed in the public sector universities. The results confirm a positive effect of knowledge sharing on organizational citizenship behaviors. It also reveals a positive effect of KS on creativity, additionally a significant relationship between creativity and OCB. Therefore, study also confirms the mediating linkages of KS and OCB. The study recommends establishment of incubation centers for creativity and knowledge sharing to stimulate OCBs.

INTRODUCTION

Al-Zu'bi (2011) argues knowledge sharing is a process where new ideas, thoughts are generated and shared among the members of organization. Rivera-Vazquez, Ortiz-Fournier et al. (2009) conjure knowledge sharing as a procedure of jointly exchanging explicit and tacit information to create new knowledge. Knowledge is viewed as the most prime resource within dynamic working environment. According to Dehghani, Hayat, Kojuri and Esmi, (2015), knowledge observe as an important assets because it is developed and properly managed within organization. Furthermore, "resource base theory" notice knowledge as key strategic resource (Van Den Hooff and De Ridder 2004). In line with the above discussion, it is significant to investigate how institutions

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acquired, stored, process and manage knowledge sharing (Dehghani, Hayat et al. 2015), and how it influence diverse behaviors.

Inherently, knowledge exists within individuals (Nonaka and Konno 1998) and particularly employees who recognize, access, archive, generate and apply. Consequently, knowledge is shifted to employees and spread in institutions ultimately rely on individuals' knowledge sharing behaviors (Bock, Zmud et al. 2005). Dehghani, Hayat et al. (2015) posit that absence of knowledge sharing may reason serious complications for an institution. Foreseeing inclination to share knowledge is extremely documented as a key objective of organizational theory. Hence, limited knowledge sharing within institutions create a knowledge gape that eventually influences work outcomes (Baird and Henderson 2001). Existing literature within knowledge sharing is pre-occupied with process, concept and explain at macro level, however, little consideration has been given at micro level. Hence, knowledge sharing consequences have been under investigation and entail the attention of researchers (Foss, 2008).

Farooq, Ullah et al. (2017) explain OCB as discretionary work behavior, not rewarded by the institutions. Murtaza *et al.*, 2016 also confirm that knowledge sharing and OCBs are important for the development of any academic institution. This view is also supported by Akturan and Çekmecelioğlu (2016) that KS has a positive impact on the employees OCBs and enhances efficiency, such efficiency contains creative behaviors. Similarly, Akturan and Çekmecelioğlu (2016) argue that creativity is problem solving ability, capacity to generate new ideas and develop new products. They further elaborate that the association between knowledge sharing, OCB and creativity is not explored enough. Therefore, this study aims to explore two such recent propositions i.e. OCB and creativity. Knowledge sharing is likely to influence diverse factors, which are extremely imperative in public sector universities to enhance the overall performance. As tenure track system (TTS) a new job structure is introduced, so a need emerge to study the linkages of KS, OC and OCB.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing denotes the process of sharing expert knowledge, assignment concerned information and feedback to make a pool of knowledge, generate fresh ideas to handle issues, and to obtain mutual goals. It is viewed as an essential resource for constructive contributions, brings novelty, reduces the production cost and eventually leading sustainable institutional growth (Kim

and Park 2017). It is concerned with the disposition of employees to share knowledge with peers which they have generated or acquired (Gibbert and Krause 2002). Wahyudi, Udin et al. (2019) also posit that knowledge sharing occurred where employees are willing to learn (collecting knowledge) and assisting (contributing knowledge) to develop new aptitudes. It is usually shared directly via communication or through a knowledge archive. Sharing of knowledge within institutions cannot be enforced but needs facilitation and encouraging attitudes. Changing employee's behavior is a challenge, organizations encourage such behaviors and wish to enhance knowledge-sharing behavior (Bock, Zmud et al. 2005).

Knowledge sharing is a concept that is not yet enough understood and needs further exploration. Despite its development phase, it is in a second decade and emerging area (Nonaka, 1991). Foss (2008) also conjures that knowledge sharing is still in the stage of preliminary documentation, observation, explanation, a predictable phenomenon and their features and contextual domains are not clear. Therefore the significant variables, associations, inferences and their results are not clear.

In the same vein, OCB is within the scope of exploration in organizations. Though the notion emerges in the late 1980s, but still an emerging concept and has become the focus of consideration in today's contemporary institutions (Akturan and Çekmecelioğlu 2016). Institutions need to be creative, dynamic, efficient and have the ability to respond promptly to creativity. Employees being institutional citizens exhibit creative behaviors in the case of generation and sharing of information (Lapierre and Hackett 2007). Knowledge sharing and OCBs are crucial for employees to show creative behaviors (Akturan and Çekmecelioğlu 2016). In the literature the direct associations have been investigated but there is a vacuum to investigate the inner mediating mechanism of creativity between Knowledge sharing and OCB. Universities are mainly knowledge-intensive, providing opportunity for creativity which ultimately modify diverse behaviors, so the aim of this paper is to study the direct impact of knowledge sharing on OCB and further to confirm the mediating role of creativity between KS and OCB. As Wahyudi, Udin et al. (2019) argue that knowledge sharing is realized and attain through technology and employees, as university is a place where both qualified people and up-to-date technology exist and it is assume that KS and creativity will have impact on OCBs.

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

The optional efforts to perform beyond formal duty refer to organizational citizenship behaviors

(OCBs), offer a path to institutional success (Marinova, Cao et al. 2019). Organ (1988) defined OCB as *“individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization”*.

LePine, Erez et al. (2002) earlier elaborated that OCB is the most necessary behavior in a job. A working environment needs to assist employees in production, encourage creativity, which is essential for organizational emergence. Volunteer behaviors increase efficiency without any financial return (Zeyada 2018), important for institutional sustainability and familiar new employees to organizational norms (Zheng, Yang et al. 2010). Employees having share vision, prefer institutional goals than personal gain exhibits such behaviors (Gaa, 2010).

Murtaza, Abbas et al. (2016) argue that diverse institutional and individual factors influence OCBs. For instances perceived organizational support and justices have a strong impact on OCBs. Similarly, the meta-analysis reveals the effects of personality on OCBs. Furthermore, the last twenty years of research have enriched the empirical and theoretical understanding base on OCBs connection with different cultures, mood states, personalities, attitudes, institutional performance and stress (Organ 2018) and Murtaza, Abbas et al. (2016) highlight organizational and individual issues influences OCBs. So the focus of this exploration is to examine the linkages of knowledge sharing with OCBs and to study the mediating mechanism of creativity.

Creativity

Creativity refers to the generation of new and valuable ideas (Zhou and Shalley 2003). King and Anderson (2002) define creativity as a useful and new idea. Organizational practitioners and mentors have seriously concerned about creativity and work attitudes for the last thirty years. Creativity is essential for endurance where employees apply novel ideas to stimulate efficiency (Wahyudi, Udin et al. 2019). Creativity researchers (for instance, Amabile, 1988) earlier have conjured that employees develop their skills in a specific area to influence output. Afsar and Badir (2017) elaborate that institutions do efforts to develop creative employee to gain sustainable competitive advantage.

Creativity is necessary for the survival and effectiveness of an organization (Anderson, Potočnik et al. 2014). On one side such new ideas are useful for the leader to develop knowledge for creativity. On the other hand, studies have suggested that group creativity is better than individual

and requires the exchange of knowledge among group members (Dong, Bartol et al. 2017). Chuang, Chiang et al. (2019) found a negative connection of creativity with OCBs. Previously, Rosing, Frese, and Bausch (2011) have argued that the results of creativity are inconsistent and found variation in the relationship due to lack of clarification in analyses and needs more exploration. Hence, this study take creativity as mediator.

Relationship of Knowledge Sharing, OCB and Creative Behaviors.

Bolino, Turnley et al. (2002) conjure that OCBs are essential to develop social capital. They elaborate that OCBs contain obedience, sharing knowledge, loyalty which are important for the creation of structural, cognitive and relational aspects of social capital. Social capital inherent among employees and in organizations (Islam, Anwar et al. 2012). OCB improves when employee's assume that institutions have supportive culture, which is also explained by social exchange theory (Akturan and Çekmecelioğlu 2016). The degree to which employees share their learn knowledge among colleague refer to knowledge sharing (Ryu S., Ho S.H., and Han I., 2003). The existence of a common goal, indorses mutual understanding, knowledge sharing and exchange of thoughts (Chow and Chan 2008). Inherently, the exchange of ideas from one employee to another or within departments of organizations significantly contributes to the organizational performance (Argote and Ingram 2000). To facilitate knowledge exchange is a difficult task, a major issue and a challenge for an organization. As it required the willingness of peers to share their scarce information (Lam, A., and Lambermont-Ford, J.P., 2010). Employees demonstrating OCBs feel themselves as an important part of organization and willingly exchange their knowledge with colleagues. This voluntary action influence social deeds which ultimately affect the employee to show creative behaviors. As knowledge sharing is positively associated with creative behaviors and has a significant impact on innovative work attitudes (Radaelli, Lettieri et al. 2014). They further conjure that when individual share the scarce information they become more integrated, translate knowledge rather than merely a passive receivers. Creativity increases through communications with others and with cross-fertilization of concepts (Perry-Smith and Shalley 2003). Creativity occurs due to the creative atmosphere and thinking of the members of the organization (Yulianti 2014).

To realize the theoretical foundations of the study, Social Exchange Theory (1964) and 'Norm of Reciprocity' (1960) offer very significant understanding of the relationships underlying variables.

Literature also indicates the significant relationship of knowledge sharing, OCBs and creativity. However, the literature is silence to test creativity as mediator, hence this paper focus to enrich the literature of knowledge sharing and OCBs through the intervention of creativity as mediator in the public sector universities. The following hypotheses are developed to test.

H1: Knowledge Sharing has a positive significant impact on OCBs.

H2: Knowledge Sharing has a positive significant impact on creativity.

H3: Creativity has a positive effects on OCBs.

H4: Creativity mediates the association between Knowledge sharing and OCBs.

Methodology

The study used survey techniques to get data from 306 participants from various universities in the KPK. Chen, Sykora et al. (2018) refer that survey techniques measure behaviors expanding population sample sizes in a good manner. The main body of this study includes public sector universities in KPK. Total 4039 faculty members are serving in all nineteen universities (Hayat, Jan and Nadeem, 2017), comprising the population for this research. This faculty includes both Tenure Track System (TTS) and Basic Pay Scale (BPS) employees. Basic pay refers to the least sum received by the employees. However, to improve the performance and tendency of faculty toward research and to share their valuable knowledge of academia another pay system naming; TTS was launched in 2002, (Khan and Jabeen 2011). Total 445 questionnaires were randomly distributed among university teachers considering both BPS and TTS faculty. In response 306 usable questionnaires were got back for analysis purposes having a response rate of 69%. A total of 74% of the respondents were male and 26% were female faculty, the average age of the participant was recorded 37 years.

Measures

Van Den Hooff and De Ridder (2004) developed a ten items scale to measure knowledge sharing. It measures both knowledge collecting and donating and has been used in different studies. The present study adopted the same ten items scale, a sample item is “I share the information I have with colleagues within my department.”. To gauge the level of OCBs a fourteen items scale developed by (Williams and Anderson 1991) was used. The sample item is “*this employee takes*

time to listen to co-workers problems and worries”. Employees creativity was measured by Zhou and George’s (2001) 13-item scale was adopted to measure creativity, sample items included “Suggests new ways to achieve goals or objectives” and “Comes up with new and practical ideas to improve performance.”

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1. Means, Standard deviations, Coefficient Alphas, and correlations between variables.

Means, Standard deviations, Coefficient Alphas, and Correlations between Variables					
Variables	M	SD	1	2	3
1 Knowledge sharing	4.71	0.76	(0.71)		
2 Creativity	3.87	0.51	0.63**	(0.81)	
3 OCBs	4.63	0.63	0.69**	0.73**	(0.74)

N=306; Cronbach Alpha in parenthesis

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 above presents the mean, standard deviation Pearson correlations, and reliabilities of the research variables. The outcomes show that all the linkages are in predictable directions. The correlation explains that KS is positively and significantly connected to the OCBs and with creativity respectively OCBs ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$) and creativity ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.01$). In the same vein there is a significant association between creativity and OCBs ($r = 0.73$, $p < 0.01$). The results of Cronbach Alpha values are in an acceptable range. Cronbach Alpha value of knowledge sharing is .71, creativity is .81 and of OCBs 0.74. These results provide preliminary sustenance to the predicted hypotheses.

Table 2. Simple Regression Analysis

	β	t	sig
KS → OCBs	0.70	10.73	0.000
KS → CR	0.65	9.32	0.000
CR → OCBs	0.72	7.87	0.000

KS (knowledge sharing), OCBs (organizational citizenship behaviors), CR (creativity).

Table 2 presents the results of regression analysis. It shows that KS has a significant impact on OCBs ($\beta=0.70$, $p<0.05$), KS also affects CR ($\beta=0.65$, $p<0.05$) and similarly creativity influences OCBs ($\beta=0.72$, $p<0.05$).

Mediating Regression Analysis

Preacher and Hayes (2004) bootstrapping techniques were carried out to verify mediating relationship of creativity between KS and OCBs. As per (Preacher and Hayes 2004), if zero is not included in the 95% CI for indirect effect, mediation is determined. Table 3 below shows the result of the mediation analysis of collected data.

Table3. Mediating Regression Analysis

Path	Total effect	Direct effect	Indirect effect	95% CI	
				Lower level	High level
KS → CR → OCBs	0.73	0.17	0.56	0.43	0.57

The direct impact of KS on OCBs is (.17, $p < .01$) and the indirect result via creativity is significant (.56, $p < .01$, 95% CI=0.43, HI 0.57). The standardized total (direct and indirect) outcome of (KS) on (OCBs) is recorded 0.73, it is due to both direct (unmediated) and indirect (mediated) impact of KS on OCBs, however when creativity increases by 1 standard deviation OCBs increase by 0.73 standard deviations, it is because of both unmediated and mediated effects of KS on OCBs. Hence, this research supported hypothesis (H4) and confirmed that creativity mediated the association of KS and OCBs in the public sector.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study explores a positive significant relationship between KS and OCBs. Akturan and Çekmecelioğlu (2016) confirm the same positive relationship in the higher educational institution in Turkey. Naz, Li et al. (2019), enlarge our understanding of the KS that affect OCBs. Results also enhances our understanding that creativity observes KS and has a positive impact on OCBs in the public sector. Furthermore, the study explores positive linkages of KS with creativity. It is in line with Yu, Yu et al. (2013) research, conducted in Taiwan, which found that knowledge sharing strongly affects employee’s creativity. In the same vein, Kim and Park (2015) argue that knowledge sharing indirectly influences the creative behaviors of employees in organizations. The latest studies confirm the same significant connection of knowledge sharing and creativity (Kim

and Park 2017, Naz, Li et al. 2019) . Therefore, the uniqueness of this study is the exploration of mediating role of creativity between KS and OCBs. Thus it expands our understanding that creativity combine with KS has meaningful effects on the level of OCBs of university teachers and has open avenues for future investigations in other public sector institutions.

Implication and Recommendations

The mediation role of creativity is enforced in the relation of KS and OCBs. Practically the results of this study are essential for universities to encourage KS for OCB behaviors and to create an environment to facilitate creativity. Literature regarding OCBs and creativity suggests that it is extremely imperative for the survival of universities. A strong positive association of KS and OCBs on creative work situations indicates that employees' creativity is likely to improve when there is knowledge sharing culture. Universities need to establish incubation centers, which provide opportunities to generate new ideas and provide bases for KS which ultimately stimulate OCBs. The present study also recommends further investigations to study cyber loafing in the relationship of KS and OCBs and cognitive aspects of OCBs.

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