IDENTIFYING DETERMINANTS OF INTENTION TO SHARING KNOWLEDGE AMONG SALESPEOPLE

Dr. Sasmita Palo
Professor
Centre for Human Resources Management
Tata Institute of Social Sciences
Mumbai -- 88

&

Ms. Linu Charles
Assistant under Training- HR
ITC Ltd.
Saharanpur

Abstract

This article examines role of various economic, socio-psychological and organizational factors that influence a salesperson's intention to share knowledge with others. The Theory of Reasoned Action was used as the theoretical framework for the study. Results indicate that

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subjective norm towards KS has the strongest influence on salesperson's intention to share knowledge. Among the factors that affect attitude towards KS, Perceived Reputation Enhancement was found to have the strongest relationship, followed by Perceived Loss of Knowledge Power. This testifies that before engaging in KS employees carefully weigh in the benefits and costs involved in the process.

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Knowledge is always seen as the most significant asset (Spender & Grant, 1996) and a critical resource to accomplish sustainable competitive advantage in organizations (Davenport & Prusak, 1998 ; Drucker, 1999). It has been multifariously defined such as "justified true belief" (Nonaka, 1994), stock of expertise (Starbuck,1992), and information in action (Elliott & O'Dell, 1999). Knowledge transfer within organizations is regarded as an important driver of firm performance (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Argote et al., 2000). There is growing discernment that KS is critical to knowledge creation, organizational learning, and performance achievement (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002).

Exchange or sharing of knowledge becomes a necessary condition for knowledge creation. Knowledge Sharing (here after referred to as KS) can be defined as individuals sharing organizationally pertinent information, ideas, suggestions, and expertise with one another. Individual knowledge has to first get translated to organizational knowledge for the organization to effectively manage it. The biggest challenge in transferring lessons learned is that knowledge is not always comprehended because the lessons are interlinked to the social processes of their creation: conversations, interactions, and reflections (Ichijo, K. & Nonaka, I., 2007). Mangers implementing process improvement programs or driving Knowledge Management initiatives find it a challenge to get their frontline employees to participate in KS. Cabrera and Cabrera (2002) state that for an employee sharing one's personal insights with co-workers carries some costs which he classifies under the public good dilemma. Social dilemmas are paradoxical situations in which individual rationality leads to collective irrationality (Kollock, 1998).

Sales force is a valuable source of market information for organizations (Evans and Schlater 1985).Salespeople are knowledge brokers (Verbeke et al., 2011) because of their close interactions with customers, they are in a position to feel the pulse of the market. Steward (2008) gives some examples of salesperson expertise. Some might be known for

expertise in closing a sale, while others might have skills in dealing with internal departments within the organization.

Knowledge management in the sales function helps to provide better customer service, reduce response times and leads to greater team work and co-ordination. (Albers ,1997). For a salesperson to perform effective adaptive selling a knowledge structure is required that facilitates the recognition of the different sales situations and access to sales strategies appropriate for each situation (Spiro and Weitz ,1990). Adaptive Selling is defined as the the altering of sales behaviours during a customer interaction based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation" (Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan, 1986). There are two kinds of knowledge related to categories-declarative and procedural knowledge (Chi, 1978; Larkin, 1979). For a salesperson declarative knowledge is like a database which contains attributes describing a type of sales situation. Procedural knowledge indicates what should be done, i.e. the sales approach to be used in a particular sales situation. There is evidence that the declarative and procedural knowledge structures of high performing salespeople are different from low performing salespeople (Szymanski and Churchill, 1990). Hence if sales departments are able to identify the distinctions in the knowledge bases of high performing versus average performers and work towards knowledge transfer it will help increase their sales figures (Ainscough et al., 1996).

According to Davenport, Long and Beers (1998) Knowledge is "intimately and inextricably bound with people's egos and occupations" and sharing it with others in the organization is far from easy. Motivation problems occur because of the way organizations operate, setting people (and in sales, geographical zones) against each other. This competition acts as a disincentive when trying to encourage KS among employees (Hinds, P. & Pfeffer, J., 2003).Employees often keep themselves out of the knowledge market because they believe they benefit more from hoarding their knowledge than they would from sharing

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it (Davenport, T. and Prusak, L. 1998). David, De Long and Fahey (2000) gives the example of Buckman Labs which implemented a KS network to support global sales operations. But before that, the CEO of Buckman Labs had to change the cultural norms which were supportive of hoarding of knowledge as source of power.

Salespeople have been underutilized as information gatherers by organizations (Liu and Comer, 2007). Also many salespeople often do not realize the value of the information they possess (Klompmaker,1980). Hayes and Walsham (2000) reported that sales representatives in a pharmaceutical company were reluctant to engage in KS under the perception that it might be against their interests. Frontline sales employees work towards meeting or exceeding targets for their territories, for which they are rewarded with financial incentives. In addition to this, in many companies sales force are offered rewards such as sales executive of the month. Such practices are designed to induce competition amongst the sales force. Thus for an expert salesperson, cost of sharing expertise in a competitive environment outweighs the benefit of sharing (Hinds & Pfeffer, 2003). A salesperson might be ready to share general information, rules and procedures with co-workers without any hesitation, but he could be reluctant to share any tricks of the trade or influential knowledge that could affect his importance within the organization (Lin, 2007). Downsizing and re-structuring also discourages the employees from sharing their expertise and they tend to hoard information (Bennett and Gabriel,1999). Salespeople spend most part of their time out of office in the markets. This could mean that since salespeople are not in close proximity with other co-workers they are less likely to display extra-role behaviours such as helping others by sharing their knowledge.

The key factors influencing KS behaviour among employees have not been understood completely (Wang and Noe, 2010). Ipe (2003) developed a conceptual framework to understand KS in organizations. According to the author, the four critical factors that affect

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KS between employees are nature of knowledge, motivation to share, opportunities for sharing and the culture of the work environment. She suggested that future research be carried out on factors that influence KS behaviours among individuals in organizations.Despite existing research on salespeople as agents for knowledge accumulation (e.g., Liu & Comer, 2007), little empirical work has been conducted that examines salespeople as knowledge disseminators (sharers). Thus, purpose of the present research is to address this gap by examining different factors that affect salesperson's attitude towards KS and intention to share knowledge.

Theoretical Background

Wang et. al (2010) conducted a narrative review of existing literature on KS across disciplines and found that theory of reasoned action, theory of planned behaviour, social exchange theory, social capital theories were the most frequently used theoretical frameworks to study KS.

According to Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) behaviour of an individual depends on their intention to perform the behaviour. Because of its ability to develop a predictive model for human behaviour, both these theories have been used to study KS behaviours. According to social exchange theory, individuals evaluate the perceived benefits and costs and base their decision to act under expectations of rewards such as reputation, reciprocity etc (Blau, 1964). When an employee decides to share his expertise, it leads to costs such as time and effort spent in the action, perceived loss of knowledge power etc. KS is considered as a social exchange (e.g. Constant et al., 1994; Wasko and Faraj,2005).Hence employees might engage in KS behaviours under the assumption that it will lead to creation of long term relationships of interest (Kankanhalli et al., 2005). Social capital consists of three

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dimensions-structural (connections that exist between actors), relational (manifested as trust, reciprocity) and cognitive dimension manifested as a shared vision and shared language (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Chiu, Tsu and Wang (2006) found that social capital factors lead to a greater quantity of KS.

Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen and Fishbein 1975) was used as the theoretical framework to understand the various factors that affect KS intention. Several studies (Bock et al. 2005; Hsu and Lin 2008) have used Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) as the framework to study the KS behaviours of individuals. According to TRA, the more favourable the attitude and subjective norm with respect to a behaviour, the stronger should be an individual's intention to perform the behaviour under consideration. Attitude refers to the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour in question. It is a combination of one's beliefs regarding the outcomes arising from a behaviour and an evaluation of the desirability of those outcomes. (Ajzen, I., 1991). Subjective Norms are formed from normative beliefs. Normative beliefs are the likelihood that important relevant others would approve or disapprove of an individual performing a given behaviour.

Scope and Objective of the Research

The aim of the study was to validate the research model consisting of various economic, socio-psychological and organizational context factors that are theorised to influence KS behaviours among employees. The study tries to address the following research questions.

I. What are the factors that affect the salesperson's attitude towards KS behaviour?

II. What are the factors that affect the salesperson's subjective norms towards KS behaviour?

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III. What are the antecedents of KS intention among salespeople?

- Does attitude towards KS influence the intention to share knowledge?

- Do subjective norms influence intention to share knowledge? Also, does subjective norms affect attitude of the individual?

- Does organizational climate have a direct relationship on intention to share knowledge?

Hypothesis Development

Wang et al. (2010) did a narrative review of seventy-six qualitative and quantitative studies published from 1998 to 2008 on KS and identified topics that needed future research. Based on literature review and the above topics suggested by Wang et al. (2010) the final constructs for this study were developed. The factors that influence employees' attitude and subjective norms towards knowledge (SNK) sharing can be categorized under three streams: economic, socio-psychological and sociological (Bock et. Al 2005).

a) Economic -Perceived organizational incentives (POI) by the employee was included in this study. This contains extrinsic rewards such as better chances for promotion, salary increase etc.

b) Social -Psychological: Perceived reputation enhancement (PRE), sense of self-worth (SSW), perceived loss of knowledge power (PLK), organizational commitment (OC) and reciprocity norms were included in the study.

c) Sociological: Organizational climate factors such as affiliation (AFN) defined as a climate with pro-social norms and psychological safety (PS) defined as a climate tolerant of mistakes were included in the study.

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Factors affecting attitude towards KS

Perceived Organizational Incentives. It was found that organizational rewards (such as better work assignment, promotion incentive, salary incentive, bonus incentive, or job security) was a significant motivator for employees to contribute to electronic knowledge repositories. (Kankanhalli et al 2005). Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater the perceived organizational incentives are, the more favourable the attitude toward KS will be (Hypothesis 1(a))

Perceived Reciprocal benefits. Concept of reciprocity is based on concept of social exchange (Blau 1964). Bock et. al (2005) conducted an empirical study in Korean organizations and found that anticipated reciprocal relationships significantly affected their attitudes toward KS. Maclure Wasko and Faraj (2000) asked participants of online newsgroups to provide reasons as to why they participate and help others. Content analysis of the comments received showed that 'giving back to community in return for help' was the most cited reason for contributing knowledge. Quantitative study conducted among members of a professional virtual community showed that reciprocity increased individuals' quantity of KS. (Chiu et al. 2006). Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater the anticipated reciprocal benefits are, the more favourable the attitude toward KS will be (Hypothesis 1 (b))

Perceived Reputation Enhancement. People participate in electronic networks of practice and share personal knowledge to increase their reputation (Donath 1999). Wasko and Faraj (2005) conducted a study on knowledge contribution in an electronic network of practice and found that the perception of enhancing one's professional reputation had a significant impact on KS. However, Kankanhalli et al (2005) found that Image (reputation enhancement) did not significantly affect the employees' contribution to the electronic repositories. Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater the perceived reputation enhancement, the more favourable the attitude toward KS will be (Hypothesis 1 (c)).

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Perceived Loss of knowledge power. "If knowledge is power, then the owners of knowledge have power that may dissipate if other people come to know what they know." (Davenport, T. and Prusak, L. 1998).Loss of knowledge power was found not to be a major concern of employees while contributing to the knowledge repositories (Kankanhalli et al 2005). In a study done in the United States, it was found that perceived loss of knowledge power had a significant negative effect on attitude towards KS. (Chennamaneni et al, 2012).There seems to exists a negative relationship between perceived loss of knowledge power and attitude towards KS. Thus it is hypothesised that: The greater the perceived loss of knowledge power, the less favourable the attitude toward KS will be (Hypothesis 1(d)).

Organizational Commitment. Mowday et al.(1979) define organizational commitment as 'the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in a particular organization'. MacKenzie , Podsakoff and Ahearne (1998) studied extra-role behaviours among salespeople. A positive relationship was found between organizational commitment and the extra role behaviours performed by the salesperson voluntarily. Greater commitment may produce beliefs that the organization has rights to the knowledge one has created or acquired Jarvenpaa and Staples (2001). Van den Hooff and Van Weenen, (2004) found affective commitment to be an important determinant of knowledge donating behaviour. In two separate studies done in Taiwan, it was found that organizational commitment had a positive effect on KS intention (Tsai and Cheng 2012) and lack of organizational commitment lead to low levels of KS (Lin 2007)**.** Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater organizational commitment, the more favourable the attitude toward KS will be (Hypothesis 1 (e)).

Factors affecting subjective norms towards KS

Sense of Self Worth. Bock et al (2005) defined sense of self-worth as the degree of one's positive cognition based on one's feeling of personal contribution to the organization.

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Bock et al (2005) in their study of KS behaviours among managers found that sense of self-worth through KS behaviour was positively related to subjective norm to share knowledge. Thus when employees share their knowledge with co-workers, they attain confidence that their knowledge can help to solve job-related problems (Constant et. al 1996) Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater the sense of self-worth, the greater the subjective norm to share knowledge will be (Hypothesis 2).

Organizational Climate. Studies have shown that organizational climate plays a significant role in employees' KS behaviour. (Orlikowski 1993, Constant et al. 1996 Lee and Al-Hawamdeh 2002). Bock et al (2005) found that organizational climate (operationalized as fairness, innovativeness, and affiliation) exerts a strong influence on the formation of subjective norms regarding KS. Organizational climate was found to have a significant impact on subjective norms to share knowledge (Chennamaneni et. al, 2012). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) states that external factors like organisational climate affects the normative beliefs held by employees.

Affiliation. Affiliation is defined as the perception of a sense of togetherness among an organization's members, which consists of caring and pro-social behaviour, being receptive to ideas, co-operate and maintain harmony (Murray 1938). It was found to be one of the organizational context factors that influenced KS among employees (Bock et al. 2005) Szulanski, G. (1996) studied best-practice transfers in companies and found that an arduous (i.e., distant) relationship as a major barrier towards transfer of knowledge within a firm.

Psychological Safety. Siemsen et al. (2009) defined psychological safety as an employee's belief that a dyadic relationship is safe for interpersonal risk taking such as admitting mistakes to a co-worker or sharing potentially inaccurate knowledge with him. Taylor and Wright (2004) found that a capacity to learn from failure were positively related to effective KS. Edmondson (1999) established the link between team psychological safety

and learning behaviours of employees such as admitting errors made, asking for help etc. Creating an organizational climate which employees consider psychologically safe to share knowledge is important for fostering KS among employees. Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater the extent to which the organizational climate is perceived to be characterized by psychological safety and affiliation, the greater the subjective norm to share knowledge will be (Hypothesis 3).

Antecedents of Intention to share knowledge

Attitude towards KS. Bock et al. (2005) described attitude towards KS as the "degree of one's positive feelings about sharing one's knowledge". Yang (2008) conducted a study on individual attitudes towards KS among employees working in tourist hotels in Taiwan. It was found that a positive attitude to Sharing was associated with KS. Attitude towards KS has been found to have the strongest influence on KS intentions among employees (Jeon et al. 2011; Chennamaneni et. al 2012). Thus it is hypothesized that: The more favourable the attitude toward KS is, the greater the intention to share knowledge will be (Hypothesis 4).

Subjective Norms toward KS. Subjective norms refer to the 'perceived social pressure' to perform or not to perform the behaviour. Employees who perceive their co-workers and supervisors to value KS feel more inclined to share their knowledge (Cabrera et al., 2006). Ryu, Ho and Han (2003) studied KS among physicians and empirically showed that subjective norm had the strongest effect on their behavioural intentions to share knowledge. Subjective norms have been shown to have significant relationship with intention to share knowledge (Bock et al., 2005; Tohidinia 2010; Chennamaneni et al., 2012).Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater the subjective norm to share knowledge is, the greater the intention to share knowledge will be (Hypothesis 5)

Attitude- Subjective Norm. There is empirical evidence that attitude and subjective norm are correlated. Subjective norms lead to internalization, where the individual

incorporates the opinion of a significant other as part of her own belief structure (Lewis et al., 2003). Several studies (Shepherd and O'Keefe, 1984; Shimp and Kavas, 1984; Vallerand et al., 1992 and Venkatesh and Davis, 2000) have found that there is a significant causal path from subjective norms to attitude. Bock et al (2005) found that as the subjective norms towards KS became higher, the attitude toward KS became more favourable. Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater the subjective norm to share knowledge is, the more favourable the attitude toward KS will be (Hypotheses 6).

Organizational Climate –Intention. Bock et al (2005) empirically found that organizational climate directly affects (although less strongly) individuals' intentions to engage in KS behaviours. Hence under this context, organizational climate can directly affect employees' intention to share knowledge. Thus it is hypothesized that: The greater the extent to which the organizational climate is perceived to be characterized by psychological safety and affiliation, the greater the intention to share knowledge will be (Hypothesis 7).

The proposed research model is shown in Figure 1.

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Figure 1: Proposed Research Model of KS Intention
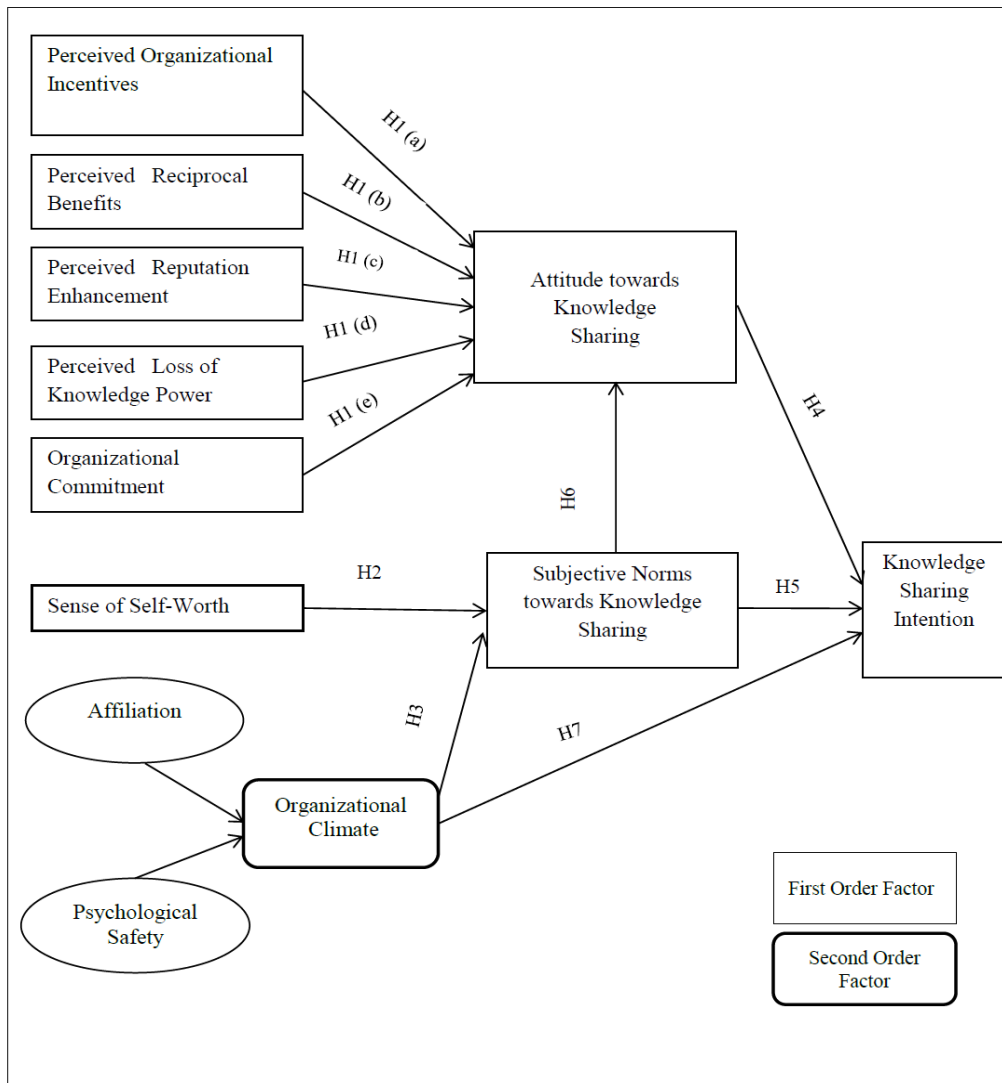
Research Design

This is an explanatory study designed to check the predictive power of the proposed research model. It also tests various hypotheses which were developed based on literature on KS. Survey method (cross-sectional) was used to gather data from the respondents. The survey was administered to salespeople across sectors such as Insurance, Pharmaceuticals, Banking, Engineering and Manufacturing. Individuals with a minimum of one year of experience in sales were considered as eligible for the study. A total of 157 individuals

participated in the survey. Of these 23 responses had to be removed on account of various reasons. 77% of the respondents were male and 23% were female sales employees Majority of the respondents (45%) belonged to sales function of insurance companies. This was followed by Banking and Non-Banking Financial Companies (10.4%) and Manufacturing/Engineering and Automobile companies (10.4%).The measures used to operationalize various constructs were taken from previously validated instruments (see Table1). The reliabilities shown in the table were reported by the individual researchers in their papers. As can be seen, the reliabilities exceed the recommended value of 0.70, providing support for the validity of the measures used in the research. The items for the constructs are based on a 7 point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Multiple items and reverse coding was used to increase accuracy of responses.

Table 1: Survey Instrument Development

No	Constructs	Items	Measure(s) taken from	Composite Reliability/ Chronbach Alpha
1	Perceived Organizational Incentives	4	Adapted from Chennamaneni et. al (2012)	0.94
2	Perceived Reciprocal Benefits	3	Chennamaneni et. al (2012)	0.84
3	Perceived Loss of Knowledge Power	4	Chennamaneni et. al (2012)	0.96
4	Perceived Reputation Enhancement	6	Chennamaneni et. al (2012)	0.90
5	Organizational Commitment	6	Lin (2007) based on Porter et. al (1974)	0.89
6	Sense of Self-Worth	5	Bock et al (2005)	0.911
7	Affiliation	4	Chennamaneni et. al (2012)	0.89
8	Psychological Safety	3	Siemson et al (2009)	0.88
10	Attitude towards knowledge sharing	5	Chennamaneni et. al (2012)	0.90
11	Subjective Norm towards knowledge sharing	4	Adapted from Chennamaneni et. al (2012)	0.93
13	Intention towards knowledge sharing	4	Adapted from Chennamaneni et. al (2012)	0.91

Data Analysis

Selection of Data Analysis Technique. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used for analysing the data as it can be used for both theory testing and theory development. SEM

also allows the creation latent variables. Latent variables are theoretical constructs that cannot not be measured directly (eg: organizational climate, behavioural intentions). In this study we develop and test a theoretical model that could predict KS intention. PLS was used as the primary analysis technique in this study. PLS is similar to regression, but simultaneously models the structural paths (i.e., theoretical relationships among latent variables) and measurement paths (i.e., relationships between a latent variable and its indicators). Thus PLS allows simultaneous assessment of the structural model as well as the measurement model. PLS also places minimal demands on measurement scales and sample size (Chin and Newsted 1999) The sample size taken was more than the recommended minimum of 10 times the number of antecedent constructs leading to an endogenous construct. (Barclay et al., 1995). As done by Bock et. al (2005) and Chennamaneni et. al (2012) a second order formative construct was created in Smart PLS for organizational climate using affiliation and psychological safety.

Convergent Validity. First the loadings of individual items to their respective constructs were evaluated. 42 of the original 48 items had loadings greater than 0.70, which is the recommended figure (Chin, 1998). There were two items both having loadings 0.692 and one item with loading 0.687(which is ~0.69). Since these values were quite close to the recommended value of 0.70, it was decided to retain them in the model. 6 items having loadings less than 0.70 were removed from the model. They are POI1, OC2, OC4, SNK3, SNK4, ATK3. The trimmed model was then re-evaluated. The weights, loadings, standard errors and t-values for the items are shown in table 2. Table 2 shows the loadings of the individual measurement items to their respective constructs. They are well over the recommended level of 0.70. Item loadings of 0.70 or higher imply that more than 50% of the variance is shared between the measurement item and its theorized construct (Barclay et al., 1995).

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Table 2 : Weights and Loadings of the Measures

Construct	Items	Weight	Loading	Standard Error	T -value
Perceived Organizational Incentives (POI)	POI2	0.5092	0.8233	0.26	3.1665
	POI3	0.0676	0.8127	0.2976	2.7309
	POI4	0.6039	0.8706	0.2611	3.3349
Perceived Reciprocal Benefits (PRB)	PRB1	0.6173	0.8841	0.0557	15.8726
	PRB2	0.3492	0.7268	0.1191	6.1041
	PRB3	0.2785	0.7197	0.1123	6.4097
Perceived Reputation Enhancement (PRE)	PRE1	0.2036	0.7815	0.0628	12.4479
	PRE2	0.2207	0.7506	0.0455	16.5079
	PRE3	0.2455	0.7594	0.0571	13.3009
	PRE4	0.262	0.8614	0.0268	32.142
	PRE5	0.2404	0.7596	0.054	14.07
	PRE6	0.1164	0.6918	0.0804	8.6077
Perceived Loss of Knowledge Power (PLK)	PLK1	0.2511	0.8945	0.0292	30.6384
	PLK2	0.3155	0.841	0.044	19.1286
	PLK3	0.3281	0.8689	0.0321	27.0721
	PLK4	0.2636	0.8532	0.0355	24.0235
Sense of Self Worth(SSW)	SSW1	0.3281	0.7366	0.05	14.7194
	SSW2	0.207	0.7311	0.0584	12.5244
	SSW3	0.2613	0.7693	0.0451	17.053
	SSW4	0.2307	0.8238	0.0472	17.4523
	SSW5	0.254	0.8498	0.0369	23.0523
Affiliation (AFN)	AFN1	0.2917	0.8336	0.0367	22.7075
	AFN2	0.2836	0.8582	0.0312	27.5461
	AFN3	0.3097	0.8314	0.0249	33.3753
	AFN4	0.2951	0.8677	0.0224	38.8
Psychological Safety(PS)	PS1	0.3955	0.8836	0.041	21.5547
	PS2	0.3651	0.9341	0.0187	50.0854
	PS3	0.3474	0.891	0.0255	34.9614
Organizational Climate (OC)	OC1	0.564	0.8288	0.0262	31.6599
	OC2	0.619	0.8603	0.0179	48.0655
Attitude towards Knowledge Sharing(ATK)	ATK1	0.3119	0.7919	0.0378	20.9634
	ATK2	0.4078	0.847	0.0231	36.6773
	ATK4	0.2592	0.7021	0.0907	7.7389
	ATK5	0.305	0.7394	0.065	11.3832
Subjective Norm towards KS(SNK)	SNK1	0.5482	0.942	0.0123	76.2819
	SNK2	0.5175	0.9346	0.012	77.5961
Intention to Share Knowledge(INT)	INT1	0.3391	0.7426	0.0561	13.2383
	INT2	0.3059	0.8367	0.0345	24.2428
	INT3	0.2797	0.6866	0.0625	10.9932
	INT4	0.3545	0.8466	0.0288	29.4446

Convergent Validity was then assessed by measuring the composite reliability and average variance extracted from the measures (Hair et al, 1998). In PLS analysis, 0.7 is the minimum accepted level of reliability (Chin, 1998) and 0.5 is the minimum acceptable level of the AVE (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). In this study, the composite reliabilities ranged from 0.823 to 0.936 and the AVE values from 0.591 to 0.880 (See Table 3).

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Table 3: Composite Reliabilities & Average Variance Extracted of the Constructs

Construct	No. of Items	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Perceived Organizational Incentives (POI)	3	0.874	0.699
Perceived Reciprocal Benefits (PRB)	3	0.823	0.609
Perceived Reputation Enhancement (PRE)	6	0.896	0.591
Perceived Loss of Knowledge Power (PLK)	4	0.922	0.748
Sense of Self Worth(SSW)	5	0.888	0.614
Affiliation (AFN)	4	0.911	0.719
Psychological Safety(PS)	3	0.930	0.816
Organizational Climate (OC)	2	0.871	0.628
Attitude towards Knowledge Sharing(ATK)	4	0.855	0.596
Subjective Norm towards Knowledge Sharing(SNK)	2	0.936	0.880
Intention to Share Knowledge(INT)	4	0.861	0.610

Discriminant Validity. Discriminant validity is used to find the extent to which one construct is different from all the other constructs present in the model. The bolded diagonal elements in the table 4 represent the square root of the AVE scores. For each variable, the square root of the AVE value was larger than the correlation coefficient values with any other variable. This verifies the discriminant validity.

Table 4 : AVE and Correlation between Constructs

	AFN	ATK	INT	OC	PLK	POI	PRB	PRE	PS	SNK	SSW
AFN	**0.848**										
ATK	0.369	**0.772**									
INT	0.347	0.470	**0.781**								
OC	0.442	0.420	0.190	**0.793**							
PLK	-0.224	-0.383	-0.169	-0.352	**0.865**						
POI	0.260	0.148	0.071	0.265	-0.067	**0.836**					
PRB	0.284	0.259	0.174	0.084	-0.041	0.089	**0.781**				
PRE	0.325	0.452	0.154	0.502	-0.300	0.454	0.139	**0.769**			
PS	0.436	0.290	0.461	0.131	-0.237	0.211	0.219	0.158	**0.903**		
SNK	0.418	0.389	0.541	0.175	-0.064	-0.030	0.244	0.202	0.400	**0.938**	
SSW	0.259	0.408	0.515	0.336	-0.305	0.211	0.159	0.353	0.268	0.499	**0.784**

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Structural Model. The structural model indicates the causal relationships among the latent constructs in the research model. R-square value of the dependent variables indicates the predictive power of the model and the path co-efficient show the strength of the hypothesized relationships. Bootstrapping procedure is used to estimate the statistical significance of the PLS path model coefficients. If the size of the empirical t-value is above 1.96, we can assume that the path coefficient is significant at a significance level of 5 per cent. Results of the PLS analysis is shown in Figure 2.

The model was able to explain 40.2 % of the variance in the behavioural intention to share knowledge. Previous studies (Chennamaneni et al., 2012), Jeon et al., (2011) and Bock et al. (2005) which have used Theory of Planned Behaviour or Theory of Reasoned Action explained 60%, 34% and 31% variance in the intention to share knowledge respectively.The research model was able to explain 40% variance in the attitude towards KS. Organizational climate (consisting of affiliation and psychological safety) along with sense of self-worth was able to explain 37% variance in the subjective norms towards KS. The findings related to various indicators are explained in detail below.

Among the various factors influencing attitude towards KS, perceived reputation enhancement had the strongest influence (0.237). This was followed by perceived loss of knowledge power in the negative direction (-0.231). No relationship was found between organizational incentives and attitude towards KS. Organizational commitment and perceived reciprocal benefits exhibited moderate influence on attitude towards sharing of knowledge. Sense of self-worth was found to have the strongest influence (0.386 on subjective norms to share knowledge. Employees with a strong sense of knowledge self-efficacy who seem to value their knowledge contribution to the organization are more likely to engage in KS.

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Figure 2 : Results of PLS Analysis
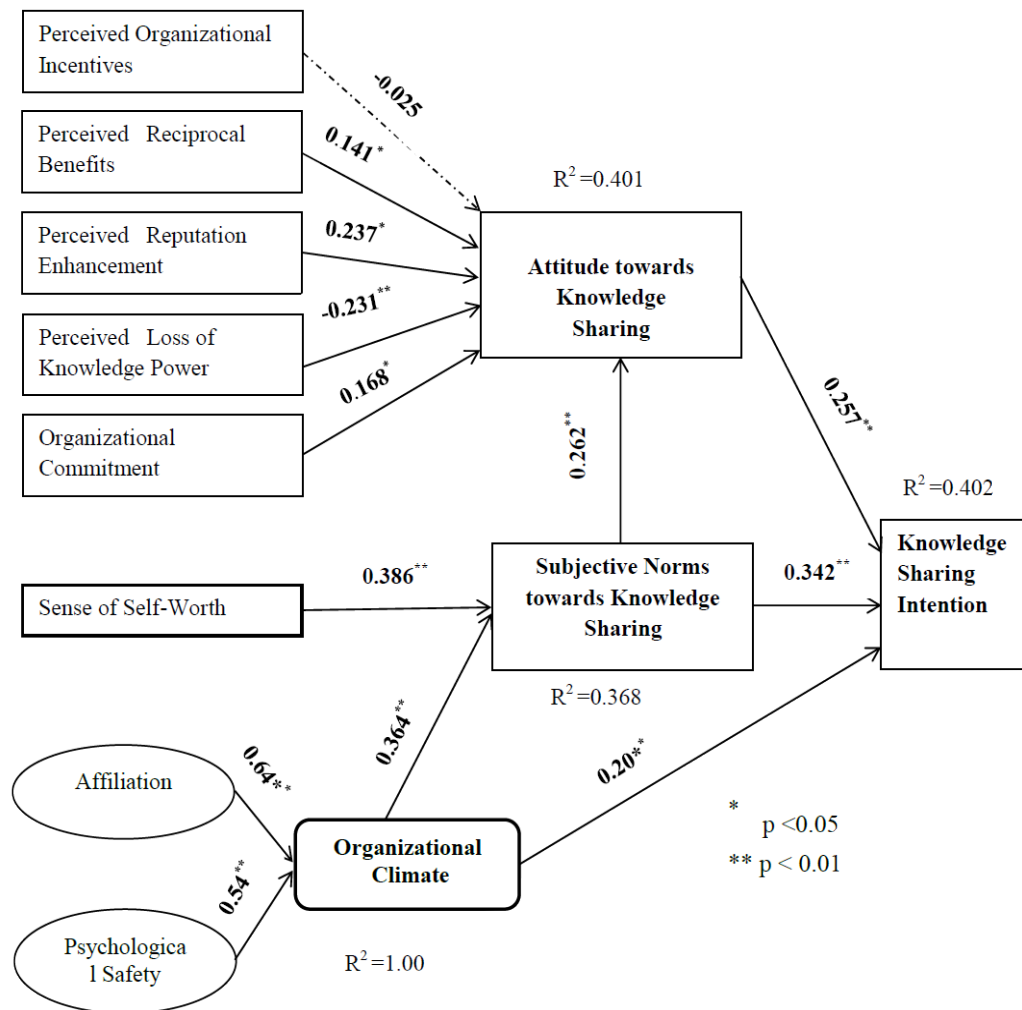
Organizational climate also had a strong influence (0.364) on subjective norms. An environment of affiliation among team members and psychological safety is positively related to subjective norms to share knowledge.

Among the determinants linked to KS intention, subjective norms had the strongest influence (0.342). This finding is consistent with that of Lee et al. (2006) and Cabrera et al. (2006) who found that among various organizational variable , normative pressures (i.e, perceptions of support from colleagues and supervisors towards KS) had the strongest influence on employees' motivation to share knowledge. This was followed by attitude

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towards KS (0.257). Organizational climate also had a moderate influence on intention to share knowledge (0.20).

National culture influences person's actions by affecting the values towards which their actions are oriented. Collectivism is one of the dimensions of national culture. It stands for a society where qualities such as interdependence, loyalty, and identification with the in-group are strongly emphasized (Hofstede, 2001). In collectivist cultures, individuals feel a moral obligation towards their in-group and knowledge is expected to be shared within the in-group (Littrell, 2002). Individuals in such cultures were found to be willing to share their knowledge with members of their in-group (Chow et al., 2000). India's culture is highly collectivistic and this could be a reason why subjective norms were found to have the strongest influence on salesperson's intention to share knowledge.

Subjective norms were also found to be positively related to attitude towards KS. This finding is consistent with that of Ryu et al. (2003) and Bock et al. (2005) that in an organizational setting, the opinions of important referent groups regarding any behaviour not only affects the intentions of the employee to perform the behaviour but also influences the attitudes of the employees towards the particular behaviour. Bock et al. (2005) also showed that while studying employee behaviours organizational climate factors affect behavioural intention directly as well as indirectly through subjective norms. This was validated by the results of this study which showed that organizational climate had a moderate direct relationship (0.20) with intention to share knowledge and a significant relationship (0.36) with subjective norms towards sharing.

The study showed how different factors such as social exchange (norms of reciprocity), cognition of sense of self-worth (self-efficacy), social image (reputation enhancement) and organizational climate (group togetherness and an environment tolerant

of mistakes and perceived as safe for risk taking influence the salesperson's intention to share knowledge. It also showed how national culture dimensions such as collectivism and strong in-group orientations in a country like India affect employee behaviours. In line with this, subjective norms were found to have the strongest influence on intention to share knowledge. It also showed that along with attitudes and norms regarding KS, a supportive organizational climate has a direct influence on an employee's intention to share knowledge. The findings provide useful insights into how organizations should invigorate employees' concerted behaviours or activities so as to create a favourable organizational climate that will in turn enhance attitude and intention to engage in KS leading to benefits for the organization as a whole.

Implications for Practice

Sense of self-worth of an employee has a strong influence on intentions to share knowledge indirectly through subjective norms. It is important for employees to develop knowledge self-efficacy in order to feel motivated to share their personal knowledge .Efficacy of the contributions can be increased by providing feedback to the employee every time others successfully use their contributions. Training programmes are useful to make employees aware of what kind of knowledge will be helpful, if shared (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002).

Organizational climate plays a key role in encouraging or inhibiting KS behaviours. Employees who have strong affiliation with their team and working in an environment that is tolerant of mistakes and learning from them will have a stronger intention to share knowledge. Face to face communication between staff was found to be one of the critical success factors of an organizational culture that encourages KS (Al-Alawi, 2007). However, salespeople especially the frontline employees spend a substantial part of their time out of

their office in the markets.. Hence it is suggested that organizations should provide salespeople are sufficient opportunities to interact with each other by arranging sales team meetings, informal gatherings etc. Encouraging unstructured and spontaneous transfer of knowledge is vital to a firm's success. Management often considers water cooler conversations by employees a waste of time. (Davenport, T. and Prusak, L. 1998) It is also important to communicate the success stories that have come out of KS. Create stories and heroes and use them to motivate people to participate. (Van der Spek and Kingma, J. 2000).

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of the study was that a substantial percentage of the participants (45.5%) were salespeople belonging to the Insurance sector. A more uniform sample where salespeople belonging to various sectors are more or less equally covered could have made the results more generalizable. Also, the study measured only willingness (or intention) to share knowledge among participants and not their actual KS behaviours. The future researches can take care of these limitations.

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