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Original Research Article

Impact of Knowledge Sharing on Innovative Work Behaviour: Evidence from Private Universities of Bangladesh

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Abstract: The study aims to investigate the impact of knowledge sharing (KS) on employees' innovative work behavior. To conduct this research, 90 respondents from 4 private universities of the Sylhet region of Bangladesh were surveyed conveniently through a structured questionnaire; then the responses were analyzed by conducting correlation and regression analysis using SPSS software to test the hypotheses. Correlation analysis reveals that the two dimensions of knowledge sharing i.e., knowledge donation, and knowledge collection has a significant and positive relationship with the innovative work behavior of faculty members, besides regression analysis shows that the two dimensions of knowledge sharing depicted in the model explain about 34 percent of innovative work behavior among the academics of private universities. It has also been found that knowledge collection (KC) has comparatively more influence on employee's innovative work behavior (IWB) than knowledge donation (KD). Therefore, findings of this study have significant implications to the university authority to ensure sustainable competitive advantage over rivals through academics' innovative work behavior by cultivating a knowledge sharing culture among their institutions.

Keywords: knowledge sharing, knowledge donation, knowledge collection, innovative work behavior, Bangladesh.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's hyper-competitive and the dynamic global economy an organization's success, performance, survival, and sustainability are determined mainly by its employees' innovative work and creativity (Mehmood, 2016, Raykov, 2014, Skerlavaj *et al.,* 2019,). Since Innovative work behavior facilitates the exploration, creation, championing, and execution of valuable and unique ideas to develop new work practices and procedures, products, and services and thus helps to adapt and craft a proactive response to evolving challenges and problems of today's fluctuating market trends, high customer expectations, and growing global competition (Janssen, 2000, Battistelli *et al.,* 2019; Akbari *et al.,* 2020). Organizations are highly interested in investigating the factors influencing employees' innovative behavior like knowledge-sharing behavior (Agarwal, 2014).

Bangladesh has experienced a paradigm shift in higher education when private universities were allowed to establish and operate which currently accounts to 105 private universities enrolling more students than the public universities making the private university education highly competitive than ever before. Unlike public universities, since private universities are not entitled to receive any funding from the governments. Hence, it mounts competitive pressures on the private universities to generate revenue for their survival and success by ensuring high students' enrolment through continuous innovation and efficient delivery of high quality services. In doing so, faculty members of these institution can play the key role in generating, and sharing knowledge through their active engagement in teaching, research, pedagogical innovations, publications, and consultation (Jolaee *et al.,* 2014; Al-Kurdi *et al.,* 2018). Moreover, knowledge sharing among academics is vital to strategic planning, curriculum development, quality of academic programs, quality of teaching & learning, collaborative research, innovation, academic excellence, and competitiveness of higher education institutions (Buckley, 2012; Howell and Annansingh, 2013; Tan, 2016). Despite this, to the best of

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researcher's knowledge, no previous studies investigated the impact of knowledge sharing particularly knowledge collecting and knowledge donating on the innovative work behaviour of faculty members of private universities of Bangladesh. To fill this void in the literature, the study has been undertaken to examine the effects in the said relationship of the variables. This study contributes to the literature by exploring the impact of two dimensions of knowledge sharing i.e. knowledge collecting and knowledge donating as predictors of academics' innovative behaviour in private universities of Bangladesh. Practically this study contributes by suggesting private university authorities to facilitate and cultivate the knowledge sharing culture in the organization to stimulate innovative work behaviour of the faculty members which will ensure their sustainability. Finally the study presents the research limitations and future research directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Innovative Work Behaviour

Innovation has been considered the prime condition for organizational sustainability in the 21st century (Nakano and Wechsler, 2018). Consequently, innovative capacity enables an organization to achieve a competitive advantage by exploiting advanced technologies and knowledge assets (Teece, 2014). Therefore, creating and fostering innovation has long been a key task for all top organizations, regardless of structure, culture, nature, or size (Kang *et al.,* 2015). However, an organization's ability to innovate mostly depends on the extent of innovative work behavior (IWB) of individual employees (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). According to De Jong and Den Hartog (2008), IWB refers to "an individual's behavior directed to achieve the initiation and intentional introduction of novel and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures within a work role, group or organization. It is also defined as the "deliberate generation, promotion, and realization of novel ideas in the workplace" (Janssen, 2000; Scott & Bruce, 1994; West & Farr, 1989). Three vital elements of innovative work behavior i.e. creation, promotion, and implementation of novel ideas that benefit the organizations have been identified in the definition (Janssen, 2000, 2004; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Yuan & Woodman, 2010). The idea generation stage may include all those issues that are aimed at refining new products, organizational practices, and services and are greatly affected by the enthusiasm level of employees. The idea promotion stage provides strength to those generated ideas and strives to eliminate organizational resistance and barriers to bringing change (Shane, 1994). Stronger organizational support and teamwork are required in this stage. Finally, the idea realization stage helps in bringing the generated and promoted ideas into practical reality and results in the development of new products, services, and job procedures (Janssen, 2000). Previous studies have suggested that in a rapidly changing world employee innovative work behavior serves as a sustainable competitive advantage for organizations that provides the firms with long-term survival and success (Abstein & Spieth, 2014).

2.2 Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is an extensively discussed concept in the management literature. It is viewed as a process or operational behavior through which individuals mutually exchange their knowledge i.e. information, skills, and expertise (Mirzaee and Ghaffari, 2018; van den Hooff and de Ridder, 2004). In an organizational context, knowledge sharing among employees entails the exchange of valuable tacit or explicit knowledge that leads to new knowledge creation, develops organizational knowledge repertoire, and brings benefits to the organization. To say specifically, knowledge sharing boosts innovativeness at the individual (Kim and Park, 2017) and organizational (Lin, 2007; Michna, 2018; Pittino *et al.,* 2018) levels. Knowledge sharing is recognized as the "provision of task information and know-how to help others and to work together with others to solve problems, develop new ideas or execute policies or procedures" (Cummings, 2004). Knowledge sharing is a multi-directional process that involves the donor and collector of knowledge. Therefore, it is not only collecting knowledge but also donating knowledge to others. In the present study, knowledge sharing is defined as knowledge donating and knowledge collecting. Knowledge donating is defined as "One's spontaneous and deliberate communication to transfer his/her intellectual capital", whereas, knowledge collecting is identified as" an attempt to convince other individuals to share their intellectual capital or what they know" (van den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004). Both processes are distinct in nature as knowledge donating is engaged in dynamic communication with others in order to transfer knowledge, whereas; knowledge collecting is consulting others for the purpose of encouraging them to share their intellectual capital (Alhady, Idris, Sawal, Azmi, & Zakaria, 2011; Yesil& Dereli, 2013).

2.3 Innovative Work Behaviour and Knowledge Sharing

The extant literature substantiates that knowledge sharing is a significant process influencing the enhancement of innovativeness both at the organizational level (Michna, 2018; Pittino *et al.,* 2018; Zhao *et al.,* 2020) and at the individual level (Anser *et al.,* 2020; Kim and Park, 2017; Mura *et al.,* 2013; Radaelli *et al.,* 2014; Rao Jada *et al.,* 2019). Andreeva and Kianto (2011) confirmed that higher innovation capabilities were achieved by sharing knowledge with strategic partners and systematically informing employees about changes in procedures, instructions, and regulations. Alhady *et al.,* (2011) observed that, the organization that supports its employees for contributing knowledge within groups and organizations is likely to create new and better ideas and encourage new business opportunities, hence enabling organizational innovation activities. Mura *et al.,* (2013) found knowledge sharing positively related to

innovative work behavior. However, knowledge sharing not only lets the employees pass the knowledge to other workers but also enables others to acquire beneficial knowledge (Kuo *et al.*, 2014). Considering knowledge donating and knowledge sharing, Kamasak and Bulutlar (2010), found the effects of knowledge sharing on innovation. Their multiple regression analysis showed a positive and significant effect of knowledge collecting on all types of innovation; though, knowledge donating was found to have no effect on innovation. Knowledge sharing by generating key information ultimately facilitates and predicts organizational innovation (O'Cass *et al.*, 2013; Kuo *et al.*, 2014). While Co-workers share their knowledge with others they not only supply them with information but also combine, elaborate, and translate it into a clear and relevant form (Hansen, Mors & Lovas, 2005). Similarly, when the individual collects knowledge from others, he/ she improve his/her ability to innovate (Radaelli *et al.*, 2014). Thus, it can be assumed that knowledge donating and knowledge collecting positively impact the innovative work behavior of individuals in organizations. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Knowledge donating is positively and significantly impacts employee innovative behaviour.

H2: Knowledge collecting positively and significantly impacts employee innovative behaviour.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design, Sample, and Data Collection

A quantitative cross-sectional survey research design has been adopted to achieve the study objectives. Data were collected from the target participants who are the faculty members (lecturer, senior lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor) working in four private universities in Sylhet a north-eastern region of Bangladesh by employing a self-reported response. Using convenience sampling, a structured questionnaire was distributed to 110 respondents who were given two weeks to respond. To ensure maximum participation with sincere responses and to avoid any types of response bias and error questionnaire included a separate section mentioning the general purpose of the study and the necessary instructions and a promise to keep the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents. Finally, 95 questionnaires were received, representing a response rate of 86.36%, of which 90 questionnaires were found usable for the study. Hence, the sample size for the study is 90.

3.2 Profile of the respondents

Table-1: Respondents' Profile

Demographics	Description	Frequency (N=90)	Percentage (%)
Gender of Respondent	Male	65	72.2
	Female	25	27.8
Age of the Respondent	<30	47	52.2
	30-40 years	37	41.1
	41-50years	5	5.6
	>50	1	1.1
Level of Education	Bachelor or equivalent	10	11.1
	Masters or Equivalent	72	80.0
	PhD or Equivalent	7	7.8
	others	1	1.1
Year of Experience	<1	10	11.1
	1-5years	55	61.1
	6-10years	19	21.1
	>10	6	6.7
Position in Organization	Lecturer	45	50.0
	Senior Lecturer	23	25.6
	Assistant professor	15	16.7
	Associate Professor	4	4.4
	Professor	3	3.3
Marital Status	Unmarried	41	45.6
	Married	49	54.4

As presented in Table 1, the sample of this study was made up of 90 faculty members representing 72.2% male and 27.8% female of whom 50% were lecturer, 25.6% were senior lecturer, 16.7% were assistant professor, 4.4% associate professor whereas only 3.3% were professor. Of the respondents, 80% had master's degree, while 11.1% had bachelor's degree and 7.8% had PhD degree. The lion share of respondents (52.2%) was less than 30 years of age whereas 41.1% and 5.6 % belonged to the age group of 31-40 years 41-50 years respectively. Only 1.1% was above 50 years. In terms of marital status, 54.4% were married and the rest were unmarried. The majority (i.e., 61.1%) of the

participants had experience as faculty members for 1-5 years, while 21.1%, had experience in the ranges of 6-10 years and, 11.1% were less than 1 year. Only 6.7% reported their experience was more than 10 years.

3.3 Reliability and Validity of the Scale

Cronbach's alpha (α) is the most widely used method to test the reliability of the scale. Mentionable that, its value ranges from 0 to 1 but the satisfactory value is required to be more than 0.6 for the scale to be reliable (Malhotra *et al.,* 2006; Cronbach, 1951). Typically, scales with a coefficient α value between 0.80 and 0.95, 0.70 and 0.80, 0.60 and 0.70 and below 0.6 are considered to have very good reliability, good reliability, fair reliability and poor reliability respectively (Zikmund *et al.,* 2013).

Table-2: Reliability value of the Scale

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha(α)
Knowledge Donation (KD)	8	.737
Knowledge Collection (KC)	8	.830
Innovative Work Behavior(IWB)	10	.683

Table -2 shows that the estimated reliability value is between α= 0.683 to 0.830 throughout the scales. Since the cronbach's alpha (α) values are above the threshold value of .06 thus our scales can be said to be fairly reliable. Face and content validity of the measures was considered as adequate by several experts while shared with them.

3.4 Measures

Knowledge Sharing (KS) with its two dimensions (i.e., knowledge donation, and knowledge collection) are measured with sixteen items out of which twelve items were adapted from the study of Hooff and Weenen (2004) and four items adapted from (Mogotsi, 2009, Carmeli *et al.,* 2011). This scale has been used widely in previous studies (Lin, 2007, Tohidinia and Mosakhani, 2010, Alhady *et al.,* 2011, Abdallah *et al.,* 2012, Tong *et al.,* 2013). Particularly, knowledge donation (KD) is assessed using eight items with a sample item "I share information about the teaching profession with my colleagues in the University". Knowledge Collection (KC) scale with a sample item "Colleagues within my department share knowledge with me when I ask them about it" is also measured with eight items.

Innovative work behavior (IWB) was measured using a ten-item scale adapted from De Jong and Den Hartog (2010). The sample item is "I wonder how things can be improved". A 5-point Likert scale was used to rate the items on the scale where 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 to "strongly agree".

3.5 Data Analysis Method

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 22.0 version has been employed to input and analyze the collected data. The study reported descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and correlation for the independent variable KS and its two dimensions, and the dependent variable IWB. Besides, inferential statistics analysis of variance and regression analysis have been conducted to find out the impact of KS on IWB and thus to validate the hypotheses in the research framework.

Since the study used self-reported data from a single source, the study tested the presence of possible common method variance (CMV) in the collected responses, using Harman's single factor test which indicated that a single factor can explain a maximum of 24.284% of the variance, which is much lower than the cut-off value of 50%. Thus, the data is assumed to be free from CMV. Moreover, the study calculated the VIF value 1.579 (in table-5) for both the independent variables which are within the threshold of 3.3 (Kock, 2015) indicating that there is no multicollinearity problem among the predictor variables.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation for the Variables

Table-3 shows the mean, standard deviation and correlation among the two dimensions of knowledge sharing (KS) (i.e., Knowledge Donation (KD), Knowledge Collection (KC)) and innovative work behaviour (IWB). Result of correlation shows both KD ($r = .515$, $p < .01$) and KC ($r = .523$, $p < .01$) are significantly and positively correlated with IWB. Data normality for all the variables was tested through using skewness and kurtosis. Z values of skewness and kurtosis were well below the specified critical values (Hair *et al.,* 1998). Since, the skewness and kurtosis values for all the items are between -2 to +2 thus it proves data are normally distributed.

Table-3: Mean, Standard Deviations and Correlation for Knowledge Sharing and Employee Innovative Behavior

SL.	Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3
1.	Knowledge Donation (KD)	3.81	.85	1		
2.	Knowledge Collection (KC)	4.02	.79	.606**	1	
3.	Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)	3.96	.76	.515**	.523**	1

Source: survey data: **Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed); ** p< 0.01

4.2 Inferential Statistics: ANOVA and Regression Analysis

Table -4 shows that R^2=.336, which implies 34% observed variability in employee innovative work behaviour can be explained by the dimensions of knowledge sharing thereby confirming a moderate predictive capacity of the independent variables included in the model.

Table-4: Predictors of Employee Innovative Behavior- Model Summery

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.579[a]	.336	.320	3.18500
a. Predictors: (Constant), KC, KD				

The result of ANOVA as exhibited in table-5 shows that F (2, 87) = 21.98 and p<0.001, indicating the significance of the regression model.

Table-5: Result of ANOVA Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	445.939	2	222.969	21.980	.000[b]
	Residual	882.550	87	10.144		
	Total	1328.489	89			
a. Dependent Variable: IWB, b. Predictors: (Constant), KC, KD						

Result of the regression coefficients as shown in table-6 demonstrate that, both the dimensions of knowledge sharing (KD, KC) are positively and significantly influencing employee innovative work behaviour since the value of knowledge donating is (H1: β=.313, t=2.854, p<0.05) and the value of knowledge collecting is (H2: β=.333, t=3.033, p<0.05). Thus, we accept both the hypothesis H1 and H2.

Table-6: Regression Coefficients for predictors of IWB

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	20.970	2.847		7.365	.000		
	KD	.299	.105	.313	2.854	.004	.633	1.579
	KC	.300	.099	.333	3.033	.003	.633	1.579
a. Dependent Variable: IWB								

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The result of the study showed that both the hypotheses proposed in the study are well-supported, indicating that the two dimensions of knowledge sharing have a significant and positive impact on the innovative work behavior of the faculty members of the private universities of Bangladesh. The findings of the current study are in line with previous studies by Liao, Fei, and Chen, (2007); Liu and Phillips (2011); Hau *et al.*, (2013); Yesil and Dereli (2013), Lin (2007) and Kuo, *et al.*, (2014) who found knowledge sharing of employees advance the innovative capability and innovation of the firm, though, the effect of knowledge collecting and knowledge donating on innovative work behavior was not investigated earlier. Additionally, Lu, Lin, and Leung (2012) suggested in their study that knowledge sharing contributes positively to the innovative work behavior of employees is also confirmed in the present study. Further, Mura *et al.*, (2013) and Akhavan *et al.*, (2015) found a positive effect of knowledge sharing on innovative work behavior. However, in those stated studies, knowledge sharing was not considered in the context of knowledge donating and knowledge collecting. Furthermore, (Akram *et al.*, 2018) found that knowledge donating and collection significantly and positively impact employee innovative behavior is also supported by the current study. Moreover, the social exchange theory supports our findings in a way that individuals are more eager to donate their knowledge if they are also reciprocated with their desired knowledge in their organizations. Besides, knowledge collecting and donating creates a congenial working atmosphere that leads to new idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization within the organization.

The study contributes to the existing literature by exploring the impact of two dimensions of knowledge sharing i.e. knowledge collecting and knowledge donating as important predictors of academics' innovative behavior in private

universities of Bangladesh. The practical implications of this study are that authorities of private universities should facilitate and cultivate a culture of knowledge collecting and knowledge donating in their organization to stimulate innovative work behavior of the faculty members which will ensure achieving competitive advantage and sustainability.

Like any other social science research, the current study has a few limitations which should be overcome in future studies. The use of a small sample size and non-probability sampling techniques are the major limitations of the study. It is suggested that future studies should use a large sample size with a probability sampling method for better generalization of the findings. Since it was a cross-sectional study, future studies can examine the impact of knowledge collecting and knowledge donating on innovative work behavior in a longitudinal study. Moreover, it is suggested to examine the mediating role of transformational leadership and self-efficacy in the studied relationship in the future.

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