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A Conceptual Framework on the Associations among Knowledge Sharing Antecedents and Innovation Performance

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Abstract:

This research aimed to study in-depth the concept of knowledge sharing process as part of knowledge management, and its role on innovative performance through conducting a comprehensive review of theories, literature, and empirical studies. Furthermore, the researchers reviewed the prevailing literature of knowledge sharing and its relationship with innovation.

Keywords:

Knowledge sharing, innovation performance, Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), Aqaba, Jordan.

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Introduction

The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) was established in 2001 by the government of Jordan to ensure that Aqaba's commercial and cultural prominence continues into the 21st Century. Its low tax, multi-sector development zone that also enjoys duty free status, value-added industries, and light manufacturing. In terms of location, Aqaba covers the total Jordanian coastline (27 km), and hosts the 12 seaports of Jordan, an international airport and the historical city of Aqaba. The city is known for its beauty and rich cultural and heritage. It also seeks diligently to ensure the continuity and sustainability of existing investments in the region to build on and maximize achievements. Thus, it has developed a unified special window for investors, based on best practices and global experiences, which provides all types of services that meet all business needs thanks to simplified procedures for registering and licensing various economic activities. The mission of it is to organize and develop all unit, sector and worker in Aqaba. It offers integrated services and assistance to every concerned business and ensures all governing laws and regulations of it are made public. The vision of it seeks diligently to ensure the continuity and sustainability of existing investments in the region to build on and maximize achievements. So, this is leading the first aim was establishing to create innovation for all the industry sector and the business process to superiority organizations and enhance the ability in business.

Due to increasing competition and growing speed of change, project-based firms are facing new challenges related to how to manage their resources and ensure timely knowledge sharing among team members (Prencipe and Tell, 2001). This has resulted in increased awareness among the project managers regarding the importance of effective management of human capital in order to make sure that workers continue to add value to the company's strategic objectives (Omotayo, 2015). Human resource is one of the critical assets of organizations across all sectors and of all types (Ferraris et al., 2018; Thrassou et al., 2018). Human Resource Management (HRM) has been defined as "all those activities associated with the management of people in firms" (Boxall and Purcell, 2003, p. 1). Literature has suggested the vital role of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) within the field of HRM (Smith and Rupp, 2003; Guthrie et al., 2009). However, past literature has not been consistent with a clear definition of HPWS (Boxall and Macky, 2009), but some authors, like Levine (1995) and Pfeffer (1998), agree on defining HPWS as "a system of HRM practices designed to enhance employees 'skills, commitment, and productivity in such a way that employees become a source of sustainable competitive advantage" (Datta et al., 2005, p. 136).

Furthermore, recent literature has identified knowledge as a core competency for the organizations which contributes towards higher competitive advantage

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for these firms (Anantatmula and Stankosky, 2008; Del Giudice and Maggioni, 2014; Del Giudice and Della Peruta, 2016; Santoro et al., 2019a). In the current knowledge-based society, growth and sustainable development are driven by the ability to create and disseminate knowledge (Karagouni, 2018; Thrassou et al., 2018; Vrontis and Christofi, 2019). Nonaka (1994) defined knowledge as a “justified personal belief” (p. 15), while Massa and Testa (2009) referred to knowledge as something that enables organizations to create value. The ability of employees to transfer knowledge among themselves is a major factor contributing to wards performance improvement and gaining competitive advantage (Latilla et al., 2019) and achieving organizational success (Lin et al., 2016; Santoro et al., 2019b). The knowledge is created and stored in the minds of employees and in order for organizations to make use of this knowledge it must be shared among the member of the organizations. Sharing knowledge can play a major role in organizations as it leads to the formation of new knowledge, the refinement of old knowledge, and the synthesis of more knowledge in the future (Fong et al., 2011; Masa’deh, 2013). Moreover, this process of sharing knowledge benefits the organization by helping it gain a competitive advantage due to the intangibility of knowledge that makes it difficult to imitate and the creation of synergetic collaboration between employees that develops their capabilities and leads to innovative ideas, services, products, and technologies (Fathi et al., 2011). Knowledge sharing also affects the long run performance of organizations (Akram and Bokhari, 2011; Masa’deh and Gharaibeh, 2013; Obeidat et al., 2014). Knowledge Sharing (KS) refers to an organization’s employees or teams that exchange and discuss knowledge within or across the organization through various channels (such as discussions, conference networks and knowledge bases) (Wang and Wang, 2012). Knowledge sharing can be divided into individual knowledge sharing, group (team) knowledge sharing, organizational knowledge sharing and interorganizational knowledge sharing from the ontological dimension; Explicit Knowledge Sharing (EKS) and Tacit Knowledge Sharing (TKS) from the epistemological dimension (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995); knowledge collection and knowledge donation from the dimension of the sharing process (Liao et al., 2007 ; Lin, 2007; Yesil et al., 2013); or internal knowledge sharing and external knowledge sharing from the dimension of the knowledge source (Carmeli et al., 2013). KS is a multilayer process that implies the accessibility of strategic knowledge at all levels of a company (Grant, 2016; Lin and Lo, 2015).

Accordingly, we considered five factors affecting knowledge sharing at the organizational level through exploratory case studies, namely, Knowledge-Sharing Culture (SC), Organizational Structure (OS), Mid-Level Leadership (ML), Management System (MS) and IT Support (IT). Based on the literature review and focusing on the problems and gaps of previous research, the study highlights the influence of various factors at the organizational level on knowledge sharing

and, in turn, the impact of knowledge sharing on innovation performance. Innovation is now a great priority to all organizations (Buenechea- Elberdin, 2017). Subsequently, in an attempt to identify the drivers of innovation, numerous approaches. These proposed drivers include the knowledge base of organization, especially with regards to the Intellectual Capital (IC) which appears to be an exceptional resource for innovation, performance, as well as economic growth. As such, employee to know IC usage to enable the enhancement of their innovation competence and organizational performance (Sivalogathan and Wu, 2015). Thus, the objective of this study is to suggest a framework as to investigate, in the forthcoming research, the effects of factors affecting knowledge sharing between employees and their impact on the organization's innovation performance; it is designed as an empirical study in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. Furthermore, we aim to investigate the role of knowledge sharing management and transaction leadership impact on behavior innovation sharing management in general and the behavior of individuals in particular as the study which related in it.

Based on the foregoing, the research question will be, is there a relationship between the factors affecting the exchange of knowledge sharing employees and its impact on the organization's innovative performance? and there is sub – questions as follows;

- Is there a relationship between transactional leadership and knowledge sharing?
- Is there a relationship between transformational leadership and knowledge sharing?
- Is there a relationship between knowledge sharing and innovation performance?
- Is there a relationship between ability enhancing HR practices and knowledge sharing?
- Is there relationship between motivation enhancing HR and knowledge sharing?
- Is there a relationship between enhancing HR practices and innovation performance?

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

The world is going through a very developed stage by changing from the industrial era to the knowledge era, and thus it realized the importance of the information as a stock in human resources, and it then started to think of the methods to make better use of knowledge in creating human elements able to innovate and excel (Shih and Tasi, 2016). The knowledge sharing indicates the social interaction, that involves skill, experience, and knowledge exchange among the employees in it (Bouraghda and Dris, 2015). Awad and Ghaziri defined knowledge sharing as a continuous and mutual interaction amount the individuals and work groups inside and between it and beneficiaries. KM (Knowledge Management) contains knowledge sharing and exchange, that occur

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through joint work, communication, learning through work, training, face-to-face discussions and informal sessions or through documents exchange, especially because the modern technology ensures the availability of the knowledge when needed (Awad and Ghaziri, 2004). However, acquiring, storing and sharing the knowledge is not enough, what is important is to transform it into practical application. The success of in KM depends on the applied knowledge to the whole information (Dalkir, 2005). Knowledge must be implemented in problem-solving, because it is the main goal of KM process, by applying it in the organizational activities and process like, HRS decision-making and services and goods quality improvement (Sweis et al., 2011). Therefore, it is possible to look in the future to sharing knowledge between employees themselves with in it, or sharing knowledge between organizations achieving a highly competitive advantage among it that leads to creating innovative performance for sustainability and survival in the external environmental.

Innovation is the adoption of new ideas and knowledge to develop and improve new products. The quality of innovation is used to maintain survival, growth, and a competitive position; therefore, knowledge resources are required to produce innovation in order to achieve superior performance (Subramaniam and Youndt, 2005). On the other hand, innovation is a new idea being achieved in a new product, process, or service, resulting in increased job opportunities as well as creating value for the innovative business organization (Cheng and Chen, 2013; Martinez-Perez et al., 2016). Afuah (1998) defined innovation as the generation of new knowledge into integrated products, processes, and services. Innovations are viewed according to technological, logistic, and administrative/organizational characteristics. The organizational structure provides the internal configuration that includes communication flows and resources needed for innovation to happen. Thus, organizational capacity provides enterprises with the inputs required for innovation, which in turn can provide the organization with superior performance. For any organization, innovation is deemed as key in the attainment of sustained success and economic growth (Jia et al., 2018). Innovation is new knowledge that is integrated in products, processes, and services. In the context of organization, innovation comprises a technology, strategy, or practice of management employed for the first time, irrespective of whether it has been used before by the organizations or users, or as an important restructuring or improvement within a given process (Varadarajan, 2018). Innovation is also a production of a novel idea alongside its application on a new product, process, or service, which contributes to the economic expansion, increased employment, and profit generation (Afuah, 1998). Furthermore, innovations are classified as incremental and radical (Afuah, 1998). These types of innovation are discussed next. Incremental innovation offers novel features, benefits, or enhancements in an existing.

Incremental innovation offers novel features, benefits, or enhancements in an existing technology (Alonso and Bressan, 2016). It can also be described as an adaptation, fine-tuning, or improvement of an already available product in the markets. Similarly, this type of innovation comprises small tweak in technology, simple product improvements, or line extensions that enhance the present performance but not only very slightly (Alonso and Bressan, 2016). In other words, incremental innovation denotes gradual enhancements in the characteristics of products and process that are already in the market (Moreno-Luzon et al., 2013; Varadarajan 2018).

The leadership role is indeed significant in both the organization's success and failure. Accordingly, successful leaders can create well-being to all of the organization's interest groups, most notably to those who won the organization (Li et al., 2018). Leadership can be viewed as the interpersonal effect that is manifested by an individual with in circumstance, and directed by way of process of communication for achieving a quantified goal or goals. In this regard, the behavior or characteristics possessed by leaders are manifested by how they realize the goals and increase organizational performance. Among the styles of leadership highlighted in the literature, which are also particularly relevant to the context of this study, are transactional and transformational leadership styles (Van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015). The behavior or characteristics possessed by leaders are manifested by how they realize the goals and increase organizational performance. Among the styles of leadership highlighted in the literature, which are also particularly relevant to the context of this study, are transactional and transformational leadership styles (Van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015).

Transactional leadership indicates a relationship between leaders and followers by responding to their own interests, the style of leadership in transactions is highlighted through the exchange between leaders and followers. This exchange depends on the leader who discusses and defines required to ask and duties and specifies the conditions and rewards attained by the followers upon completion of these tasks and duties, transaction leaders identify what to do, and the rewards for satisfactory completion of tasks (Bass and Avolio, 1994).

Knowledge is one of the most important resources of the organization because it lies within the minds of its employees, clients, suppliers, documents and routines; it is the result of data processing that was transformed into information and became knowledge after they were understood, applied repeatedly and practiced during the work until they became rooted in the mind of the individual as a mental state that is shown clearly through the experiences, skills and cleverness of the employees (Fernandez and Sabherwal, 2010). In addition to that, KM is considered one of the main pillars that the organizations seek to

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apply and one of the best ways they go through to enhance the performance, by rehabilitating, educating and training the work force on KM, organizational also are looking for collecting, storing, spreading over all administrative levels and developing the information to invest in having new knowledge and using the currently possessed knowledge with the maximum capacity and efficiency to reach the excellence in performance (Shih and Tasi, 2016). Jaradat et al. (2011) indicated that the impact of KM on the employee is done by affecting the one's learning, and learning is the rational or constant change in behavior, and it is the process that allows the individual to gain information and skills through his interaction with the surrounding social and cultural systems.

Therefore, procedural and transformational leadership has an important role in the growth and development of both workers and organizational together in order to survive and compete with organization in the external environment. This role is highlighted in supporting and developing innovative performance in order to achieve the goal or goals of organizations and companies. According to the foregoing, previous studies are extremely important in scientific research, as they give the researcher knowledge of the history of the development of research and open his eyes to points that he did not pay attention to and may be a key to the solution. However, we hypothesized the following:

H1. Transformational leadership positively influences knowledge sharing.

In other words, leaders build a considerate relationship with each individual, pay attention to each individual's growth and achievement needs by acting as a coach or mentor in order to develop subordinates' potential in a supportive climate (Limsila and Ogunlana, 2008). Furthermore, a considerable amount of research has shown that transformational leadership style impacted job performance (e.g., Chu and Lai, 2011; Sani and Maharani, 2012; Bacha, 2014; Tse and Chiu, 2014) and knowledge sharing (e.g., Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi, 2012; Shao et al., 2012; Liu and DeFrank, 2013; Li et al., 2014); hence, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H2. Transactional leadership practices positively influences knowledge sharing.

Moreover, a significant body of research has suggested that transactional leadership style could impact knowledge sharing (e.g. Bryant, 2003; Analoui et al., 2013; Birasnav, 2014; Riaz and Khalili, 2014) and job performance (e.g. Politis, 2001; Chu and Lai, 2011; Rowold et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2014).

H3. Ability-enhancing HR Practices positively influences knowledge sharing.

H4 . Motiviting-enhancing HR positively influences knowledge sharing.

H5. Opportunity-enhancing HR practices positively influences knowledge sharing.

On the other hand, researchers like Chowhan (2016) found evidence that only skill-enhancing HR practices significantly impact organizational performance through the mediating effect of organizational innovation. But overall, Jiang et al. (2012) found in their meta analyses significant relationships between the skill, motivation, and opportunity-enhancing HR practices and operational financial outcomes (where the operational outcomes included innovation as a component). Although scholars have highlighted that research that focuses explicitly on HR in project based organizations is limited (Huemann, 2016), HR practices have been linked to improved project and employee performance in project based organizations (Wickramasinghe and Liyanage, 2013; Popaitoon and Siengthai, 2014).

H6. Transactional leadership positively influences innovation performance.

As stated, leaders do things that are perceived as right while managers do things in the manner that is correct. Accordingly, the important qualities of a leader include the following: communication, creativity, determination, boosting changes, adaptability, initiative, innovation, and vision. It is important that leaders could lead and adapt their approach to the followers so that they could achieve the set goals and the sought-after outcomes. The task entrusted to the leader is to execute change in the organization (Kara et al., 2018). Based on that, we propose the following hypothesis:

H7. Opportunity-enhancing HR practices positively influences innovation performance.

We propose that HR practices following the AMO framework will improve knowledge sharing among employees, leading to better innovation outcomes of project-based organizations, as such employees will be more critical and creative, and they will be more successful in creating new knowledge. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H8. Knowledge sharing positively influences innovation performance.

Knowledge sharing promotes the improvement of organizational innovation performance and requires organizations to provide corresponding institutional support (Xie and Li, 2015). From an individual perspective, knowledge sharing behavior can be divided into two directions: knowledge inbound and outbound flow, that is, knowledge collecting and donating, respectively (Dyer et al., 2009). However, knowledge outbound or inbound only increases stock knowledge within organizations. Thus, organizations must focus on identifying and utilizing knowledge. Employees' knowledge sharing behavior occurs at all organization levels. Breaking the organizational structure constraints and accelerating the knowledge flow are necessary to integrate employees' knowledge (Hartono and Sheng, 2016). However, inter-organizational knowledge

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sharing behavior can help organizations obtain the strategic resources needed to implement innovative behaviors from the external environment and promote organizational innovation performance.

Conclusion

A survey questionnaire (Appendix) will be used to gather the data in the study. The survey questionnaire will be distributed electronically to the employees of the Aqaba Special Economic Zoon Authority, whose number is 2,200 employee distributed among the heads of department and directorates of Deputy Director Directorate and delegated who will answer these questions, which are variables related to the research are referred to in order to obtain in the responses that will be statistically analyzed through statistical analysis in order to examine the hypotheses and results that lead to achieving the goals of the research in terms of accepting or rejecting the nihilistic hypotheses.

Research type and measures: As the coming research will be conducted to investigate the effects of factors affecting knowledge sharing between employees and their impact on the organization's innovative performance; it will be designed as an empirical study in the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), as relationships between variables will be tested using multifaceted scale adopted from previous researches. Furthermore, the positivist philosophy and deductive approach will be considered to be appropriate for this type of research, and adopted to accomplishing this is the main goal of this study. The basis for data collection and analysis will be a field study in which respondents should answer all items on a five- point Likert –scale ranging from “1” meaning “strongly disagree” to “5” meaning “strongly agree”. In addition, elements will be used to consider each of the constructs will be primarily obtained from prior research. These elements provided a valued source for data gathering and measurement as their reliability and validity will be verified through previous research and peer reviews. The variables of transformational and transactional leadership will be adapted from Dai et al. (2013); knowledge sharing from Vuori and Okkonen (2012); job performance items will be adapted from Tseng and Huang (2011); and firm performance from Wang and Wang (2012).

Conceptual model will consider the relationship between knowledge sharing and Innovation. This model will illustrate the factors affecting the exchange of knowledge between employees and its impact on the organization's innovative performance.

Appendix

First: Please mark (v) at the appropriate answer:

Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 20- less than 30 <input type="checkbox"/> 30-less than 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-less than 50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-lsee than 60.
Qualificatio n	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than secondary Class <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> High diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Master <input type="checkbox"/> PhD
Job Title	<input type="checkbox"/> Administration <input type="checkbox"/> Supervisor <input type="checkbox"/> Director, Deputy Director Directorate <input type="checkbox"/> Commissioner.

Second: Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements by marking (v) at the appropriate answer. The scale can be interpreted as:

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly agree

F1	Transformational Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
1	The supervisor can understand my situation and gives me encouragement and assistance					
2	The supervisor encourages me to take challenges					
3	I believe the supervisor can overcome any challenge at work					
4	The supervisor encourages me to make efforts towards fulfilling the company vision					
5	The supervisor encourages me to think about problems from a new perspective					
6	The supervisor encourages me to rethink opinions that have never been doubted in the past					
7	I believe I can complete my work under the leadership of the supervisor					
8	The supervisor spends time to understand my needs					
F2	Transactional Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
9	When I am unable to complete my work, the supervisor reprimands me					
10	The supervisor precisely records any of my mistakes					
11	The supervisor gives me what I want to exchange for my hard work					
12	The supervisor tells me that I can get special rewards when I show good work performance					
F3	Ability-enhancing HR Practices	1	2	3	4	5
13	Only the best candidates are hired to work in my company					

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1 4	When new employees are hired, they must go through an extensive hiring process in which they are interviewed a number of times					
1 5	The company provides training for me to learn new ways to do my job					
1 6	There are formal training programs to teach new hires the skills they need to perform their job					
1 7	Training programs in my company are comprehensive					
1 8	Performance appraisals provide specific feedback concerning how my performance can be improved					
1 9	The results of the performance appraisal are used to determine my training needs					
F4	Motivation-enhancing HR Practices	1	2	3	4	5
2 0	Our pay in this company is higher than what competitors offer					
2 1	Our bonuses are closely tied to individual or group performance					
2 2	Part of my compensation is based on how well the company is doing financially					
2 3	I regularly (at least once a year) receive a formal evaluation of my performance					
2 4	Performance appraisals are based on objective quantifiable results					
2 5	I have the opportunity to receive extra benefits such as housing benefit provided by the company					
F5	Opportunity-enhancing HR Practices	1	2	3	4	5
2 6	My company places a great deal of importance on working in teams					
2 7	There is a reasonable and fair complaint process in my company					
2 8	Information about how well my company is doing financially is shared with me					
2 9	I am given enough information to understand my role in this company					
3 0	I am well-informed about how well the company is performing					
3 1	I have opportunities to make important work-related decisions such as how the work is done or implement new ideas					
3 2	If there is a decision to be made, I have opportunities to participate in the decision-making process					

3 3	I do have a say in the decisions that are made around here					
F6	Knowledge Sharing Behavior	1	2	3	4	5
3 4	I often participate in knowledge sharing activities in my team					
3 5	I usually spend a lot of time conducting knowledge-sharing activities in my team					
3 6	I usually share my knowledge with the other members of my team					
F7	Innovation Performance	1	2	3	4	5
3 7	The level of newness (novelty) of our new products/service is very high					
3 8	We use the latest technological innovations in our new products/service					
3 9	The speed of our new product/service development is very high					
4 0	The number of our new products/service introduced into the market is very high					
4 1	Our technological competitiveness is higher than other project teams in the industry					
4 2	The speed with which we adopt the latest technological innovations is very high					
4 3	The company contributes to work by adopting the latest technological innovations in a timely manner					
4 4	The rate of change and update in the technology use to complete the world in the company is very high.					

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