

**IMPACT OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS ON ORGANIZATIONAL  
PERFORMANCE WITH MEDIATING ROLE OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING  
BEHAVIOUR**

**Syed Jaleel Abbas, Muhammad Kashif Nawaz & Dr. Muhammad Imran Hanif\***

PhD scholar

\*Assistant Professor

Institute of Banking and Finance, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan Pakistan

jaleelshirazi@gmail.com

kashif347@gmail.com

mimranhanif@bzu.edu.pk

**Abu Bakar Abdul Hamid, PhD**

Professor of Marketing and Supply Chain Management

Putra Business School (PBS)

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

43400 Serdang, Selangor. Malaysia

**Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of motivational factors such as hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency on organizational performance with mediation of knowledge sharing behaviour. With the help of self-administered questionnaire, data were collected from employees of banks in Pakistan. The data comprise 371 responses. Regression analysis is made to analyse the impact of motivational factors such as hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency on organizational performance with mediation of knowledge sharing behaviour. For mediation three step method suggested by Baron & Kenny, 1986 is applied. Findings show that motivational factors such as hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency significantly affect the organizational performance with mediator knowledge sharing behaviour. The results reveal partial mediation between motivational factors and organizational performance. This study explores the relationship of motivational factor on organizational performance with mediating role of knowledge sharing behaviour in Pakistani context.*

**Keywords:** *Pakistan, motivational factors, knowledge sharing behaviour, organizational performance*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge management (KM) has become a pivotal issue of 21<sup>st</sup> century. The organizations of this century are trying to become comprehensive in field of sharing tacit and explicit knowledge as this ensures their supremacy in competitive advantage with increased level of innovativeness (Gunsel, Siachou and Acar, 2011; Almeida, Lesca and Canton, 2016; Nonaka, 2007). The valuable information is much important for leveraging the intellectual capital of the organizations and keeping in view the importance of intellectual capital, knowledge management is trying to discover factors and devise ways through which it may motivate employees for sharing valuable information (Barachini, 2009). Many researchers have found that almost all the successful organizations have acknowledged the importance of KM and have developed knowledge creating and knowing climate in their premises (Rowley, 2000). Furthermore, the organizations are also devising ways which foster the concept of knowledge management amongst the employees (Beijerse, 2000; Bloice and Burnett, 2016). One of the significant way to enhance the concept of KM is that the organizations focus to develop knowledge sharing culture (Chen et al., 2103) which motivates the employees to learn new things, idea and solutions (Trivellas et al., 2015; Shih and Tsai, 2016).

“Employee motivation in knowledge sharing is an important but neglected issue” (Hsu, 2006). As it has been observed in previous research that no one in the organization seems to be voluntarily participate in knowledge sharing. Rather the workers are persuaded for sharing their experiences and knowledge with the help of certain motivators (Baranchini, 2009). But the dilemma is that organizations usually ignore this important aspect and don’t bother to focus on developing such motivators which enhance the urge in employees to share and acquire job related knowledge (Hsu, 2006). Here arises the question that which factors motivate the employees to share tacit and explicit knowledge. There are two types of factors which enhance capabilities of knowledge sharing among employees. These are extrinsic and intrinsic factors (Lin, 2007). The extrinsic and intrinsic factors comprise many dimensions but this study discusses hard and soft rewards (extrinsic) and trust and knowledge sharing tendency (intrinsic) (Wang & Hou, 2015; Kankanhalli, Tan & Wei, 2005; Rahman et al., 2015; Henttonen, Kianto & Ritala, 2016).

Under the guidance of self-determined theory (SDT), which says, “an understanding of human motivations requires a consideration of innate psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness” (Deci & Ryan, 2000), this study intends to discuss extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors (Lin, 2007) which moulds the intentions of individuals to share knowledge and acquire the ability of sharing knowledge (Tsai et al., 2012). The extrinsic factors comprise hard and soft rewards which affect the individuals’ behaviours and work performance (Wang & Hou, 2015) and the intrinsic factors which influence the behaviours of the workers to share their experience and knowledge are trust (Rahman et al., 2015) and knowledge sharing tendency (Henttonen et al., 2016). These factors such as rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency initiate the knowledge sharing behaviour and lead to better organizational performance. (Wang and Hou, 2015; Rahman et al., 2015; Henttonen et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2013; Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi and Mohammed, 2007; Reinholt, Pedersen and Foss, 2011).

The context is also considered important for every research because the results of the research in one context may vary from the results of another context (Hoftede, 1991; Khiliji and Mathew, 2012). Previously a lot of research has been conducted in western countries regarding knowledge management and organizational performance (e.g. Razmerita, Kirchner and Nielsen, 2016; Heisig et al., 2016) but in

South Asian country like Pakistan, there is scarcity of research on knowledge management. Pakistan is blend of diversified culture, traditions and religions (Khilji, 2003; Khiliji and Mathew, 2012; Khilji, 2012). So, the research conducted in Pakistan would be value addition in literature of Knowledge management.

Keeping in view the importance of knowledge management in Pakistani context, this study evaluates the impact of motivational factors (hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency) on organizational performance with the mediating role of knowledge sharing behaviour in the banking sector.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *Hard and soft rewards*

Employees' knowledge sharing (tacit and explicit) in the organization is not an easy task. Mostly, the employees seem reluctant to share their experience and knowledge with other employees. The organizations try to facilitate their employees to share valuable information with other workers but their reluctance hinders them to do so (Bock et al., 2005; Lam & Lambermont-Ford, 2010). There are many barriers which induce reluctance in employees to share knowledge. These are change in behaviour, lack of trust and lack of time (Razmerita, Kirchner & Nielsen, 2016). Now a days, there is need to develop such motivators which may foster knowledge sharing behaviour amongst employees. Previously, it has been discussed that such motivators are rewards (hard and soft) which lessen reluctance and encourage knowledge sharing amongst employees (Bock et al., 2005; Lin, 2007; Wang & Hou, 2015). Hard rewards are associated with employees' expectation of receiving financial rewards and soft rewards are concerned with personal reputation and relationships (Hall & Graham, 2004; Hummel et al., 2005; Kankanhalli et al., 2005; Kankanhalli et al., 2011).

These rewards play a significant role in knowledge sharing and influence the employees to be committed to share valuable information (Martin-Perez & Martin-Cruz, 2015). Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi & Mohammad (2007) derives from the research that rewards have significant role in creating a knowledge sharing culture. In another research, it has been discussed that rewards are given individually and group based but group based rewards are considered valuable because in this way, the leaders can develop relations with workers and encourage them easily to share and utilize their knowledge effectively (Chen et al., 2013).

Rewards system, in some researches, found to be indirectly related to knowledge sharing behaviour. Rather, it influences the affective commitment and then knowledge sharing behaviour. Though expected rewards are considered very much important but these are not directly related to knowledge sharing behaviour. These rewards just enhance the tendency of sharing of knowledge but not knowledge sharing behaviour (Martin-Perez & Martin-Cruz, 2015; Bartol & Srivastava, 2002; Bock & Kim, 2001).

Despite all this discussion, the importance of extrinsic rewards in shape of monetary rewards, personal reputation and relationships with other employees cannot be denied. These significantly influence the knowledge sharing behaviour, and enhance organizational performance (Kankanhalli, Taw and Wei, 2005; Razmerita, Kirchner & Nielsen, 2016; Bock & Kim, 2001; Durmusoglu et al., 2014; Wang an Hou, 2015; Rahman et al., 2015; Henttonen et al., 2016; Chen et al., 2013; Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi and Mohammed, 2007; Reinholt, Pedersen and Foss, 2011). Therefore, this study hypothesizes

H 1: Knowledge sharing behaviour mediates the relationship of hard rewards and organizational performance.

H 2: Knowledge sharing behaviour mediates the relationship of soft rewards and organizational performance.

### 2.2 Trust

As far as intrinsic factors are concerned, trust of employees in other employees is prioritized in the field of knowledge management because trust is the only factor which lessens hesitation and reluctance in sharing valuable information. Employees believe in other workers that they would not betray their faith and work for enhancing organizational performance (Ardichivili, Page & Wentling, 2003; Razmerita, Kirchner & Nielsen, 2016; Rehman et al., 2015; Kankanhalli, Tan & Wei, 2005; Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi & Mohammad, 2007). There are two levels of trust which exist between co-workers; “high versus low trust situation.” The organizations desire to develop a culture equipped with high trust situation between co-workers as high level of trust amongst employees ensures high level of knowledge sharing (Rutten, Blass-Franken & Martin, 2016). It also minimizes “fear of losing one’s unique value and improves willingness to document knowledge (Renzl, 2008). So, the tendency of trust within individuals in organization is required to be at high level. It has been evaluated before that even though, the organizations which have developed knowledge-centred culture do not acquire good results from knowledge sharing. The reason is low level of trust among employees. This low level of trust deteriorates the worth of knowledge-centred culture and it becomes incapable to fulfil the purpose of knowledge sharing (Peralta & Saldanha, 2014).

There are certain barriers which discourage employees to share knowledge and their experiences. These barriers are “fear of criticism, or of misleading the community members (not being sure that their contributions are important, or completely accurate, or reluctant to specific discussion)”. In order to get rid of these hindrances, it is duty of every organizations to build a culture where trust of employees in themselves and in other would be strengthened (Ardchvilli, Page & Wentling, 2003). This culture of trust encourages employees to share knowledge without hesitation. This would not only enhance knowledge sharing behaviour but organizational performance also (Chen et al., 2013).

Casimir, Lee & Loon (2012) discuss that trust is an important factor which develops the tendency of knowledge sharing. It fosters knowledge sharing culture and motivates employees to share knowledge. Rehman and Hussain (2014) have revealed the same concept that without trust amongst employees, it is difficult for the organizations to develop knowledge sharing culture. So, for acquiring effective organizational performance, it is required to develop knowledge sharing behaviour amongst employees which is built only with the factor of high level of trust among employees (Abrams et al., 2003; Rutten, Blass-Franken & Martin, 2016; Ardchvilli, Page & Wentling, 2003; Chen et al., 2013). Therefore, this study hypothesizes

H 3: Knowledge sharing behaviour mediates the relationship of trust and organizational performance.

### 2.3 Knowledge-sharing tendency

Knowledge sharing is a voluntary process. It cannot be applied forcefully (Käser and Miles, 2002). There are three factors associated with human nature which support knowledge sharing process. These are positive attitude towards knowledge sharing, the benefits from knowledge sharing and self-efficacy related to knowledge sharing. These factors in human nature and perception determine one’s

tendency towards knowledge sharing and shape one's knowledge sharing behaviour (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993).

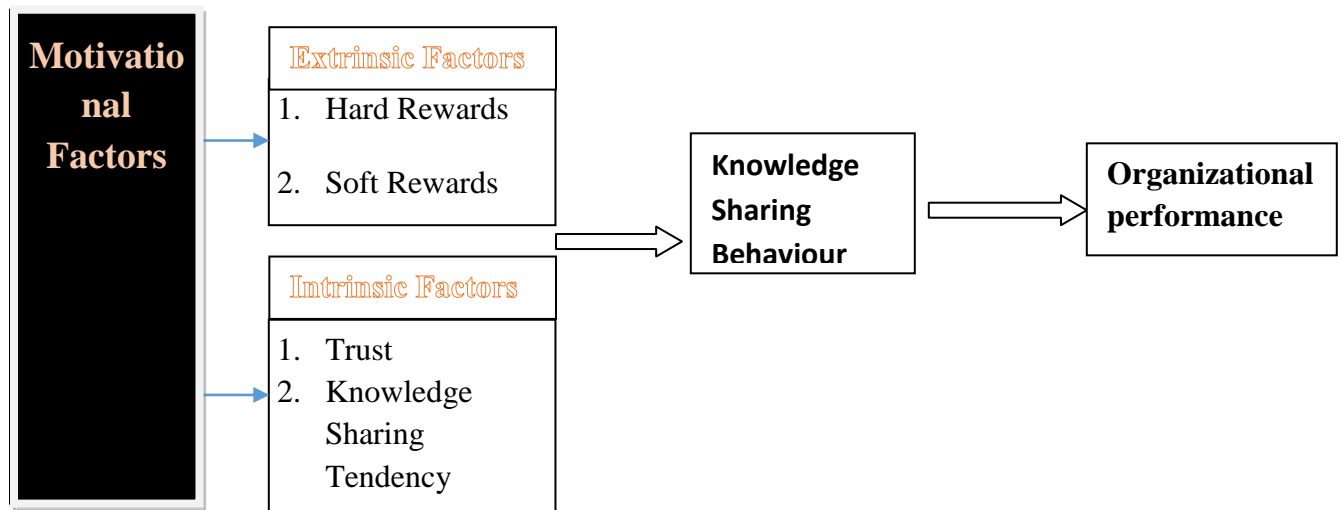
Attitudes play distinctive role in influencing behaviour. Positive attitudes exert the tendency towards enhancing one's ability to achieve something, whereas negative attitudes lead towards the unfavourable behaviours for one's objectives. Therefore, acknowledge-sharing attitude according to Eagly and Chaiken (1993) if positive determines one's ability to have knowledge sharing behaviour (Bock and Kim, 2002). Therefore, it can be said that positive attitude in knowledge sharing is likely to enhance the tendency of knowledge-sharing behaviours.

Perceived benefits another factor in an individual's positive tendency towards knowledge-sharing behaviour. Social exchange theory explains it explicitly which says that every action has its reaction. If one receives benefits for the deed which he or she does, there will be motivation to do the same task for the next time (Blau, 1964). For this rewards are given to the workers. These might be of a monetary or non-monetary in nature. If such rewards are not sure, they may hoard the knowledge and will not share with others (Wah, 2000). It seems that keeping knowledge with oneself is only ownership which he or she has. This can be the case especially when workers do not receive any reward from sharing knowledge or they feel it loss of ownership of precious knowledge without nothing (Ford and Staples, 2010; Ford *et al.*, 2015),

Finally, an individual's perception of his/her self-efficacy impacts the tendency to share knowledge. Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986) means that one believes that he or she has capabilities to accomplish the task. Having self-efficacy, people voluntarily execute the tasks in which they believe to have much competencies. As we have studied knowledge sharing literature, we have found several studies which describe that self-efficacy influences knowledge sharing behaviour and then organizational performance (Cabrera *et al.*, 2006; Lin, 2007; Kankanhalliet *al.*, 2005; Hsuet *al.*, 2007; Chen and Hung 2010). Therefore, this study hypothesizes

H 4 Knowledge sharing behaviour mediates the relationship of knowledge sharing tendency and organizational performance.

**Fig. 1 Research Model**



### 3. METHOD

#### 3.1 Sample and data collection

The population of the study comprises employees of banking sector of Multan district. The sample included 371 employees of banking sector. We have targeted five major banks named National Bank of Pakistan (NBP), Habib Bank Limited (HBL), Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB), Allied Bank Limited (ABL) and United Bank Limited (UBL). We have used stratified sampling technique. The sample was equally bifurcated into five major banks and then questionnaires were distributed to the banks equally. 400 questionnaires were distributed to the banks with the division of 80 questionnaires to each bank. 371 questionnaires were collected back from the banks. The response rate was 92% as respondents were chased time and again to fill the questionnaires. Self-administered questionnaire was used for the study. The data were analysed in SPSS 21.

#### 3.2 Measure

This study adapts the scales from the previous studies to measure the variables. 4-items for the independent variable hard rewards and 4-items for the independent variable soft rewards were adapted from the study of Wang and Hou (2015). One item from the hard rewards (I expect to receive opportunities to learn from others in return for sharing knowledge with my colleagues) with the lowest factor loading below than 0.4 was dropped. Independent variable trust was measured with the scale adapted from the study of Rehman et al. (2015). Total 6-items were taken, 2-items (1. I like my colleagues will stick to their words. 2. My colleagues always try hard to be fair in dealings with others) with lowest factor loading below than 0.4 were dropped. Independent variable knowledge sharing tendency was measured with the scale of 4-items adapted from the study of Henttonen, Kianto and Ritala (2016). Mediating variable knowledge sharing behaviour was measured by the scale adapted from the study of Wang and Hou (2015). 4-items were taken but 1-item (I usually involve myself in discussion of various topics rather than specific ones in my company) with lowest factor loading below than 0.4 was dropped. Dependent variable organizational performance was adapted from the study of Slavković and Babić (2013). Total 6-item were taken for the study and 2-items (1. Organization solves new problem quickly. 2. Organization has good reputation) with lowest factor loading below than 0.4 were dropped.

### 4. RESULTS

#### 4.1 Respondent's biography

Total 371 responses have been included in the study. Male respondents were 74.1% and female respondents were 25.9%. The maximum respondents were of the age of 25-30 with the percentage of 39.6 and least age group was above 40 with the percentage 10.2. There were 67.4 % post-graduates who are working in banking sector and Ph. Ds are less in number with 2.4%.

Maximum data (29.9%) had been collected from MCB and less data (17.5%) from UBL.

#### 4.2 Descriptive statistics

The data have been analysed by performing correlation and regression analysis in SPSS. Table I depicts descriptive statistics, reliability coefficient, and correlation of all the variables of the study. The results show that mean and standard deviation are accepted and correlations are predicting the path coefficient at acceptable level. As this study has analysed the impact of motivational factors on

organizational performance with mediating effect of knowledge sharing behaviour, the motivational factors such as hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency, show positive correlation with knowledge sharing behaviour (mediating variable) and organizational performance (dependent variable) at 1% significant level. Coefficient correlation ranges from 0.512 to 0.301 which reveal the strongest direct relation between knowledge sharing tendency and soft rewards and the weakest direct relationship between knowledge sharing behaviour and knowledge sharing tendency respectively.

**Table I** Means, correlations & Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Hard Rewards	2.53	0.37	0.72	1					
2. Soft Rewards	2.74	0.51	0.77	0.503*	1				
3. Trust	2.90	0.53	0.84	0.487*	0.405*	1			
4. Knowledge Sharing Tendency	2.74	0.53	0.82	0.445*	0.512*	0.464*	1		
5. Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	2.80	0.40	0.71	0.473*	0.457*	0.405*	0.301*	1	
6. Organizational Performance	3.12	0.35	0.83	0.383*	0.358*	0.489*	0.351*	0.325*	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 – tailed)

#### 4.1 Regression analysis

##### 4.1.1 Mediation

Table II, III, IV, V show the mediation analysis of hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency respectively. Mediation analysis is used to see the impact of motivational factors (hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency) on the organizational performance with the mediating effect of knowledge sharing behaviour. To analyse the mediation, this study has followed Baron & Kenny, 1986 three step of mediation. In the first step, the regression analysis was performed between independent variables (hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency) and dependent variable (organizational performance). In the second step, the regression was executed between independent variables (hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency) and mediating variable (knowledge sharing behaviour). In the third step, the regression was performed between independent variables (hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency) and dependent variable (organizational performance) with the mediation of knowledge sharing

behaviour. The results in Table II, III, IV, V show that each time with the mediation beta value decreases which show the decrease in the intensity of impact of hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency on organizational performance. Hence, it proves the partial mediation of knowledge sharing behaviour in relationship independent variables (hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency) and dependent variable (organizational performance). Therefore the hypothesis (H1, H2, H3, H4) of the study are accepted.

**Table II**

Model	I.V	D.V	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	T.stat	P
1	Hard Rewards	OP	0.147	0.383	7.969	0.000
2	Hard Rewards	KSB	0.224	0.473	10.323	0.000
3	Hard Rewards	OP	0.174	0.295	5.489	0.000
	KSB			0.186	3.451	0.001

**Table III**

Model	I.V	D.V	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	T.stat	P
1	Soft Rewards	OP	0.128	0.358	7.374	0.000
2	Soft Rewards	KSB	0.209	0.457	9.863	0.000
3	Soft Rewards	OP	0.161	0.265	4.939	0.000
	KSB			0.204	3.808	0.000

**Table IV**

Model	I.V	D.V	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	T.stat	P
1	Trust	OP	0.239	0.489	10.757	0.000
2	Trust	KSB	0.164	0.405	8.515	0.000
3	Trust	OP	0.258	0.427	8.691	0.000
	KSB			0.152	3.104	0.002



**Table V**

Model	I.V	D.V	R <sup>2</sup>	Beta	T.stat	P
1	KST	OP	0.123	0.351	7.206	0.000
2	KST	KSB	0.091	0.301	6.074	0.000
3	KST	OP	0.176	0.278	5.612	0.000
	KSB			0.241	4.867	0.000

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study has been conducted to see the impact of independent variables (hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency) on the organizational performance with mediating effect of knowledge sharing behaviour. First of all, the impact of hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency on organizational performance has been analysed. The result show significant impact of the hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency on the organizational performance and these are positively associated with one another. Secondly, the study evaluates the impact of hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency on a mediator knowledge sharing behaviour. There is significant impact of independent variable on mediator. Thirdly, the impact of knowledge sharing behaviour on organizational performance was analysed. The result show significant impact of hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency on organizational performance with mediator knowledge sharing behaviour. The result show partial mediation.

This study suggests that motivational factors such as hard rewards, soft rewards, trust and knowledge sharing tendency should be established at their standards. The employees should be given appropriate rewards (hard or soft) for the knowledge sharing with in organizations. There must be developed the scenario of trust and employees must be encouraged to enhance knowledge sharing tendency. This would nurture knowledge sharing behaviour of the employees. This knowledge sharing behaviour would be beneficial for the organizational performance because with knowledge sharing in the organization, everyone will be equipped with the job-related skill and knowledge.

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