Exploring the Role of Knowledge Sharing in Driving Innovative Work Behavior : A Multi-Dimensional Perspective

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Abstract

Innovation plays a pivotal and irreplaceable role in fostering a competitive edge and effectively responding to the ever-changing global marketplaces. In the contemporary global marketplace, companies that fail to engage in innovation have diminished prospects for survival. The acquisition of innovation within an organization may be facilitated by its employees. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize the significance of workers' innovative work behavior (IWB) at the workplace and discover approaches to developing it. Knowledge-sharing behavior has been identified as contributing to innovative work behavior. Therefore, this study aims to explore the multi-dimensional effect of knowledge sharing on three phases of innovative work behavior. Data was collected from 282 employees working in the telecom sector in two Indian states. PLS_SEM was utilized to test the hypothesized research model. The results revealed a positive impact of both dimensions of knowledge sharing on all three phases of innovative work behavior. Therefore, this study highlights the significance of knowledge-sharing behavior in fostering innovative work behavior. When employees freely exchange their insights and expertise within the organization, it fosters innovative thinking, inspiring colleagues to generate novel ideas. Sharing knowledge within organizations enhances employee engagement, enabling them to experiment with innovative solutions and strategies. Therefore, it is recommended that a knowledge-sharing culture be cultivated to improve innovative work behavior at the workplace.

Keywords: *Knowledge sharing behavior, innovation, innovative work behavior*

1. Introduction:

The growing interest in the capacity of innovation to provide a competitive edge is capturing more attention from scholars and practitioners in the current dynamic business landscape (Smith, 2018). Innovation is a fundamental component of corporate effectiveness (Atitumpong & Badir 2018). The prevalence of intense competition within business organizations necessitates the engagement of innovative activities by business organizations. The existing body of research about innovation has mostly emphasized the pivotal role played by workers in driving innovation inside businesses (Martins and Terblanche, 2003). According to Amabile and Pratt (2016), the capacity for innovation inside an organization is contingent upon the innovative conduct shown by its employees. Consequently, several organizations prioritize the cultivation of such discretionary behavior (Amabile and Pratt, 2016). Since the recognition of innovative work behavior is considered a crucial element for organizations to get a competitive

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advantage (Rao Jada, 2019), Organisations have been earnestly contemplating the precursors of innovative work behavior. Knowledge sharing is a characteristic that has been identified as a significant factor influencing innovative work behavior (Akram et al., 2018; Gow and Lim, 2014; Yeşil et al., 2013; Nguyen et, al.,2020; Kmieciak, 2020; Islam, 2022). The acquisition of employee knowledge is crucial for firms to foster innovation and cultivate a sustainable competitive advantage (Shanker et. al,2017). The exchange of knowledge and skills within an organization plays a crucial role in driving the success and innovation capabilities of the organization (Nonaka and Takeuchi,1995). Battistelli et al. (2019) argue that the engagement of employees in innovative endeavors necessitates contemporary knowledge, skills, and competencies that foster their inclination toward innovative work behaviors. This process enables members of a group, organization, or company to share their knowledge with other members, thereby facilitating the dissemination and utilization of valuable knowledge assets (Hu & Zhao, 2016). The exchange of knowledge plays a crucial role in enhancing an organization's competitive advantage, as well as contributing to its long-term viability and expansion (Yeşil et al., 2013; Lin, 2007). Knowledge sharing is a crucial approach for the accumulation and generation of knowledge within a professional setting. This practice has significant importance in the realm of effective knowledge management (Yeşil et al., 2013).

Moreover, Innovation is crucial in the telecommunications industry, as it drives growth and flexibility in response to technological advancements and changing customer preferences. Therefore, fostering innovation is essential for telecommunication firms to succeed in the rapidly evolving industry and maintain their relevance. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to examine the determinants that impact innovative work behavior within the telecommunications sector, recognizing its importance in organizational contexts as thrust upon by researchers in the literature (Akram et, al.2018). To the researcher's understanding, this work represents a novel endeavor in investigating the multi-dimensional impact of knowledge-sharing behavior on the three stages of innovative work behavior in the Indian Telecom Sector. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to address the gap present in the current body of scholarly research by exploring the impact of multi-dimensional knowledge-sharing behavior in terms of "knowledge donating" and "knowledge collecting" behavior with three phases of innovative work behavior i.e "idea generation", "ideas promotion" and "idea application".

2. Literature review:

2.1 Knowledge sharing behavior

Knowledge sharing (KS) is a fundamental aspect that motivates people to generate knowledge and transform it into a more powerful force (Liebowitz, 2001). The acquisition and use of knowledge are fundamental to the sustenance of an organization since it has been recognized as a vital component for the endurance of businesses in the current dynamic and competitive landscape (Haq and Anwar, 2016). Knowledge sharing (KS) is a focal point of interest that pertains to the reciprocal communication between workers, facilitating the exchange of information and expertise (Radaelli et al., 2014). Knowledge sharing (KS) refers to the process of employees engaging in social interactions to facilitate the exchange of information, skills, and experiences, intending to acquire new knowledge (Jimenez-Jimenez et al., 2014). Based on the research conducted by Lin (2007) and Yeşil et al. (2013), knowledge sharing may be seen as including two distinct dimensions, namely "knowledge donating" and "knowledge collecting". These dimensions exhibit a significant role in shaping a firm's innovation capabilities, as they include the acquisition and contribution of knowledge from workers. Knowledge donation refers to the act of people transferring their intellectual capital to others (Yeşil et al., 2013; Lin, 2007). The process of knowledge collection involves seeking input

from others to acquire and use their intellectual resources (Yeşil et al., 2013; Lin, 2007). When workers exhibit higher levels of engagement in knowledge-sharing activities, they tend to internalize a higher quantity of knowledge. This phenomenon promotes the development of innovative behaviors among workers (Akhavan et.al, 2015). According to Holub (2003), the facilitation of quicker knowledge transmission via sharing plays a pivotal role in cultivating the capacity for critical thinking and creativity.

2.2 Innovative work behavior:

Innovative Work Behavior is defined "as the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization, to benefit role performance, the group, or the organization" (Janssen 2000, p. 288). While "Innovative behaviors reflect the creation of something new or different. Innovative behaviors are by definition change-oriented because they involve the creation of a new product, service, idea, procedure, or process" (Spreitzer,1995, p. 1449). Therefore, the deliberate introduction of novel concepts to address preexisting issues is referred to as innovative work behavior (Peerzada et al., 2022). A company's ability to adapt to changing market conditions and sustain a competitive edge is heavily dependent on its employees' ability to consistently generate innovative ideas (Wahyudi 2019). Organizations are under increasing pressure to expedite the development of new goods and services while retaining efficiency. Consequently, they are persistently endeavoring to foster employee innovative work behavior as a means of sustaining and enhancing long-term performance (Van Burg et, al 2014). The concept of innovative work behaviors encompasses three distinct tasks: idea generation, which involves the development of original ideas; idea promotion, which entails garnering external support for these ideas; and idea application or implementation, which involves the creation of a model or prototype based on the idea (Janssen, 2000). Battistelli, Montani, et al. (2013) argue that to satisfy the rigorous demands of contemporary organizations, the cultivation of innovative work behavior among workers may effectively facilitate their adaptation and enable them to achieve desired job and organizational results. According to Thompson and Werner (1997), mere fulfillment of fundamental job responsibilities is deemed inadequate for workers. Instead, individuals are required to demonstrate proactive behavior and provide innovative ideas to ensure organizational effectiveness. According to Afsar et al. (2018), employees who exhibit higher levels of innovative work behavior have a greater capacity to promptly adapt to the work environment, generate novel ideas, and provide a wider range of services and goods. Hence, the pursuit of continuous innovation has emerged as a crucial organizational imperative for ensuring survival. Consequently, organizations display a keen interest in exploring various aspects that might potentially influence innovative work behavior, (Agarwal, 2014), with knowledge-sharing behavior being one such element.

2.3 Linking Knowledge-sharing behavior and innovative work behavior:

In the pursuit of enhancing firm efficiency, it is imperative to recognize the importance of employee innovative work behavior within an organization (Katz, 1964). The scholarly investigation of the effects of knowledge sharing on the performance of individuals and organizations has gained considerable attention due to its significance, as emphasized by Anand et al. (2021), resulting in a substantial volume of research in this domain (Singh, 2019). According to Luu (2021), the act of sharing knowledge has the potential to enhance performance, foster employee creativity, and promote innovative work behavior. Prior research has shown a favorable effect of knowledge-sharing behavior on innovative work behavior. In a recent empirical investigation carried out by Islam, Zehra, et al. (2022) on the relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and innovative work behavior within the IT sector in Pakistan with occupational self-efficacy as a mediator and the findings of the study provide

evidence supporting a positive impact of knowledge sharing behavior on innovative work behavior. Asurakkody and Kim (2020) conducted a study to assess the impact of knowledge-sharing behavior among nursing students on innovative work behavior, with self-leadership serving as a mediator, within a nursing school in Sri Lanka. The findings of the study indicated a favorable correlation between knowledge-sharing behavior and innovative work behavior. Furthermore, Akram et al. (2020) carried out a study in the Chinese telecommunication industry to examine the impact of organizational justice on innovative work behavior, with Akram et al. (2020) conducted a study in the Chinese telecommunication industry the mediating effect of knowledge sharing behavior and their findings indicated a positive correlation between knowledge-sharing behavior and innovative work behavior. In their study, Jnaneswar and Ranjit (2020) examined the correlation between organizational justice, knowledge-sharing behavior, and innovative work behavior within the context of manufacturing organizations in India. Their findings provided empirical evidence supporting a positive relationship between knowledge-sharing behavior and innovative work behavior among employees. Similarly, Kmieciak, (2021) investigated the effects of trust on knowledge-sharing behavior, and innovative work behavior in large Polish organizations in Poland and confirmed a positive effect of trust on knowledge-sharing behavior and innovative work behavior. Many previous studies have primarily focused on examining the influence of knowledge-sharing behavior on the overall concept of innovative work behavior. However, there is a notable gap in research that delves into the specific dimensions of innovative work behavior affected by the dimension's knowledge sharing. Investigating how knowledge sharing impacts various dimensions of innovative work behavior would provide valuable insights and enhance our understanding of this relationship. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H_1: Knowledge donation has a positive impact on idea generation

H_2: Knowledge donation has a positive impact on idea promotion

H_3; Knowledge donation has a positive impact on idea implementation

H_4; Knowledge collection has a positive impact on idea generation

H_5: Knowledge collection has a positive impact on idea promotion

H_6: Knowledge collection has a positive impact on idea implementation

3. Methodology:

3.1 Measures:

To assess knowledge-sharing behavior, the study used an eight-item measure created by De Vries et al (2006). The scale used in this study assesses two distinct characteristics of knowledge-sharing behavior, namely "knowledge donation" and "knowledge collection".

Innovative work behavior: The measurement of innovative work behavior included the use of a nine-item scale created by Janssen (2000). The scale used in this study assesses three distinct phases of innovative behavior, namely "Idea Generation", "Idea Promotion", and "Idea Application".

3.2 Data collection: Data was gathered from individuals employed within a telecom organization across two states i.e. Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab in India. Data were collected from three telecom players in India i.e. Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and BSNL. A total of 300 surveys were distributed, out of which 282 were successfully collected, indicating a 94 percent response rate. A proportionate stratified systematic sampling technique was used to gather data from respondents. Stratification was done based on the two states and data was gathered from

each state in proportion to its population. The demographic profile of the respondents is given below in Table 1.

Demographic variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	184	65.25%
	Female	98	34.75%
	Total	282	100%
Age	<30	52	18.43%
	31-45	150	53.19%
	Above 45	80	28.36%
Educational Qualifications	Diploma	20	07.09%
	Graduate	160	56.73%
	Postgraduate	102	36.17%
Experience	Up to 2	52	18.43%
	2-5 years	98	34.75%
	>5 years	132	46.80%

3.3 Data Analysis and Findings: The data analysis was conducted using structural equation modeling (SEM) with the assistance of smart PLS software. The reason behind choosing PLS-SEM is it works well with non-normal data and small-size samples. PLS_SEM is carried out in two steps: measurement evaluation and structural model evaluation.

3.4 Measurement model: Validity and reliability assessments were performed to evaluate the robustness of the measurement model (See Table 1). All the items exhibited factor loadings above the threshold limit of 0.70. Furthermore, Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability of each dimension of the model surpassed the crucial threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al. 2019). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all the dimensions was found to exceed the threshold of 0.5, as reported by Hair et al. (2019). Furthermore, the model was also checked for the discriminant validity through the Fornell and Larker Criterion (1961), and the discriminant validity of the model was also established since the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds its highest correlation with other constructs. Consequently, our measurement model's validity and reliability were confirmed and the measurement model was deemed suitable for conducting structural analysis.

Table 1: Reliability and Validity analysis

Constructs	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
KSB	KDB1	0.791	0.837	0.891	0.671
	KDB2	0.833			
	KDB3	0.830			
	KDB4	0.822			
	KCB1	0.778	0.789	0.863	0.613
	KCB2	0.755			
	KCB3	0.841			
	KCB4	0.753			
IWB	IG1	0.858	0.829	0.897	0.745
	IG2	0.896			
	IG3	0.834			
	IP1	0.872	0.825	0.869	0.741
	IP2	0.876			
	IP3	0.834			
	IA1	0.887	0.864	0.917	0.786
	IA2	0.887			
	IA3	0.885			

Notes: KSB: Knowledge Sharing Behaviour; KDB: Knowledge Donating Behaviour

; KCB: Knowledge Collecting Behavior; IWB: Innovative work Behaviour;

IG: Idea Generation; IP: Idea Promotion; IA: Idea Application.

Table 2: Discriminant validity through Fornell and Larker Criterion

Dimensions	**IA**	**IG**	**IP**	**KCB**	**KDB**
IA	**0.886**				
IG	0.640	**0.863**			
IP	0.759	0.643	**0.861**		
KCB	0.477	0.469	0.392	**0.783**	
KDB	0.443	0.464	0.429	0.643	**0.819**

3.5 Structural model analysis:

The assessment of the structural model has been conducted in three steps. Initially, we analyzed the structural model to examine the presence of collinearity which is assessed in terms of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. For the present model, the VIF values for all the predictor constructs were much lower than the recommended threshold of 5, as proposed by

Hair et al. (2017). Therefore, the issue of collinearity does not exist inside our structural model. The subsequent phase included the assessment of path coefficients and their statistical significance. The hypotheses were examined using a bootstrapping approach, which included generating 5,000 bootstrap samples. Hypothesis 1 posited that knowledge donation has a positive impact on idea generation and the results indicated the positive impact of knowledge donation on idea generation (Beta value=0.277; t-value=4.065; p-value=0.000). Furthermore, H_2 stated that there is a positive impact of knowledge donation on idea promotion and the findings revealed a statistically significant and positive impact of knowledge donation on idea promotion (Beta value=0.302; t-value=4.426; p-value=0.000). Similarly, H_3 stated that knowledge donation has a positive impact on idea application and the results pointed out our positive impact of knowledge donation on idea application (Beta value=0.234; t-value=3.530; p-value=0.000). Therefore, the hypothesis H1 is supported. Furthermore, H_4 stated that knowledge collection has a positive impact on idea generation and the results revealed a positive impact on knowledge collection idea generation (Beta value=0.291; t-value=4.043; p-value=0.000). Concerning H_5 which stated that knowledge collection has a positive impact on idea promotion, the results a positive impact of knowledge collection on idea promotion (Beta value=0.199; t-value=2.799; p-value=0.005). Concerning the last hypothesis(H_6) which stated that knowledge collection has a positive impact on idea application, the analysis brought to light the positive impact of knowledge collection on idea application. Table 2 exhibits the results of the hypotheses (Beta value=0.327; t-value=4.822; p-value=0.000). Therefore, all our hypotheses are supported.

Moreover, in the next step, the study included an evaluation of the coefficient of determination (R^2 value) to assess predictive accuracy, as well as the Stone-Geisser's (Q^2) to evaluate the predictive significance of the model. The model explained 26.5% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.265$) in idea generation, 20.7 percent variation ($R^2 = 0.207$) in idea promotion, and 25.9 percent variation ($R^2 = 0.259$) in idea application indicating a satisfactory level of predictive accuracy for the model (Hair et al., 2017). In a similar vein, the Q^2 values obtained via the implementation of a blindfolding process are 0.191, 0.146, and 0.198 for the constructs of idea generation, idea promotion, and idea application respectively. The Q^2 values, as shown by Hair et al. (2017), exhibit a significant level of predictive importance for the model, since they are greater than zero.

Table 3: Results of hypotheses testing

Hypotheses	Beta coefficient	(STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Status
KDB -> IG	0.277	0.068	4.065	0.000	Supported
KDB -> IP	0.302	0.068	4.426	0.000	Supported
KDB-> IA	0.234	0.066	3.53	0.000	Supported
KCB-> IG	0.291	0.072	4.043	0.000	Supported
KCB-> IP	0.199	0.071	2.799	0.005	Supported
KCB-> IA	0.327	0.068	4.822	0.000	Supported

4. Discussions:

This study aimed to investigate the impact of two dimensions of knowledge sharing behavior i.e. "knowledge donating" behavior and "knowledge collecting" behavior on three stages of innovative work behavior i.e. "Idea Generation", "Idea promotion" and "idea application". The results confirmed the positive impact of both dimensions of knowledge-sharing behavior on all three stages of innovative work behavior. Knowledge donation had a positive impact on idea generation (Beta value=0.277; t-statistics=4.065; p value=0.000) which implies that the act of imparting knowledge allows colleagues to be exposed to diverse perspectives and a wider range of facts. The exchange of knowledge has the potential to initiate innovative ideas and foster new experiences. When colleagues engage in the sharing of their expertise, experiences, and viewpoints, it may stimulate innovative thinking and foster the development of new solutions. The willingness to consider other viewpoints may aid individuals in connecting seemingly diverse ideas, hence fostering the generation of novel ideas. However, knowledge donation showed the highest impact (Beta value=0.302; t-statistics=4.426; p value=0.000) on idea promotion. The reason could be that the dissemination or knowledge donation allows colleagues to scrutinize and evaluate ideas. When colleagues engage in open discussions on ideas, they have the opportunity to provide valuable feedback, improve ideas, and identify potential challenges or opportunities. This collaborative process facilitates the refinement of ideas and the identification of strategies for enhancing their feasibility and relevance. The process of knowledge donation also allows colleagues to advocate for their ideas, garnering support and generating enthusiasm among peers, thus facilitating the process of idea promotion. Furthermore, knowledge donation also exhibited a positive impact on idea application (Beta Value=0.234; t-statistics=3.530; p value=0.000) which implies sharing knowledge among peers plays a crucial role in expediting the application of ideas by proactively addressing potential problems, navigating complicated situations by generating innovative ideas and transforming novel ideas into useful application. Similarly, knowledge collection had a positive impact on idea generation (Beta value=0.291; t-statistics=4.043; p value=0.000). Knowledge collection being the process of obtaining facts, insights, experiences, and knowledge from a variety of sources increases the knowledge base of employees. Being exposed to many ideas leads to the generation of novel ideas. Knowledge collection also exhibited a positive impact on idea promotion (Beta value=0.199; t-value=2.799; p value=0.005). Knowledge collection serves to clarify the feasibility, benefits, and possible impact of an idea, thereby, facilitating well-informed discussions among colleagues. Consequently, this contributes to the strengthening and progression of an idea by garnering more support which leads to idea promotion. Moreover, knowledge collection exhibited a positive influence on Idea Application (Beta value=0.327; t-statistics=4.822; p value=0.000). Knowledge collection assists in building an effective strategy, identifies problems, and enables colleagues to coordinate efforts, make informed decisions, and adjust the plan as required. These factors together enhance the probability of effective execution or application of an idea.

5. Conclusion:

The objective of this research was to examine the influence of dimensions of knowledge-sharing behavior aspects on the three phases of innovative work behavior. To the best knowledge of the researcher, the study is the first of its kind to explore the multi-dimensional effect of knowledge-sharing behavior on the three stages of innovative work behavior of employees of the Indian telecom sector, thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge. The results confirm the positive association between the aforementioned variables. Therefore, both dimensions of knowledge sharing are important for fostering innovative work behavior. The current research posits that the act of knowledge collecting has more significance

in facilitating idea generation compared to knowledge donation. These findings contradict the results of Roman Kmieciak, (2022) who found that knowledge donating has more impact on a generation of ideas than knowledge collecting. The results also confirmed the highest impact of knowledge donation on idea promotion. Furthermore, knowledge collection exhibited the highest impact on idea application. However, taking into consideration the holistic view, the results reveal that knowledge-sharing behavior exhibits a positive impact on innovative work behavior of employees. This study provides further validation of earlier empirical research that has shown the positive relationship between knowledge sharing and innovative work behavior (Islam et al, (2022); Asurakkody and Kim (2020); Jnaneswar and Ranjit (2020); Akram et al., 2018). Given the significance of knowledge-sharing behavior in fostering innovative work behavior, individuals should prioritize the sharing of useful knowledge and skills between themselves, as this will contribute to the improvement of their capabilities in innovative endeavors (Anser et al.,2022). Managers can drive the culture of knowledge sharing among employees by assigning new challenges, encouraging innovative approaches, and instigating processes geared towards knowledge development and the exchange of expertise and experiences such as mentoring or coaching (Kmieciak, 2022). Moreover, management should take the initiative and look for ways to motivate employees to share their knowledge. They should provide structural support mechanisms such as technological platforms and as a part of the organizational reward system, incentives must be provided to employees to encourage them to share knowledge. So, organizations should seek out means and ways to encourage their employees to donate and collect knowledge to cultivate innovative work behavior within the organization. This will eventually lead to organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, future researchers are advised to study different mediators or moderators to gain deeper insights into this relationship. This study did not account for the impact of various demographic variables on the variables under investigation. Consequently, future research should explore how different demographic factors influence this relationship.

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