

Knowledge Sharing Among Malaysian Academics: Influence of Affective Commitment and Trust

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Abstract: Knowledge resides within a human being and it is hard to be transferred to others. Unwillingness to share is one of the main impediments of knowledge sharing. In a university setting, this situation could be more alarming as universities are knowledge centric organisation. Knowledge sharing will help universities to strengthen its research and teaching activities. Despite the importance of knowledge sharing, many academics still hoard their knowledge. The aims for this paper are (1) to evaluate the influence of these two emotional factors towards knowledge sharing intention; (2) to examine whether the perception of knowledge sharing in public universities differs from private universities. The research model includes the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and the two affective components. In order to examine the research model, a survey was conducted with a total respondent of 545 academics from 30 universities in Malaysia. Multiple linear regression was used to examine the research model. On the other hand, t-test was used to examine the differences between public and private universities. In general, the findings revealed that emotional influence is crucial for knowledge sharing behaviour. The t-test analysis shows that there are significant differences between public and private universities. This paper contributes to the existing literature by evaluating the impact of emotional factors (affective commitment and affective trust) towards knowledge sharing behaviour. It also provides a greater depth of understanding on how knowledge sharing in public universities deviate from private universities. University administrators need to implement policies and activities to strengthen the emotional bonding between academics in order to facilitate knowledge sharing in Malaysian universities. This is exceptionally crucial for private universities as the results shows that knowledge sharing intention is lower than the public universities.

Keywords: knowledge sharing, theory of planned behaviour, affective commitment and trust

1. Introduction

Knowledge is today seen as one of the 'most strategically important resource' that organisations own (Grant, 1996: , p.376). Davenport and Prusak(1998) went one step further by reiterating that knowledge assets due to their intangibility are difficult to imitate and replicate and are therefore more important than tangible resources. Ownership of knowledge assets are thus seen as a source of long term sustainable competitive advantage. In the context of higher education, universities are considered as knowledge based organisations due to their role as the epitome of knowledge development and management. A clear example would be the sharing of knowledge among academic staff, which would enhance the capability and quality of research undertaken by the universities. It is a norm and culture in an academic institution that senior academic staffs share knowledge and expertise with junior academics to improve the symbiotic processes of learning and teaching respectively. In recent years, knowledge management (KM) researchers have shifted their attention from organisational and technological factors to human factors. This is because social and human factors serve as the key to the willingness of an individual to share his or her knowledge. Naturally, humans have high reluctance to share their knowledge; an effective knowledge management process will never take place if individuals are not willing to share what they know. Willingness relies heavily on each individual. Carmen et al.(2011) stated that employees need to feel, identified with, and involved in the particular social organisation for them to share their knowledge. In other words, the stronger the feeling or identification, the higher the willingness to share knowledge. As such, emotional influence on knowledge sharing is important. From the perspective of the workplace, the emotional component should be evaluated from two dimensions of (1) emotional influence towards the organisation, and (2) emotional influence towards other colleagues. Based on these dimensions, the authors proposed to adopt affective commitment towards the organisation and affect-based trust among colleagues as the two central constructs in this study.

The first objective of this paper is to examine the influence of affective commitment and affective-based trust towards knowledge sharing intention. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) would be used as the anchor model to predict knowledge sharing intention. Meanwhile the two constructs of

emotional influence serve as the antecedents for knowledge sharing intention. The second objective of this paper is to evaluate whether knowledge sharing intention differ between public universities and private universities in Malaysia. Two research questions are addressed as follows:

- Do affective commitment and affect-based trust positively influence knowledge sharing intention?
- Do attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, affective commitment, affect-based trust and knowledge sharing intention differ between public and private universities?

2. Literature review

2.1 Knowledge sharing

Valuable complex knowledge is created via interaction between individuals and through accumulation of personal experience. This knowledge resides in the mind of the individual. Such knowledge is mostly tacit in nature. Tacit or implicit knowledge refers to knowledge that lives and sticks in a person's mind (Markus, 2001). This type of knowledge is normally deeply embedded in the mind of individuals (Janson and McQueen, 2007) and is hard to quantify and can be lost easily when employees leave organisations. Alternatively, explicit knowledge is easily understood, expressed and shared among the members in the organisation (Girard, 2006). Some authors consider explicit knowledge as information that is specific and could be easily encoded into other means (Bartol and Srivastava, 2002). It is important for organisations to make sure tacit knowledge is retained within the organisation through the development of proper knowledge sharing practices.

2.2 Theory of planned behaviour

The theory of planned behaviour suggests that an individual's behaviour is shaped by the intention (I) to execute or not to execute the behaviour. The likelihood of an individual participating in a specific behaviour ($B = f(I)$) corresponds with the behavioural intention. Based on research, behavioural intention is a good indicator of the targeted behaviour. Because of its strong and significant causal link to the targeted behaviour, we propose to adopt behavioural intention as the dependent variable to examine academic knowledge sharing. Behavioural intention (BI) is influenced by three other variables: attitude (ATT) towards the specific behaviour, the social forces for conforming to certain behaviour, also known as subjective norm (SN), and the perceived behavioural control (PBC) towards the specific behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). This could be represented by a simple equation of $BI = ATT + SN + PBC$.

Attitude is described as "the degree to which a person has a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the behaviour in question" (Ajzen, 1991: , p. 188). In other words, attitude assesses an individual's belief and consequences in pursuing a specific behaviour (So and Bolloju, 2005). In the context of knowledge sharing, attitude is looked upon as the evaluation measure of behavioural belief within the context of knowledge sharing as being either favourable or harmful. Individuals in an organisation will of course have higher intention to share their knowledge if they perceive knowledge sharing is favourable (So and Bolloju, 2005). In the current publication of Hsu and Lin (2008), they found a significant relationship between attitude and behavioural intention of using a blog system from the world wide web to share knowledge. Several other researchers have also asserted that attitude towards knowledge sharing is vital for knowledge sharing intention (Bock, et al., 2005: ; Lin and Lee, 2004). Accordingly, we hypothesise:

H1: The higher the attitude towards knowledge sharing the higher the intention to share knowledge

A subjective norm is defined as "the perceived social pressure to perform or not to perform the behaviour" (Ajzen, 1991: , p. 188). As such, subjective norm evaluates and assesses whether an individual is willing to conform to the surrounding social pressure in its existence to sequentially perform a distinct behaviour. This implies that one will have a higher tendency to share his or her knowledge if the individual perceives conforming to the social norm is crucial. For example, an individual has higher intention to share when the individual perceive sharing among colleagues is highly regarded by his or her superior. From the empirical findings of Lin and Lee (2004), and Kuo and Young (2008), they claimed that high subjective norm does lead to high intention toward knowledge sharing. Therefore, we hypothesize:

H2: The higher the subjective norm the higher the intention to share knowledge

Perceived behavioural control is defined as “the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour and it is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments and obstacles” (Ajzen, 1991: , p.188). This construct reflects the controllability of an individual either to act or not to act in a specific behaviour (So and Bolloju, 2005). The concept of perceived behavioural control is deemed to possess similar characteristics as the concept of perceived self-efficacy by Bandura (1982). It is regarded as the self-judgement by an individual regarding his or her capability to achieve a specific goal (Kuo and Young, 2008). If one is perceived of having strong competence and greater control over sharing their knowledge, the intention to share would be higher (Cabrera, et al., 2006: ; Lin, 2007b: ; So and Bolloju, 2005) and ultimately he or she will actually engage in knowledge sharing (Hsu, et al., 2007: ; Thomas, et al., 2001).. In line with this argument the following hypothesis is developed:

H3: The higher the perceived behavioural control the higher the intention to share knowledge

2.3 Emotional influence

Knowledge sharing requires knowledge to be channelled from one party to another. In the context of social organisations, emotional bonding could facilitate such activity. There are two main reasons why emotional evaluation is crucial. First, some researchers have claimed that knowledge sharing in the organisation requires someone to play an extra role that goes beyond the normal responsibility of an employee (Kim and Mauborgne, 1997: ; Carmen et al., 2011). More often than that, this additional role does not result in any tangible or explicit remuneration. A broad range of literature supports a positive influence of affective commitment on extra role behaviour (Schaubroeck and Ganster, 1991: ; Coyle-Shapiro and Kessler, 2000). Second, individuals perceived sharing of knowledge as a risky behaviour since knowledge shared might be misused, mishandled or imitated by others and subsequently affect their status or advantages in the organisation (Ipe, 2003: ; Zhang and Sundaresan, 2010). However, the influence of affect-based trust reduces the perceive risk of sharing knowledge among individuals. As such, we propose that affective commitment and affect-based trust play critical roles in encouraging knowledge sharing.

2.3.1 Affective commitment

Affective commitment denotes the identification and involvement of an individual based on emotional feeling towards the organisation (Allen and Meyer, 1990). In recent studies, several authors have shed light on the importance of affective commitment in influencing knowledge sharing behaviour (Hislop, 2003: ; Van Den Hooff and De Ridder, 2004). Affective commitment is perceived to have the strongest effect on workplace behaviour, eliminating the barrier of resistance to share their knowledge (Meyer, et al., 2002). In the context of a university, the strength of the relationship between an academic and the organisation is believed to affect knowledge sharing behaviour. Once employees are emotionally committed to the organisation, their sense of engagement towards organisational objectives and goals is higher. Thus, when employees adopt a stronger affective commitment, they are more willing to share their knowledge (Lin, 2007a). Similarly, Jarvenpaa and Staples (2001) argued that a higher level of commitment might “engender beliefs that the organization has rights to the information and knowledge one has created or acquired” (p.156). One who has positive emotional feelings towards the organisation will eventually develop a positive attitude towards the required task by the organisation. Therefore, we argue that affective commitment influences one’s knowledge sharing intention. Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis is as follows:

H4: The higher the affective commitment the higher the intention to share knowledge

2.3.2 Affect-based trust

Several definitions of trust exist in the literature. For example, McAllister (1995: , p.25) define trust as “the extent to which a person is confident in, and willing to act on the basis of the words, actions, and decisions of another”. Similarly, Rempel, Holmes and Zanna (1985: , p.96) defined trust as “feelings of confidence and security in the caring responses of the partner and the strength of the relationship”. Based on these definitions, trust results from confidence and willingness to engage in a strong relationship with another person. If one has confidence and willingness to strengthen the relationship with another person, then he or she is more ready to comply in sharing knowledge with those he or she trusts. As commented by Davenport and Prusak(1998), trust lies at the centre of knowledge

sharing. According to the literature, trust appears to be a multidimensional construct (McAllister, 1995; Barney and Hansen, 1994). Specifically, interpersonal trust is derived from affective and cognitive components (Lewis and Weigert, 1985). These two components of affect-based trust and cognition-based trust have been widely used in organisational studies (McAllister, 1995; Yang, et al., 2009). The affective component evaluates the emotional content of trust, which ties the relationship between employees (McAllister, 1995). Explicitly, affect-based trust permits the assessor (the one who judge) to continually interact with the counterpart (the one being judged) based on positive feelings and emotions (Parayitam and Dooley, 2007). When the assessor feels emotionally pleasant in the relationship, he or she is more willing to exchange personal information and knowledge (Chowdhury, 2005). Thus the following hypothesis is developed:

H5: The higher the affect-based trust the higher the intention to share knowledge.

2.4 Differences between private and public university

In Malaysia, there are generally two broad categories of university, the public university and private university. Public universities receive funding from the government whereas private universities receive revenues from customers and funding from shareholders. Malaysia has 20 public universities (Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), 2012a) and 30 private universities (Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), 2012b). Out of the 30 private universities, five are foreign branch campus universities. Some major public universities in Malaysia are 100 years old while the oldest local home-grown private university is only 15 years old. Because of discrepancies in funding, policies, structure and historical development of these universities, we believe that knowledge sharing among the academics in the public universities is diverse from the private universities. To date, very little research has been conducted to compare how knowledge sharing behaviour in public universities differs from private universities. A research conducted by Jain et al.(2007) covering knowledge sharing among academic staff in selected Malaysian universities found that self-serving biases existed whereby respondents tended to be very positive in their perception towards knowledge sharing. Another study conducted by Sandhu et al.(2011) investigating knowledge sharing in the public sector found that the employees have positive inclination towards knowledge sharing. So far, no research has been conducted to compare the perception of knowledge sharing between the private and public sectors in Malaysia. Approximately a decade ago, McAdam and Reid (2000) conducted a comparison between public and private sector employees in Ireland and found that respondents from the public sector were more positive in their views on the importance of knowledge sharing.

It has been noted widely that public institutions have a different set of characteristics compared to private institutions (Cong, et al., 2007). Private universities are more profit-centred and the sector is highly competitive. Conversely, public universities receive subsidies and assistance from the government. However, academics in private universities receive more incentives for greater efficiency compared to the public sector (Cong et al., 2007). Heffron (cited in Cong et al., 2007) reported that public sector personnel have lower work satisfaction and organisational commitment as opposed to the private sector. Therefore, we believe public universities will have different perceptions towards the antecedents of knowledge sharing and knowledge sharing intention as compared to private universities.

Based on the review above, we hypothesise:

H6:

Intention towards knowledge sharing is significantly different between public and private universities.

The theoretical framework for this study is depicted in Figure 1. The dependent variable is intention to share while the independent variables are attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, affective commitment and affect-based trust.

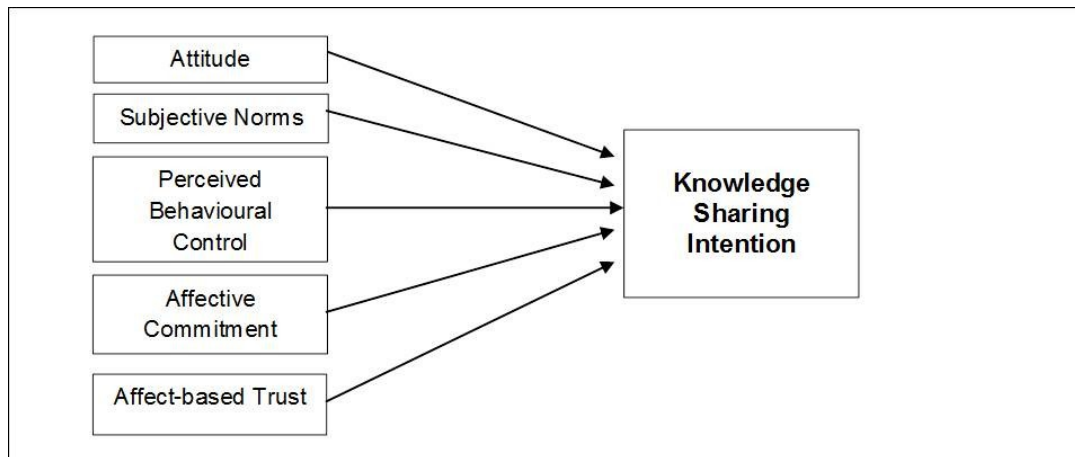


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

3. Research methodology and analysis

3.1 Data collection

An online survey was conducted to collect data from the respondents in various universities in Malaysia. The sampling strategy followed several stages. Firstly, 30 universities in Malaysia were selected randomly from the Ministry of Higher Education website. The staff directory listed on each university's website served as the sampling frame. Then, respondents were randomly selected from the respective university website. Only academics were selected. A total of 1,520 email invitations were sent to potential respondents; 78 of these emails were rejected because of unforeseen technical problems. It is assumed that the remaining 1,442 emails were successfully mailed to the target respondent. Of the 1,442 emails, 53 have chosen to opt-out from the research and the remaining 661 people in total responded to the survey. However, only 545 questionnaires were usable because 116 were incomplete, hence rendering them unusable for the survey. Therefore, the concluding overall response rate was 39.3%.

3.2 Measurement and data collection

The items for the constructs were adapted from past studies and measured on a 5-point Likert scale; ranging from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. Table 1 list all the constructs, sources and number of items used.

Table 1: Constructs, item and source

CONSTRUCT	ITEMS	SOURCE
Attitude towards knowledge sharing (ATT)	4	Bock et al. (2005)
Subjective Norm (SN)	4	Bock et al. (2005)& Kuo and Young (2008)
Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)	6	Ryu et al. (2003)& Lin (2007c)
Intention to share (ITS)	5	Bock et al. (2005)
Affective Commitment (AC)	4	(Allen and Meyer, 1990)
Affect-based trust (ABT)	5	Yang et al.(2009)

4. Data analysis and results

4.1 Participant characteristics

The study population consisted of academics in 30 different universities in Malaysia. Approximately 45% of the respondents were male and 55% of them were female. There is a good mixture of public and private universities in the sample with both equally sharing 50% of the respondents. The average age of respondent is 37 years old and approximately 93% of the respondents had postgraduate qualifications. A majority of the respondents held a lecturer position (58%), 29% of them were senior lecturers and approximately 13% were Professors or Associate Professors.

4.2 Exploratory factor analysis

We conducted the Kaiser-Mayer Olkin's (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's test of sphericity to assess the suitability of the survey data for factor analysis (Hair, et al., 2006). Factor analysis was also useful to determine construct validity: convergent and discriminant validity. The results of the KMO measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test show that the data meet the fundamental requirements for factor analysis. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.902 and the Bartlett test is significant. Factor analysis with principal component analysis and Varimax rotation was then used to group all of the variables into several common factors. The results are reported in Table 2. To control the number of factors extracted, a minimum eigenvalue of one was used in the factor analysis. Factors with eigenvalues less than one were considered insignificant and were excluded. The factor analysis generated a six-factors solution with a total cumulative percentage of variance of 71.68%. They were found to have meaningful relationships and were therefore, retained. The factors that retained are interpreted as follows:

F1: Attitude (ATT); F2: Subjective Norms (SN); F3: Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC); F4: Intention to share Knowledge (ITS); F5: Affective Commitment (AC); F6: Affect-based Trust (ABT)

Table 2: Factor analysis

Items	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
ATT1	0.689					
ATT2	0.803					
ATT3	0.727					
ATT4	0.677					
SN1		0.81				
SN2		0.809				
SN3		0.772				
SN4		0.704				
PBC1			0.617			
PBC2			0.668			
PBC3			0.879			
PBC4			0.847			
PBC5			0.711			
PBC6			0.839			
ITS1				0.709		
ITS2				0.682		
ITS3				0.789		
ITS4				0.731		
ITS5				0.699		
AC1					0.841	
AC2					0.83	
AC3					0.84	
AC4					0.816	
ABT1						0.796
ABT2						0.828
ABT3						0.816
ABT4						0.829
ABT5						0.824

4.3 Reliability test

A Cronbach coefficient alpha test was conducted on all six factors (5 Independent Variables and 1 Dependent Variable) to test the reliability of all of the item variables. This was to determine the internal consistency of the scale used. The values of Cronbach Alpha coefficient are depicted below in Table 3. All of the factors were found to have alpha coefficient values of greater than 0.7, which is an acceptable level of reliability (Hair et al., 2006).

Table 3: Reliability tests

FACTORS	CRONBACH ALPHA VALUES
Attitude	0.832
Subjective norms	0.866
Perceived behavioural control	0.832
Intention to share knowledge	0.847

FACTORS	CRONBACH ALPHA VALUES
Affective Commitment	0.907
Affect-based trust	0.908

4.4 Descriptive statistics and analysis

Table 4 lists all the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations) involving both the dependent and independent variables. A closer examination of the mean scores reveals that generally, academics are very positive towards sharing of knowledge in universities. The highest mean score was obtained for PBC (4.10) whereas the lowest mean score was obtained for ABT (3.57). All correlations were significant at $p < 0.01$

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the constructs

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1 ATT	3.91	0.48					
2 SN	3.80	0.60	.533**				
3 PBC	4.10	0.47	.495**	.312**			
4 AC	3.66	0.78	.348**	.400**	.328**		
5 ABT	3.57	0.66	.380**	.384**	.255**	.375**	
Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
6 ITS	3.84	0.49	.520**	.459**	.445**	.434**	.394**

N= 545; *correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1- tailed).

4.5 Regression analysis

To examine hypotheses 1 to 5, regression analysis was conducted. T-test analysis was used to examine hypothesis 6. The results of the regression analysis and t-test are shown in Table 5 and 6 respectively. To test for multicollinearity, variance inflation factor (VIF) values were examined and all were found to be below 2.5, which means there is low multicollinearity among the independent variables and the stability of the regression was not affected (Hair et al, 2006). Table 5 depicts a linear regression of the general mode. Intention to share knowledge serves as the dependent variable. Whereas, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, affective commitment and affect-based trust serve as the independent variables.

Table 5: Regression results on the effects of ATT, SN, PBC, AC and ABT on ITS

Independent variables	Beta Coefficient	t-value	p-value	VIF
Constant	.819	4.874	.000**	
ATT	.240	5.312	.000**	1.74
SN	.127	3.720	.000**	1.55
PBC	.200	4.851	.000**	1.38
AC	.116	4.724	.000**	1.34
ABT	.099	3.434	.001**	1.31
$R^2 = 0.406$, $F = 73.572$, $\text{Sig} = 0.000$; ** $p < 0.01$, (N= 545)				

Based on table 5 above, all antecedents for knowledge sharing intention are supported. As such hypotheses one to five are all supported. R^2 value of 0.406 showed that 41% of the variation in knowledge sharing intention is explained by attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, affective commitment and affect-based trust. Attitude towards knowledge sharing is the most crucial factor as it has the highest effect towards knowledge sharing intention ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.01$) and it is followed by perceived behavioural control ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, affect-based trust has the least influence on knowledge sharing intention ($\beta = 0.099$, $p < 0.01$).

Next, in order to examine the differences between the public sector employees with the private sector employees toward knowledge sharing intention, two additional regression analyses were conducted. Both models achieved statistical significant at $p < 0.001$. The Adj R^2 value for private sector is slightly higher than public sector with 0.432 and 0.354 respectively. The results of the analyses are stated in Table 6 below. All independent variables are significant except for affect-based trust in the private sector where $p > 0.05$. Based on the comparison stated below, attitude, subjective norm and affective commitment played a more significant role in predicting knowledge sharing intention in the private sector than the public sector. Perceived behavioural control had a stronger impact on the public sector employees as compared to the private sector. However, the proposed framework for this

research seems to work better for public sector as all independent variables are significantly affecting knowledge sharing intention among the employees in public sector.

Table 6: Results of regression analyses comparing the public and private sector employees independent variables

	Public sector employees coefficient	Mean for public sector	Private sector employees coefficient	Mean for private sector
Constant	1.029***		.662**	
ATT	.149*	3.97	.309***	3.86
SN	.107*	3.93	.134**	3.66
PBC	.241***	4.13	.177**	4.06
AC	.099**	3.81	.127***	3.50
ABT	.140***	3.59	.074	3.56
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$	$F = 30.711^{***}$ $R^2 = 0.366$ $Adj R^2 = 0.354$ $N = 272$		$F = 40.936^{***}$ $R^2 = 0.434$ $Adj R^2 = 0.432$ $N = 273$	

4.6 T-test

An independent sample t-test was used to examine the differences of knowledge sharing intention between public universities and private universities. According to table 7 below, intention to share knowledge in public sector is significantly different from private sector. The mean of this construct for public universities (3.9147) is higher than private universities (3.7736). The analysis fulfilled the Levene test where equal variances were assumed. Therefore, hypothesis 6 is supported.

Table 7: T-test

Variable	Education Sector	Mean	F	Sig.		t	Mean difference
Intention to share knowledge	Public	3.9147	.922	.337	Equal variances assumed	3.325	0.141**
	Private	3.7736					

df=543, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

5. Implications, conclusions and limitations

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the effects of affective commitment and affect based trust on knowledge sharing behaviour among the academics in Malaysia and to examine the differences in perceptions towards knowledge sharing intention between employees in public universities and private universities. Generally, the results indicated a good fit to the data. This research has led to several theoretical and managerial implications. Existing studies provide ample literature regarding factors that influence knowledge-sharing, however, limited research exist in this area from the context of academics in institutions of higher learning in a developing country. Overall, all academics were found to have a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing. Moreover, it was identified that affective commitment, along with affect-based trust, attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, carried significant influence in predicting one's intention to share knowledge among academics.. Also perceived behavioural control was identified as the factor having the strongest influence on knowledge sharing.

On the other hand, both the emotional factors (affective commitment and affect based trust) were found to have the lowest influence on knowledge sharing. The mean score for affect based trust was the lowest. This indicates that the emotional bonding among academics in Malaysia is relatively low. An individual's attitude and control over knowledge sharing intention seemed to be more important in the prediction of knowledge sharing intention. The major contribution to this phenomenon might be due to the fact that academics are self-govern and tend to work independently. Therefore it is opined that the interpersonal trust is low. This result is similar with the recent finding of Kim and Ju (2008) whereby the academics from the South Korea perceived trust as insignificant towards knowledge sharing.

A comparison of public and private university academics also recorded mixed results. The mean scores recorded for each construct in public universities were identified as higher than those of

private universities. Private universities scored a lower mean in every construct. This could be due to the fact that private universities are profit based in nature. Tendency to hoard knowledge could be higher as a result of lack of affective commitment and greater competition among academics. Additionally, results from the regression analysis performed for the private sector contradicts with past research, whereby researchers argued that affect-based trust is a crucial factor in affecting knowledge sharing intention. However, results revealed that affect-based trust is in fact insignificant in predicting knowledge sharing intention; while attitude was conversely identified as the most important factor in predicting one's intention towards knowledge sharing for the private sector. This implies that if the academics are more favourable toward knowledge sharing, they will have higher tendency to share their knowledge with others. Meanwhile, within the public sector, perceived behavioural control appeared to carry the strongest impact towards knowledge sharing intention in the public sector. This indicates that academics within the public sector must first maintain the belief that they have the ability to share their knowledge, before subsequently engaging in knowledge sharing activities.

From a managerial point of view, private university administrators must place greater emphasis on encouraging academics to share their knowledge. This will help in creating a more positive attitude towards knowledge sharing. Administrators in the private universities can opt to organise activities that can positively increase the attitude of its academics towards knowledge sharing. These activities include focusing on employee concerns, appreciating their contributions, and providing public acknowledgment for their efforts especially pertaining to knowledge sharing. Apart from this, administrators of public universities should place heavier emphasis on developing academics' confidence in participating in knowledge sharing activities. This could be achieved by conducting training and workshops that focus on knowledge sharing activities, such as teaching and researching skills training, internal sharing of research work and the use of knowledge cafés. Through such trainings and workshops, academics will be better equipped with skills related to their work and this will lead to an increased confidence for them to share their knowledge. Furthermore, these trainings or workshops will serve as a platform for academics to share their knowledge and will consequently result to a higher propensity of them engaging in knowledge sharing behaviour.

As affect-based trust was identified to have the lowest mean score, universities in Malaysia must specifically take proactive measures to enhance the emotional bonding among academics in order to increase the presence of this factor.. University administrators must also develop activities to enhance interpersonal relationship between academics and forge enhanced feelings of trust among them. Standing to promote a climate of frequent interaction and open communication may strengthen the affect-based trust between academics in the university. More specifically, universities could encourage more teamwork in research projects or consultancy works or academic teachings. Although affective commitment and affect-based trust is not a strong predictor for knowledge sharing intention in Malaysian universities, we believe that in time, these factors will play a crucial role in affecting knowledge sharing behavior when universities in Malaysia reach greater maturity.

This study includes a few limitations. First, the findings of this research must be interpreted with distinct parameters and considerations as the sample adopted in this research is purely based on the context of universities in Malaysia. Consequently the results are industry specific with reference to the academia world and would unlikely be readily applicable to other industries. To increase the generalizability of the findings, future research could involve different industries. It should also be noted that the research is a cross sectional study rather than a longitudinal study. Cross sectional research might not be able to capture the perception of knowledge sharing behaviour across time. Nevertheless, having made this statement, a majority of the relationships posited were based on the grounded findings from past research. Future studies should also examine whether personal and demographic factors such as gender, ethnicity, job position, type of industry, and country of origin will moderate the effects of affective commitment and affect-based trust on knowledge sharing behaviour.

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