

Factors Affect Knowledge Sharing by Using Knowledge Management Systems to Support Decision Making Processes

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Abstract

In the current fluid environment, the challenge for society and organizational decision makers is how to accumulate and share knowledge that stems from various sources, and maximize value generated from all available assets. For this purpose, this paper explores how knowledge sharing (KS) is mediated by technology, and more specifically, by Knowledge Management Systems (KMSs) to support decision making processes (DMP) in organizations. In this study, 42 semi-structured interviews were conducted and a set of strong overarching themes concerning the factors that affect KS in using KMSs to support the DMP in Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in a conceptual framework which comprises four core themes: Knowledge Management Systems, Knowledge Sharing Practice, Culture, and Decision-making Processes. This study proposes a conceptual framework that would help managers, employees and decision makers to identify ways of leveraging and sharing knowledge by using KMSs in MNCs.

Keywords (Required)

Knowledge Management Systems, Decision-making Processes, Knowledge Sharing, Organisational Culture.

Introduction

In the current global market and in this highly competitive environment, society and organisational decision makers are increasingly recognising an urgent need to institutionalise knowledge sharing (KS) as a means of obtaining the best value from all available knowledge assets (Goh, 2007). To facilitate knowledge flow in organisations, specific relationships between individuals and groups are required (Huang et al., 2014). However, effective KS between different units overseas is a challenge for Multinational Corporations (MNCs), as there are so many unprecedented difficulties facing managers outside their organisations, along with environmental “forces for change”, such as globalisation, emerging technologies, emerging best business practices, government regulations, politics, competitive global financial markets, limited availability of knowledge workers, and higher worker turnover rates (Cuffe, 2007). As Montazemi et al. (2012) emphasise, the effective sharing of organisational knowledge is particularly relevant for MNCs, as it is considered a significant source of competitive advantage in their global strategy. Therefore, in order to succeed in the global society, MNCs need to identify, evaluate, create, evolve, and develop their knowledge assets since knowledge is one of their major economic resources (Ergazakis and Metaxiotis, 2011). Moreover, with the advent of the knowledge economy and the increasing size of the knowledge society, organisations and societies continue to seek new ways of leveraging and sharing knowledge to support organisational decision makers and decision-making processes (DMP) (Thompson et al., 2009; DeTienne and Jackson, 2001). In this paper, we investigate how knowledge sharing is mediated by technology, and more specifically, by KMSs to support decision making processes (DMP) in organisations. Therefore, we used an exploratory research with semi-structured interviews supported by qualitative analysis to support the exploration and interpretation of this study. In this paper we begin by discussing Knowledge Management Systems, Knowledge Sharing, and DMP in MNCs. Then, we outline the methodology and data collection of the study, followed by the findings and conceptual framework. The final sections are the discussion and conclusions, and we draw out some of the implications of our findings with a focus on future research.

Research Background

Knowledge-Based View (KBV)

In the current economy “where the only certainty is uncertainty” the one sure source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge (Nonaka, 1995). The KBV of the organisation is at the centre of the resource based view (RBV) (Conner and Prahalad, 1996; Grant, 1996; Zheng et al., 2010), indicating that the most important source of an organisation’s sustainable competitive advantage is its ability to create and utilise knowledge (Grant, 1996; Kogut and Zander, 1992; Nonaka, 1995; Prahalad and Hamel, 1990). The KBV points out the importance of understanding the organisational processes to access and utilise knowledge owned by its employees (Grant, 1996). It has developed the view of the firm as a bundle of resources from the RBV, focusing on the most strategically valuable and perhaps the only source of competitive advantage.

The KBV treats KS through the organisational capacity to integrate knowledge within existing structures of the organisation and share the integrated knowledge between individuals (Michailova and Minbaeva, 2012). It emphasises the importance of considering knowledge characteristics. For example, Szulanski (1996) explores the knowledge characteristics that influence the degree of KS by identifying motivational factors and knowledge-related factors that create internal “stickiness” of knowledge in organisations and impede their internal sharing. KS does not occur automatically; it may require substantial organisational efforts aimed at encouraging close relationships between organisations’ members (Michailova and Minbaeva, 2012). Accordingly, organisations should invest in systems which are symbolised by continuous social interactions, communication of ideas, sharing of knowledge and other acts associated with the social character of learning (Minbaeva et al., 2003). The KBV considers the organisation as a set of knowledge-assets and the role of the organisation is creating, organising and deploying these assets to create value from them (Grant, 1996). Also, information technology (IT) is important for organisations in making the best use of these resources. Alavi and Leidner (2001) point out that IT can play a significant role in the KBV of the firm when information systems are used to synthesise and enhance inter- and intra- KM. Thus, organisational culture and KMSs can be perceived as the organisation’s plan of deploying and sharing knowledge assets. Thus, to better understand knowledge as a competitive resource and link it with KS, this study aims to extend the KBV in the context of KS.

Knowledge Management Systems (KMSs)

Over the past three decades, many organisations have developed information-technology-based systems designed specifically to facilitate the sharing, integration, and utilisation of knowledge, referred to as Knowledge Management Systems (KMSs) (Nielsen and Michailova, 2007). Alavi and Leidner (2001) define KMSs as “Information Technology based systems developed to support and enhance the organisational processes of knowledge creation, storage/retrieval, transfer, and application”. They also point out that IT can be used as an enabler in KM initiatives, but stress that KM initiatives do not necessarily involve the implementation of IT solutions.

Organisations across all sectors recognise the critical role of effective KMSs in their future success (Shin, 2004). Binney (2001, p.33) posited that “The KM spectrum has been developed to assist organisations in understanding the range of KM options, applications and technologies available to them”. Sharda et al. (2013) point out that KMSs are intended to help an organisation to cope with rapid change, turnover, downsizing, and leveraging knowledge use by making the expertise of the organisation’s human capital widely accessible. Indeed, the focus of the Information Systems literature has shifted from data and technology to knowledge and expertise (Willcocks and Whitley, 2009).

Knowledge Sharing (KS)

With the advent of the knowledge economy and the increasing size of knowledge societies, organisations continue to seek new ways of leveraging and sharing knowledge to support DMP (DeTienne and Jackson, 2001). The primary objective of most KM research and practice is to facilitate effective and efficient KS among organisational members (Shin, 2004; Davenport and Prusak, 2000; Nonaka et al., 1998).

Effective KS is not moving knowledge from one location to another, but the basic notion is that the sharing of viable knowledge should assist with collaborative problem solving between people, directly and indirectly, supported by networks and tools (Wang and Noe, 2010). KS refers to the provision of know-how

to help others and to collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures (Cummings, 2004). Although, in reality, KS is still challenging for managers, organisations exert a lot of effort to utilise, implement and apply the knowledge that they have to make actual use of this knowledge and to be reflected in organisational performance (Gold et al., 2001; Zheng et al., 2010). The term KS has been used interchangeably in the literature with “knowledge transfer”, “knowledge diffusion” and “knowledge exchange” (Cabrera et al., 2006; Szulanski et al., 2000). Wang and Noe (2010) highlight the differences between knowledge sharing, knowledge transfer, and knowledge exchange. Knowledge transfer includes both KS by the source of knowledge and the recipients’ acquisition, application, and use of this knowledge. Knowledge exchange involves both knowledge sharing and knowledge seeking, or in other words, it includes employees providing knowledge to others and employees searching for knowledge from others. Davenport and Prusak (2000) define KS as “The process by which knowledge is transferred from one person to another, from individuals to groups, or from one group to another group”. Kulkarni et al. (2006) use the term KS to mean both contributing to and using available knowledge. In this paper, “knowledge sharing” will be used to describe the movement of knowledge between different individuals, departments, divisions, units or branches in MNCs through KMSs.

Decision-making Processes (DMP)

DM is a fundamental activity for managers and, as a result of the increase in its complexity, the issue of developing DM capabilities remains a challenge (Papamichail and Rajarm, 2007). Newell and Marabelli (2015) argue that “today, digital data are captured through a variety of devices that have the ability to monitor the minutiae of an individual’s everyday life. These data are often processed by algorithms, which support (or drive) decisions”. In the DMP, decision makers combine different types of data, both internal and external, and different types of knowledge, tacit and explicit, which are available in a variety of forms throughout the organisation such as knowledge owned by an individual, developed from ongoing practices, the wisdom of the crowd or the connections observed in a data-set (Newell, 2014). Knowledge workers and managers continuously engage in DMP in various applications such as product design and strategy formulation (Sharda et al., 2013).

There is a large number of research studies in IS that have investigated technology-based decision making and its effect on decision-making behaviour (Chen and Koufaris, 2014; Kamis et al., 2008; Lilien et al., 2004; Barkhi, 2002; Todd and Benbasat, 1999). Information systems can potentially transform DMP and improve organisational performance (Habjan and Gotsi, 2014).

Research Methodology

The qualitative analysis presented here is used as exploratory research. It supports the exploration and interpretation of the study. The authors followed a semi-structured interview protocol that began with general questions about participants and their experience in the organisation. In total, 42 semi-structured interviews were conducted. After the data collection, thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis is one such approach; it concentrates on the themes or subjects and patterns, emphasising, pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this study a set of strong overarching themes concerning the factors affecting KS were identified based on analysis of the interviews. The participants in this study all use KMSs to support the DMP, most on a daily basis. Most respondents have more than five years’ experience of using KMSs.

Analysis & Discussion

The thematic analysis used in this paper highlights the factors that affect knowledge sharing and indicates how participants in MNCs share knowledge through KMSs to support organisational decision makers. The emergent conceptual framework comprises four core themes: *Knowledge Management Systems* (Technology Acceptance, Communication Tools and KMS Usage), *Knowledge Sharing Practice* (Content, External Factors, and Willingness to Share), *Culture* (National Culture, Organisational Culture, and IT Culture), and *Decision-making Processes* (Extent of Analysis and Speed).

Knowledge Management Systems (KMSs)

Under this theme, three different sub-themes were identified: Technology Acceptance, Communication Tools, and KMS Usage.

Technology acceptance- affects the participant's decisions regarding using KMSs. In this study, technology acceptance depends on employees' perceptions regarding the usefulness and the ease of use of KMSs in supporting their job performance without extra effort. Interviewees stressed that employees in MNCs want KMSs to be easy to use, like the social networking tools that they use in their daily life (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, some applications on smartphones, Google, etc.). They also want advanced and smart searching tools to be available in KMSs to enable them to search and find knowledge quickly and easily by codes, abbreviations, product, country, branch, region, keywords, etc. This finding is in line with some studies which show that the links between employees within social networks can facilitate KS and enhance the quality of knowledge shared (Coakes et al., 2008; Cross and Cummings, 2004; Hansen et al., 2005; Reagans and McEvily, 2003; Wang and Noe, 2010). Coakes et al. (2008) point out that "social networks hold those colleagues who are most trusted in central positions within the knowledge sharing activities".

Communication tools- participants prefer KMSs that have a variety of tools to help them in creating and sharing usable knowledge through an interactive, consolidated, and user-centred design; they want KMSs to help them in finding, sharing, interacting, and collaborating with each other in a simple way. Recent technologies have also affected employees' behaviour, as the participants noted that they want to have KMS applications on their mobiles to enable them to share knowledge and documents with their colleagues easily at any time and from anywhere. Additionally, some participants have internal multi-media communication tools in their MNCs (i.e. intranet, TV channels, radio stations, magazines) which keep employees updated with the latest news regarding their work, best practice, markets, and customers. However, MNCs use shared drives which allow employees to access different knowledge-bases but with different degrees of accessibility, according to their position, location, and level of authority. As a result, participants pointed out the importance of having unified KMSs in all other branches to avoid any differences that might prevent them from sharing knowledge. Overall, communication tools, social networks, and the existence of networking connections can facilitate KS in MNCs.

KMSs usage- was highlighted in this study as an important theme that affects KS in MNCs; as already noted, most of the interviewees studied have more than five years' experience in using KMSs, use them on a daily basis, and consider them as a crucial part of their daily work. Participants also described the wide variety of KMS tools they use in KS and the DMP; tool selection depends on what they want to share or what they want to decide. Nicolas (2004) highlights this point in his study and reveals that each KMS has an impact on the DMP, and this impact depends on the KMS used; it is therefore recommended that organisations match the right KMS with their DM situations. Minbaeva (2007) emphasises the importance of involving MNC units in using KMSs with other branches, and states that "the higher the degree of involvement of the focal subsidiary in network relations with other MNC units, the higher the degree of KS". On the other hand, not all participants prefer to use KMSs for KS. For example, some of the executives over 50 years old in the Middle East prefer to use traditional methods of KS (i.e. telephone, fax, face-to-face, etc.); if they are required to use KMSs in their work, they just ask the people who work for them. Szulanski (2000) highlights this point and mentioned that in spite of the increasing use of technology to facilitate KS within organisations, face-to-face communication and interaction is still an indispensable mechanism for KS, especially when more tacit knowledge is involved.

Knowledge Sharing Practices

Under this main theme, three different sub-themes were identified: Content, Willingness to Share, and External Factors.

The content- of KMSs is perceived to be an important factor in KS to support DMPs in MNCs. The participants underlined the importance of reviewing all knowledge shared between MNC units through a committee or knowledge team to check the veracity and accuracy of knowledge uploaded on KMSs and to avoid any incorrect decisions or errors based on this knowledge. Additionally, interviewees remarked on the importance of keeping the content of KMSs secure and regularly updated to ensure that all knowledge is correct and accurate. These findings are consistent with the literature. For example, Shin (2004) says

that lack of up-to-date knowledge can hinder KS. Bordia et al. (2006), state that employees' apprehension about KS may result from their perception that the shared knowledge might be inaccurate and likely to result in unfavourable criticism from others. Nemati et al. (2002), state that KM initiatives can facilitate capturing, coding, and KS within organisations, which is expected to result in well-informed decision processes.

Willingness to share- KS obviously cannot occur unless there is a willingness to share between senders and receivers. Some participants highlighted that they do not trust the knowledge that they have, so they are less willing to share it. Similarly, some respondents do not trust the knowledge shared through KMSs when they do not know the source; equally, they prefer to share knowledge with someone they know. Thus, most participants are willing to share knowledge with someone they know and trust rather than someone they do not know. These findings are consistent with a body of research that demonstrates the relationships between these factors and KS. For example, Wu et al. (2007) point out that KS involves providing knowledge to another person or a team or community of practice with expectations of reciprocity. Ghoshal and Bartlett (1994), state that unfriendly relationships between source and recipient might be a barrier to KS in organisations. Minbaeva (2007) developed and tested a model of KS in MNCs through analysing the relationships between knowledge senders and receivers. She found that, for receivers, "the higher the ability and motivation of the subsidiary's employees to absorb knowledge (absorptive capacity), the higher the degree of KS"; and for senders, "the higher the ability and motivation of the knowledge senders to share knowledge (disseminative capacity), the higher the degree of KS".

External factors- participants pointed out several external effects of KMSs. Politics plays a major role in KS, especially in the Middle East, and participants believed that their MNCs have hidden agendas which are influenced by politics. They also claimed that sometimes their organisations control the DMP through KMSs by providing or precluding specific knowledge to avoid or support specific decisions. They also noted that some branches cannot always access all knowledge in specific countries like Syria, for political reasons. Secondly, some participants said that MNC units operating in some African and Middle East countries are involved in fabrications and falsification practices, in corruption, and in bribery. All of these practices are known to employees and accepted by their headquarters and managers, as they believe that this is how work is done in these countries. However, they cannot share this type of knowledge on KMSs.

Mellahi et al. (2011) point out that "substantial economic and political changes have been underway in most Middle Eastern countries which prompt the need for a closer look at emerging business opportunities and challenges for MNCs operating or considering entering the region". Thirdly, the ICT infrastructure is itself considered as an obstacle in specific countries, as MNCs experience network connection problems, especially in developing countries; thus KMSs in these branches might be down or slow because of the speed of the internet or other connection problems.

Culture

Under this main theme, three different sub-themes were identified: National Culture, Organisational Culture, and Information Technology Culture.

Different national cultures- or culture distance between employees in MNCs also affect KS and KMS use, as there are many employees working in MNCs with different nationalities, languages, norms, and customs. Participants pointed out that some employees regularly use two different languages in KS (English and their national language), as not all employees speak English. Especially in the Middle East, participants use at least two languages in KS: English and, for example, Arabic, Hindi-Urdu, or Bengali. In other regions, for example Europe, knowledge is shared in English irrespective of nationality or mother tongue. Some participants would therefore prefer to have a translator or dictionary in the KMS to facilitate reading, writing, and sharing knowledge in any language. These findings are consistent with the body of research that investigates the relationships between national culture and KS and the challenges to MNCs (Ford and Chan, 2003; Minbaeva, 2007; Wang and Noe, 2010). One of the top priorities of MNCs is to manage KS effectively to handle these differences (Monteiro et al., 2008). Kostova et al. (2008) point out that "MNCs have complex internal environments, with spatial, cultural, and organisational distance, language barriers, inter-unit power struggles and possible inconsistencies and conflict among the interests, values, practices, and routines used in the various parts of the organisation". Therefore, KS between MNCs units requires particular coordination mechanisms and tools in this complex environment (Ghoshal and Bartlett, 1995; Gupta and Govindarajan, 2000; Sia et al., 2010).

David et al. (2000) state that culture can shape assumptions about which knowledge is important, given that subcultures often lead their members to define important knowledge differently from other groups in the organisation.

Organisational culture- includes values, visions, missions, incentives, consistency, and involvement. Participants pointed out that OC affects the way individuals and groups interact to share knowledge with managers, employees, customers, and stakeholders to achieve the organisation's objectives and mission. Participants highlighted the importance of training and organisational learning in KS, as they believe that much knowledge can be shared during the training time, because the purpose of attending any training is to learn something new. These findings are consistent with the research that has found a positive contribution of OC in supporting KS. For example, Grover and Davenport (2001) and Zheng et al. (2010) suggest that in order to have long-term and complete success in using knowledge for business advantage, some changes need to take place, mainly in core aspects of the business such as culture. Moreover, David et al. (2000) emphasise the fact that the benefits of a new technology infrastructure will be limited if practices and long-standing organisational values are not supportive of KS across units. Management support is critical for the success of KS. For example, the support of top management, supervisors, and co-workers affects the quality of KS through influencing employees' commitment to knowledge management, and increasing employees' KS and their perception of the usefulness of KS (Cabrera et al., 2006; Kulkarni et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2006). Similarly, Wang and Noe (2010) recommend that managers should provide the support necessary to encourage KS among employees. Thus, the importance of OC lies in its ability to have a direct effect on employees' KS behaviour as well as an indirect effect through influencing managers' attitudes (Wang and Noe, 2010). Therefore, organisations can support KS through creating opportunities for employees to interact, and encouraging communications between departments (Liebowitz and Megbolugbe, 2003; Yang and Chen, 2007).

Information Technology culture- was highlighted as a theme in this study, although there were geographic variations in the way that participants perceived IT's pros and cons. They also drew attention to who should control IT in MNC units and the IT skills required from employees. The participants pointed out the importance of IT expenditure and how it should be controlled. Although little research has been undertaken in analysing IT culture and its effect on KS, some assumptions that affect IT cultural patterns were highlighted by Leidner and Kayworth (2006): the fearful IT, the controlled IT, the revered IT, the demystified IT, and the integrated IT. These assumptions relate to IT control, IT's relation with strategy, IT skills, justification for IT expenditure, and who benefits (or loses) from IT.

Decision-making Processes

Under this main theme, two sub-themes were identified: the Extent of Analysis and the Speed of Decision Making.

The extent of analysis is seen as important in the DMP, as participants pointed out that KMSs cannot make decisions, but can offer knowledge and analysis that can help them in the DMP. They stress that KMSs are important in the early stages of DM, as they can identify sources of knowledge and establish what the decision makers need to know with regard to the issue or problem. For example, participants remarked that KMSs can help them in identifying experts who should be contacted, and who have experience and knowledge of specific issues. They also stated that KMSs can facilitate the analysis of DM as they believe that all data, information, knowledge, best practice, cases, and documents are available and can be analysed easily through KMSs. They agreed that KMSs can be used in the formulation, evaluation, and appraisal phases of DM, but they underlined that KMSs are more helpful in the formulation stage than the evaluation and appraisal stages. They added that KMSs can provide them with many possible alternatives and can help them in verifying and clarifying why they should select a specific alternative and ignore others. This finding is consistent with research that highlighted the importance of technology and the DMP. For example, technology plays a vital role in businesses, as it helps employees in accessing the knowledge they need when they need it and provides the tools with which decision makers and users can leverage their knowledge in the context of their work (Abdelrahman *et al.*, 2019; Abdelrahman and Papamichail, 2017; Saleh *et al.*, 2017; Chong and Chong, 2009; Bals *et al.*, 2007). Several tools have emerged to support complex DMPs and facilitate effective analytical thinking (Marakas, 2003). To a great extent, as organisations become complex there is an emphasis on decentralised DM.

The time and the speed of KMSs are essential characteristics for employees in MNCs; the interviewees preferred to use quick tools in KS in order to support DM and finish their work quickly. They use any tools that will enable them to accomplish their work quickly and effectively, and it does not matter which tool they use (e.g. phone, email, KMSs, face-to-face, or chat). However, other participants considered the use of KMSs as time-consuming, as they cannot explain to their managers the time they spend finding the answers they were looking for. Overall, the vast majority of participants perceived that KMSs save time in searching, finding people, getting support documents, and finishing a task.

Leidner and Elam (1995) posit that using technological systems frequently and over time will be positively related to perceived problem identification and decision-making speed for senior and middle managers. However, Szulanski (1996) states that employees may feel that the time consumed in KS will deplete the time and effort available for their work activities; accordingly they will be less likely to share knowledge. Moreover, sometimes employees do not use KMSs in KS because of lack of time, unfamiliarity with the issue, and the effort needed to codify and share knowledge, especially when there is weak trust between the employees who are contributing to or reusing the knowledge (Hew and Hara, 2007; Kankanhalli et al., 2005; Wang and Noe, 2010).

Conclusion

The findings presented in this paper indicated that participants in MNCs tend to use KMSs regularly to share best practice and knowledge with other branches all over the world, which is unsurprising as knowledge is the core of their business and the reason for their existence and survival. Without KMSs they cannot share knowledge appropriately. The thematic analysis used in this study highlighted the factors that affect KS in using KMSs to support the DMP in MNCs, and these are summarised in a conceptual framework (Figure 1) which comprises four core themes: Knowledge Management Systems, Knowledge Sharing Practice, Culture, and Decision-making Processes. Findings are discussed in relation to literature in the following sections.

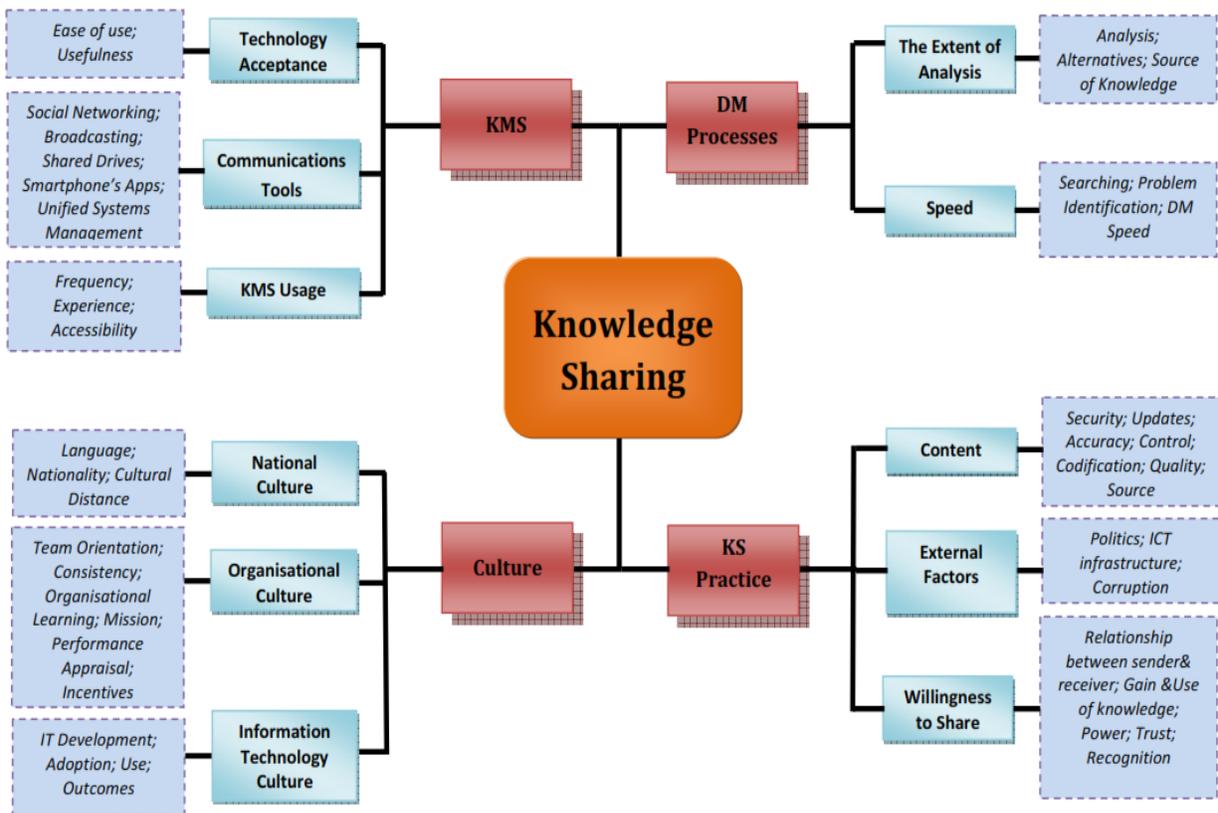


FIGURE 1.
Factors Affecting Knowledge Sharing by Using KMSs to Support Decision Making Processes

Given the advent of the knowledge economy and the increasing magnitude of the knowledge society, this study highlights the factors that affect KS by using KMSs to support DMP in MNCs; these factors have four dimensions: Knowledge Management Systems, Knowledge Sharing Practice, Culture, and Decision-Making Processes. Regarding Knowledge Management Systems, it is recommended that MNCs acknowledge evolution in the KMS tools that they use to share knowledge, by meeting employees' wants and needs and incorporating the latest common technologies, such as the social networking tools that they use in their daily lives (e.g. Google, Wikipedia, Twitter, Facebook, Skype, MSN, Smartphones, radio, TV channels for work, ... etc). This will make it easier and more comfortable for them to share their knowledge, by using tools similar to those in their personal lives. Taking into consideration preferences regarding ease of use and the usefulness of KMSs will enable employees to work and collaborate, and to be updated with news and practices from their MNC locally and in other branches all over the world.

Knowledge Sharing Practice is important, and employees care about the content and other issues when they share knowledge. The accuracy and quality of knowledge shared inside the MNC must be reviewed, secured, updated and controlled. Employees' willingness to share is also important, as it is an essential part of sending and receiving knowledge. It includes trust between employees. There are also some pragmatic issues like corruption, ICT infrastructure and politics, mainly dependent on the countries in which the organisation is operating.

Cultural differences in MNCs cannot be ignored. Cultural distance between employees, organisational culture and IT culture must all be considered. Employees working in MNCs inevitably have different cultures, some of which prefer not to share knowledge which they see as a source of power and advantage over their colleagues; some employees will only share knowledge with people of their own nationality and in their own language. Others experience difficulty in contacting other employees in languages other than their own. Management support is therefore important to encourage employees to share their knowledge with employees in other departments and branches overseas. Organisation culture can facilitate KS inside an organisation by having a shared mission, consistency, incentives and rules to be followed to overcome any challenges. Incentives play a major role in encouraging employees to share knowledge, but in this study the incentives that were highlighted by respondents were not financial; they want to be recognised as knowledgeable persons inside their organisation, promoted, and spread their knowledge under their own names. Recent developments in the IT environment have introduced new requirements and changed the way of doing work, which is reflected in an organisation's results.

Knowledge sharing helps decision-making processes, and participants agree that KMSs can be used in the formulation, evaluation and appraisal phases of DMP, and especially the first stage. Using KMSs in KS will help decision makers in searching, identifying problems and making decisions quickly, increasing the extent of analysis, offering more alternatives and supplying different sources of knowledge. Furthermore, the study provides some insights in integrating the resource-based view and knowledge-based view; with regard to the latter, the findings suggest that knowledge sharing should not be seen in isolation, as it is a central mechanism that leverages the influence of organisational culture and KMSs usage on decision-making processes.

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