

# Knowledge Sharing Behavior Reviewed From a Social Exchange Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Knowledge sharing behavior is the act of exchanging knowledge that is carried out voluntarily and does not receive tangible rewards. This study aims to determine the relationship between trust, intrinsic reward, and knowledge sharing behavior. The subjects of this study were 244 civil servants in Bengkulu City Government. The findings of this study indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between trust and intrinsic reward on knowledge sharing behavior. The relative contribution given by intrinsic trust and reward is 34.6 percent for knowledge sharing behavior.

**Keywords:** *Knowledge sharing, Trust, Reward.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is a competitive advantage that an individual has and is inherent in himself. People who have valuable knowledge of the organization are highly mobile resources. The organization will suffer huge losses if the knowledgeable individual leaves the company. Therefore, organizations are looking for ways to make individual knowledge into collective knowledge. Knowledge sharing is the appropriate solution that can be done so that knowledge controlled by one person becomes knowledge that can be used by every employee in achieving organizational competitive advantage [1].

Survey conducted by KPMG [2] at 500 big companies in Europe found that the benefits of sharing knowledge can increase financial profit, improve the quality and quantity of task, improve teamwork, innovation, and better decision making. The advantages of knowledge sharing encourage many top leaders in organizations to facilitate knowledge sharing behavior by developing on-line application as a tool to contribute and collect knowledge. One of the companies using on-line application to share knowledge PT. Telkom tbk. Unfortunately, empirical condition has shown that the use Kampion is still far from organization expected. A survey conducted by Purwanti, Pasaribu, and Lumbantobing [3] on Kampion found that employees' contribution to the system is still very low when compared with the total number of employees approximately 23,000 people, less than 1000 articles or

about 4.3 percent in a year with quality is not good enough. This condition proves that the use of information and communication technology does not guarantee the success of knowledge sharing behavior in organizations.

Knowledge sharing is a social process that involves two or more parties exchanging knowledge. In line with the definition which explains that knowledge sharing behavior is an act of exchanging knowledge among colleagues, is voluntary, this action is not included in the job description, and if it does not get tangible rewards [4]. Conelly and Kelloway [4] explained that knowledge sharing behavior is a form of social exchange.

From the perspective of social exchange, knowledge-sharing behavior is a voluntary action of an individual motivated by the response that follows and the reply may come from other parties [5]. In social exchange, there is no guarantee that will get a reciprocal reward for the costs or efforts incurred because there is no agreement that regulates the interaction [6]. Blau [5] explained that the success of social exchange is based on a foundation of trust between the two parties. In several previous studies, social exchange theory was used to explain the dynamics of knowledge sharing behavior. Research Kankanhalli *et al* [7] found that the pleasure to help others, trust, reward, and sharing efforts influence contributing behavior to the company's electronic knowledge repository. Likewise, research conducted by Huang, Davison, and Gu [8] found that the disadvantages

and benefits obtained, rewards and reputation influence a person's behavior to share knowledge.

Social exchange theory is widely used as a basis for examining individual behavior. Homans [9] defines social exchange as social exchange as an exchange of activities, tangible or intangible and profitable or not between at least two parties. He introduced the concept of exchange between people not limited to material goods such as money and resources, but also symbolic values such as respect and prestige [6]. Intrinsic reward is an intangible reward or psychological reward in the form of appreciation, caring and positive attitude from superiors, being given challenging tasks, feeling proud of doing something valuable for the organization and feeling good about helping colleagues. Blau [5] explained that social exchange only tends to deliver personal obligations, gratitude, and trust. In social exchange, there is no guarantee that you will get a reciprocal reward for the costs / efforts incurred because there is no agreement that regulates the interaction. Independent variables are considered as benefits, namely extrinsic rewards and intrinsic rewards [7]; [8] and effort to share is considered as cost [7]; [8]. Knowledge sharing will not occur if there is no trust among co-workers. This was confirmed by a meta-analysis of studies conducted Elita [10] on 20 studies. The result of meta-analysis found correlation between trust and knowledge sharing is 0.49. This correlation indicates that trust is always positively correlated with knowledge sharing behavior. trust is an important component in social relationships. Trust is defined as the desire of one party towards another party with the expectation that the other party will perform certain actions that are important to the entrusting party, regardless of the ability to control the other party[11]. Someone has intention to share his/her knowledge if convinced that the people who want to be given the knowledge to be trustworthy or will not misuse the knowledge. Trust between both sides will sustain knowledge sharing behavior.

The research aims to test whether social exchange theory can prove that knowledge sharing behavior is a form of social exchange. The research involved intrinsic reward and trust on knowledge sharing behavior.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a quantitative study by finding the correlation between variables. The variables involved is be measured, so that numerical data is obtained which

can then be analyzed using statistical procedures [12]. This study involved the intrinsic and extrinsic trust and reward variables for the knowledge sharing variable as the dependent variable. The subjects involved in this study were 244 subjects who came from various agencies, namely nine Bengkulu City Government institutions namely Kesbangpol, Social, Hygiene and Gardening, Labor, Cooperatives and UKM, Women's Empowerment, and the Environment. The subjects were 244 people with a composition of 131 men and 113 women. Each institution is represented by 20 people. Subjects come from various positions / grades, various educational backgrounds, with a minimum work period of one year so that the subject is sufficiently able to understand the organizational environment. The scale used is a Likert model scale with five response responses which are a continuum (1-5), 5 for "Very Appropriate", 4 for "Appropriate", 3 for "Neutral", 2 for "Inappropriate", and 1 for "Very inappropriate". The sampling technique used is quota sampling [13]. Subjects who are given a scale come from predetermined work units with a certain number which can be considered to reflect the population [14]. Data were collected using a survey. The instrument used is a scale consisting of a trust scale with a reliability of 0.780, a reward with a reliability of 0.781, and a scale for sharing knowledge with a reliability of 0.882. The scale used in this study adapts an instrument that has good validity and reliability. Hypothesis testing using multiple correlation test with analysis using SPSS.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the hypothesis test which states that there is a relationship between trust and reward on knowledge sharing behavior as indicated by an F value 65,205 ( $p < 0,05$ ).

Table 1. ANOVA

Model	F	P
Regresi	65,205	0.000

Based on F value of 65.205 ( $p < 0.05$ ), it shows that there is an influence that is given by trust and intrinsic reward simultaneously on knowledge sharing behavior. It is also informed that the relative contribution made by the independent variable to the dependent variable is also informed. Based on the adjusted R Square, the contribution of 34.6% is given by the two dependent variables to knowledge sharing

behavior. In table 2 regarding the coefficient, it can be seen that the effect of each variable on the dependent variable.

Table 2. Standardized Coefficient

Variables	Beta	T	P
Trust	0,450	7,739	0,00
Reward	0,233	4,001	0,00

From the coefficient, trust is related to knowledge sharing behavior. Trust is a determining factor for commitment in a relationship. These findings prove that trust is positively related to knowledge sharing behavior with a correlation value of 0.450 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Knowledge sharing behavior is a form of social exchange that involves high trust. A person is willing to share knowledge with other people because he has trust in that person, on the other hand, if there is no trust in social relationships, knowledge will not be shared. A mutual trusting relationship is needed for successful knowledge sharing in organizations [15]. Trust used in this study is knowledge based trust. KBT is a trust that requires information about people to be trusted on the basis of experience working together and communicating regularly [16].

The social exchange perspective explains that trust among co-workers is an important component underlying knowledge exchange activity. The findings in the study proved that the direct effect of trust positively and significantly to the knowledge-sharing behavior ( $\beta = 0.305$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Someone is willing to share their knowledge with others because he has trust to the other. In the context of knowledge sharing, someone willing to share knowledge based on information obtained before or the track record about the person who wants to be shared. For instance, someone who wants to share his knowledge should be sure that the person to be shared not misused knowledge. Positive experiences in the past when interacting with one party will determine knowledge sharing process in the future. If there is no trust between the parties, then knowledge sharing will not happen.

Other independent variable involved in this study is reward, reward which has a correlation to knowledge sharing behavior, namely intrinsic reward. Intrinsic

reward has a relationship with knowledge sharing behavior of 0.233 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This reward is a intangible reward that comes from ourself. Someone feels happy to have helped others is a form of intrinsic reward. Social exchange theory explains that individuals in interacting with other individuals consider the disadvantages and advantages of these interactions [17]. If someone feels that the benefits that are felt are greater than the costs or efforts incurred, then the behavior of sharing knowledge can be sustainable. The social exchange perspective positions intrinsic reward as the benefit obtained when engaging in knowledge-sharing behavior with colleagues. Individuals who feel that by sharing knowledge, they get self-satisfaction in the form of feelings of satisfaction that have contributed to the organization and feel happy to have helped colleagues by providing the knowledge needed. The intrinsic rewards obtained when sharing knowledge are predicted to encourage knowledge-sharing behavior rather than tangible rewards.

The findings of this study prove that knowledge sharing behavior is a form of social exchange. People are willing to share because they get intangible rewards such as the joy of helping others and pride in contributing to the organization. Trust is the foundation for knowledge sharing behavior. People are willing to share knowledge because they believe that knowledge is not misused. The higher the trust, the more knowledge is shared.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study found that the variables of trust and reward, especially the intrinsic reward, were related to the knowledge sharing behavior variable. From a social exchange perspective, a person is willing to share knowledge with others if he believes in that person that the knowledge shared will not be misused. Trust is the foundation of knowledge sharing behavior. Another finding in this study is that intrinsic reward is positively and significantly related to knowledge sharing. A person who shares knowledge gets a intrinsic reward in the form of a pleasure to help others and can contribute to the organization.

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