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**DOES PERCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING ,TRANSFER AND RECOGNITION  
HAVE AN IMPACT ON JOB SATISFACTION? AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN SAUDI  
ARABIA**

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**Abstract:** *Although the term knowledge sharing is generally used more often than information sharing, researchers tend to use the term “information sharing” to refer to sharing with others that occurs in experimental studies in which participants are given lists of information, manuals, or programs. Knowledge sharing differs from knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange. Knowledge transfer involves both the sharing of knowledge by the knowledge source and the acquisition and application of knowledge by the recipient. The empirical research paper had discussed select Knowledge Management variables, recognition aspects with job satisfaction. The dependent variable taken as Job satisfaction. An extensive literature review was done and the study was conducted in five mid-sized companies from different sectors in Saudi Arabia. Data Analysis showed that knowledge sharing and self recognition are found to be positively associated to job satisfaction and self recognition. Future research directions are proposed.*

**Keywords:** *job satisfaction ; knowledge sharing; knowledge transfer; self recognition, supervisor recognition*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The main pillar of knowledge management's success lies on employees' willingness and commitment to participate in the initiatives (Lin, 2011; Wasko and Faraj, 2005). Much of the focus in knowledge management and organizational learning involves the ability to transfer the tacit knowledge (expertise and know-how) of individuals and groups to the organization level so that it can be widely distributed (Raisinghani, 2000).

In this paper we propose to explore the relationship among employee perception of select Knowledge Management variables and supervisor and self-recognition aspects to job satisfaction.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Knowledge has been well documented as a source of sustainable competitive advantage for organizations in today's economy (e.g., Wang & Noe, 2010). Research has shown that knowledge sharing is positively related to firm innovation (Liao, 2006), increased productivity (Quigley, Tesluk, Locke, & Bartol, 2007), and improved individual and firm performance (Verburg & Andriessen, 2011).

These benefits from knowledge sharing have encouraged organizations to invest significant amounts of money and time into knowledge management projects. Despite the resources allocated to knowledge management projects, many still fail (Wang & Noe, 2011). One reason for these outcomes may be the lack of attention paid to some of the factors that influence individuals' motivation to share knowledge such as personality traits and diversity. Knowledge sharing is the "provision of task information and know-how to help others and to collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures" (Wang & Noe, 2010, p. 117).

There are two types of knowledge: tacit and explicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge can be easily recognized, codified, and stored. Tacit (or implicit) knowledge is understood and implied without being stated; it is embedded in individuals or in organizational contexts, associated with experience and more difficult to transfer than explicit knowledge for that particular reason (Hau & Evangelista, 2007). Tacit knowledge is acquired by interacting with others (Bate & Robert, 2002).



## **KNOWLEDGE-SHARING:**

As one knowledge-centered activity, knowledge sharing is the fundamental means through which employees can contribute to knowledge application, innovation, and ultimately the competitive advantage of the organization (Jackson, Chuang, Harden, Jiang, & Joseph, 2006). Knowledge sharing between employees and within and across teams allows organizations to exploit and capitalize on knowledge-based resources (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; Damodaran & Olphert, 2000; Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

Knowledge sharing refers to the provision of task information and know-how to help others and to collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures (Cummings, 2004; Pulakos, Dorsey, & Borman, 2003).

Knowledge sharing can occur via written correspondence or face-to-face communications through networking with other experts, or documenting, organizing and capturing knowledge for others (Cummings, 2004; Pulakos et al., 2003).

“Knowledge transfer” typically has been used to describe the movement of knowledge between different units, divisions, or organizations rather than individuals (e.g., Szulanski, Cappetta, & Jensen, 2004). Although “knowledge exchange” has been used interchangeably with “knowledge sharing” (e.g., Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006), knowledge exchange includes both knowledge sharing (and employees providing knowledge to others) and knowledge seeking (or employees searching for knowledge from others). In this review, we use the term “knowledge exchange” when discussing studies that measured knowledge sharing using scales that assessed both knowledge sharing and seeking.

## **KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER:**

The literature on knowledge transfer mentions a number of barriers to successful knowledge transfer like causal ambiguity (Reed & DeFillippi 1990), tacitness of knowledge (Cohendet et al. 2000; Polanyi 1962), and lack of motivation to share knowledge (Osterloh & Frey 2000).

## **INTERNAL KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER**

The most simple word-word definition was suggested by Lord and Ranft (2000: 574), who defined knowledge transfer as 'the dissemination of knowledge from one division to another division within the same firm'. Kalling views knowledge transfer as 'a process by which an organization makes available knowledge about routines to its members' (2003:

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115). In contrast to Kalling, who is rather imprecise about the exact nature of the process by using the phrase 'making available', Styhre (2002: 229) explicitly states that 'knowledge is produced as it is shared'. Knowledge thereby is not consumed but shared, given away and received. Finally, knowledge transfer may be seen as knowledge sharing with the characteristics of a public good dilemma (Cabrera & Cabrera 2002: 692-694).

## **MANAGEMENT SUPPORT**

Management support for knowledge sharing has been shown to be positively associated with employees' perceptions of a knowledge sharing culture (e.g., employee trust, willingness of experts to help others) and willingness to share knowledge (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003; Lin, 2007d). Lee et al. (2006) found that top management support affected both the level and quality of knowledge sharing through influencing employee commitment to KM. Perceived supervisor and coworkers support and their encouragement of knowledge sharing also increase employees' knowledge exchange and their perceptions of usefulness of knowledge sharing (Cabrera et al., 2006; Kulkarni, Ravindran, & Freeze, 2006).

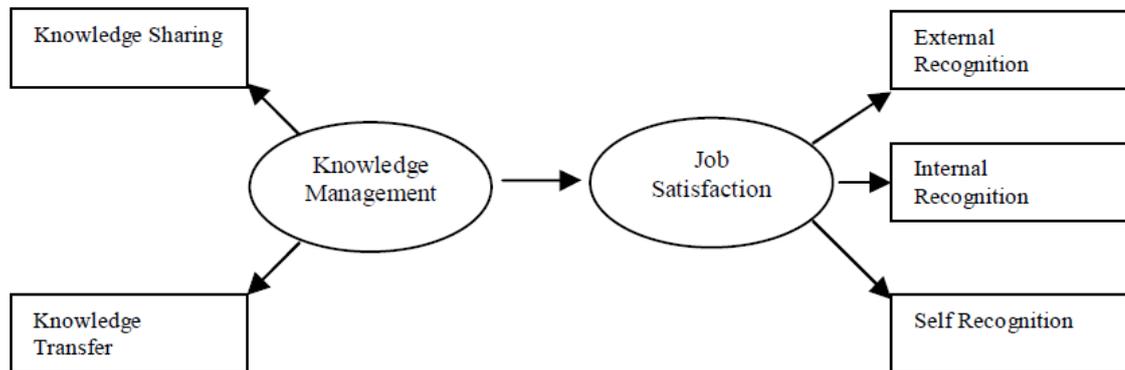
King and Marks (2008), however, failed to find a significant effect for perceived organizational support after controlling for ease of use and usefulness of KMS. It appears that management support specific to knowledge sharing is a better predictor of employee knowledge sharing. They found supervisory control (i.e., perceived supervisor influence over utilizing the KMS in the organization appropriately) was a significant predictor of individual effort which was related to the frequency of knowledge sharing. Similarly, based on French and Raven's (1959) typology of social power, Liao (2008) found that a manager's control of rewards for desired behavior (i.e., reward power) and the employees' belief that the manager had knowledge and expertise in the area (i.e., expert power) were positively related to employees' self-reported knowledge sharing. Both social exchange theory and agency theory have been used in studies examining the management support–knowledge sharing relationship. Overall, these studies show that management support likely influences knowledge sharing.

Levin and Cross (2004) found that controlling for trustworthiness, knowledge recipients with weak ties reported more benefits compared to those with strong ties.

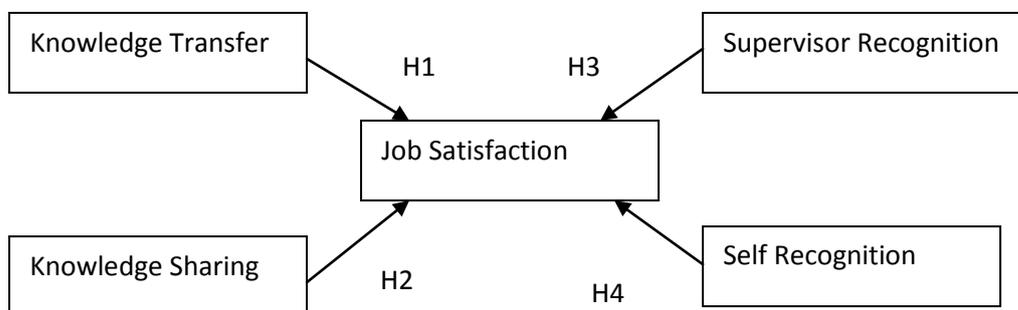
These studies have focused more on relationships rather than individuals. The findings suggest that the existence of network connections and the associated social capital can



facilitate knowledge sharing within a community of practice (e.g., Kankanhalli et al., 2005; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).



Proposed Model :



## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The purpose of the conducted empirical investigation was to shed light on the nature and incidence of Knowledge management as influenced by recognition. The survey respondents were employees of five mid-sized companies in Saudi Arabia from diversified sectors .

In the studied organizations, participation in the study was voluntary. Respondents worked in various departments including production, HR, Sales and logistics and Finance and Accounting. Respondents were assured of the strict confidentiality of their responses and were told that no one in the organization would ever see the completed questionnaires. After reading the invitation to participate and consent form (which summarized the ethical guidelines of the study), the participants completed the questionnaires. Data were collected at the participating organizations during working hours.



## DATA COLLECTION

One questionnaire based on all five factors was administered to employees to collect the relevant data.

### Descriptive Analysis of the respondents

Variable		N	%	Mean	SD
Gender	Female	44	22.1	1.778	.416
	Male	155	77.9		
Age	Below 25 Years	41	20.6	2.452	1.166
	26-35 years	80	40.2		
	36-45 years	41	20.6		
	46- 55 years	21	10.6		
	56 years & above	16	8.0		
Experience	Below 2 years	26	13.1	2.507	.852
	3-5 years	67	33.7		
	6 -10 years	85	42.7		
	11 years and above	21	10.6		
Education	High School	28	14.1	2.698	.989
	Diploma	47	23.6		
	Bachelor Degree	86	43.2		
	Master Degree	33	16.6		
	P.Hd	5	2.5		
Marital Status	Single	40	20.1	1.799	.401
	Married	159	79.9		
Knowledge Sharing		199	100	2.822	1.366
Knowledge Transfer		199	100	3.125	1.430
Job Satisfaction		199	100	2.787	1.372
Self Recognition		199	100	3.982	.999
Supervisor Recognition		199	100	3.120	1.267

Note :

1- Gender : 1= female, 2= male ; Age: 1= below 25 years, 2= 26 to 35 years , 3= 36 to 45 years , 4= 46 to 55 years , 5 = 56 years and above ; Experience: 1= below 2 years, 2= 3 to 5



years , 3= 6 to 8 years , 4= 9 years and above ; Education: 1= High School , 2 = Diploma , 3= Bachelor Degree ; 4 = Master Degree , 5= Ph.D.; Marital Status: 1=Single, 2=Married.

2- Characteristics of the respondents : employee

Females constituted 22.1% of the sample whereas 77.9% were males . The largest age group was between 26-35 years representing 40.2 % of the sample, followed by below 25 years & 36-45 years at 20.6% each . Respondents between 46-55 years of age represented 10.6% of the sample whereas 55 years and above made up 8%. Out of total respondents , 79.9% were married and 20.1 % were unmarried.

43.2% of the respondents had a bachelor degree as their highest level of academic qualifications and 23.6% had obtained Diploma . 14.1% of the respondents had High School as qualification and 16.6% had obtained Master Degree whereas 2.5% of respondents had Ph. D as their highest qualification. 42.7% of respondents had 6 to 10 years of work experience whereas 33.7% had 3 to 5 years of experience. Respondents with less than 2 years of experience represented 13.1% of the sample whereas respondents with 11 years and above of experience are 10.6% .

## MEASURES

The present study employs a questionnaire survey approach. Knowledge management and job satisfaction were measured using the scale developed by Lee and Chang (2007). Knowledge management comprised two categories: (1) knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing. Recognition consisted of two factors: (1) Supervisor recognition, (2) internal recognition and (3) self - recognition. Job satisfaction has been taken as independent factor. Each item was measured on a Likert type five- point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 260 pre- tested questionnaires were distributed, among which 215 were returned (response rate was 83%). The number of completely filled up questionnaires were 199 whereas 16 questionnaires were rejected due to incomplete information.

## KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Knowledge transfer (M= 3.125 and SD = 1.430) were measured on a three - item scale. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale in which 1= *strongly disagree* and 5 =*strongly agree*. The following are some excerpts of the questionnaire: “The workers always share experience and thoughts with each other”, “The workers always share their opinions with



the other through documents and e-mails””. The reliability of Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.975.

### **KNOWLEDGE SHARING**

Knowledge sharing (M= 2.822 and SD = 1.366) were measured on a four - item scale. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale in which 1= *strongly disagree* and 5 =*strongly agree*. The following are some excerpts of the questionnaire: “Workers regularly find opportunities to express their opinions and discuss through evaluation meetings” , “While doing the job, new information and skills are gained” , “Information sharing supports the objectives and strategies of the organization”. The reliability of Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.806.

### **JOB SATISFACTION**

Job satisfaction (M= 2.787 and SD = 1.372) were measured on a four - item scale. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale in which 1= *strongly disagree* and 5 =*strongly agree*. The following are some excerpts of the questionnaire: “My job only provides me with a salary not with promotion opportunities ”, “Required tools and equipments are given to me while I am doing my job”. The reliability of Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.813.

### **SUPERVISOR RECOGNITION**

Supervisor Recognition (M= 3.982 and SD = 0.999) were measured on a four - item scale. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale in which 1= *strongly disagree* and 5 =*strongly agree*. The following are some excerpts of the questionnaire: “My manager praises me for my performance”, “My manager encourages me for professional improvement “ , “I get on well with my managers”. The reliability of Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.935.

### **SELF RECOGNITION**

Self Recognition (M= 3.120 and SD = 1.267) were measured on a four - item scale. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale in which 1= *strongly disagree* and 5 =*strongly agree*. The following are some excerpts of the questionnaire: “My present job is suitable for me to display my abilities” , “I think I am successful in my job” , “My current workload is acceptable” . The reliability of Cronbach’s alpha was found to be 0.940.



## CONTROL VARIABLES

Employee age has been the subject of much work performance research, producing mixed results (McEvoy and Cascio, 1989; Waldman and Avolio, 1986). The gender of employees is known to be one of the control variable in studies. Many studies have found different effects of gender on employees' attitudes and behaviors (Indartono and Chen, 2011).

To provide a stronger test of the study hypotheses, several variables that may relate to the variables and examined outcomes were controlled for. The human capital measure of age (coded as 1= below 25 years, 2= 26 to 35 years, 3= 36 to 45 years, 4= 46 to 55 years, 5 = 56 years and above) and gender (coded as 1= female and 2 = male) were controlled.

## RESULTS

To analyze the directions of the relationships among the key variables, Spearman correlation was conducted.

**Table 2: Correlation Matrix**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Age	1						
Gender	-.058	1					
Knowledge Sharing	.510*	-.017	1				
Knowledge Transfer	.024	.059	.079	1			
Job Satisfaction	.642*	-.064	.860**	.055	1		
Self Recognition	-.019	.103	-.109	.157*	.175*	1	
Supervisor Recognition	.022	.171*	.043	.349**	.000	.601**	1

N= 199 , \*p< 0.05 and \*\*p<0.01

To analyse the relationship among the variables , spearman correlation was done . It was found that Supervisor Recognition had positive and significant relationship with Knowledge transfer . Supervisor Recognition had positive significant relationship with Self Recognition and gender . Self Recognition had positive significant relationship with Knowledge transfer . Self Recognition had positive significant relationship with Job Satisfaction. Job Satisfaction had positive significant relationship with age and Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Sharing had positive significant relationship with age .



Hierarchical linear regression analysis was performed to analyze the strength of the variables. In the first step, I entered the control variables. In step 2, the independent variables KS (Knowledge Sharing) & KT (Knowledge Transfer) were added. Before computing this term, all variables were standardized in order to reduce problems associated with multicollinearity. The multicollinearity test was also done for all the independent variables. The tolerance values were greater than 0.10, hence it can be mentioned that multicollinearity is not a problem in this regression analysis. Finally, I examined the change in R2 from step 1 to step 2 to determine if there was a significant effect of the moderating variable. I had also checked the outlier in the analysis; all standardized residuals were less than +/-3.0 by looking at the minimum and maximum standardized residuals in the table of Residual Statistics. Both the minimum and maximum fell in the acceptable range.

**Table 3 : Hierarchical Regression Analysis**

Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Age	0.657**	0.145**	0.152**
Gender		-0.109	-0.105
KS		0.870**	0.853**
KT		-0.006	-0.001
Self Recognition			-0.113*
Supervisor Recognition			0.025
Adjusted R2	0.307	0.872	0.875
Change adjusted R2	0.314**	0.560**	0.005*
F	44.871**	337.147**	232.496**

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Age,
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Age, KS , KT
- c. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Age, KS , KT, Recognition , Self –Recognition
- d. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction



To test the hypothesis, this study employs a hierarchical regression method to analyze the relationship among KS, KT, Supervisor Recognition & Self Recognition. The Assumption of independence of errors was checked by Durbin-Watson test. The value was found to be 1.590, which falls in the acceptable range of 1.50 -2.50.

First, the control variables namely age and genders were entered into the equation along with Job Satisfaction as dependent variable. The probability of the F statistic for the overall regression relationship for all independent variables was  $<0.001$  which is less than the level of significance of 0.05. Thus we can reject the null hypothesis that there was no relationship between the set of all independent variables and the dependent variable. We can support the research hypothesis that there was a statistically significant relationship between the set of all independent variables and the dependent variable. The R Square value for step 1 was 0.314. The R square change statistic for the increase in R square associated with the added variables (Knowledge Sharing & Knowledge Transfer) was 0.560. Using a proportional reduction in error interpretation for R square, the added variables had an impact of 56% on Job Satisfaction. The probability of F statistic (432.056) for the change in R square associated with the addition of the independent variables to the regression analysis containing the control variables was  $<0.001$  which was significant. I support the research hypothesis that there was a statistically significant improvement in the relationship among Knowledge Sharing, Knowledge Transfer & Job Satisfaction. The beta value is positive, so it can be predicted to have significant positive relationship among the given variables. The Beta value was .935, it can be stated the relationship is very strong.

In step 3, Supervisor Recognition and Self Recognition were entered into the regression analysis. The R square change statistic for the increase in R square associated with the added variables was 0.005. Using a proportional reduction in error interpretation for R square, the added variables had an impact of 1% on Job Satisfaction. Since the impact value was very less, it can be stated that Supervisor Recognition and Self Recognition have very limited impact on the relationship of Knowledge Transfer, Knowledge Sharing & Job Satisfaction. The probability of F statistic (3.791) for the change in R square associated with the addition of the independent variables to the regression analysis containing the other variables was 0.024 which was significant. We support the research hypothesis that there was a statistically significant improvement in the relationship after adding Supervisor



Recognition & Self Recognition. The beta value is positive, so it can be predicted to have significant positive relationship among the given variables. Knowledge Sharing beta value was .870 and it was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) so it can be stated that Knowledge Sharing is having positive and significant relationship with Job Satisfaction. The hypothesis can be accepted that there was positive significant relationship between Knowledge Sharing & Job Satisfaction.

The beta value of Knowledge Transfer was .006 and ( $p > 0.975$ ) which was not significant. We reject the hypothesis that there was a positive significant relationship between Knowledge Transfer and Job Satisfaction.

The Regression value of Supervisor Recognition was 0.025 and ( $p > 0.496$ ) which was not significant. We reject the hypothesis that there was a significant relationship between Supervisor Recognition and Job Satisfaction.

The Beta value of Self Recognition was 0.113 and ( $p < 0.011$ ) which was significant in nature. The null hypothesis is rejected that there was no relationship between Self Recognition and Job Satisfaction. The research hypothesis is accepted that Self Recognition had significant relationship with Job Satisfaction.

## **DISCUSSION**

Perceived supervisor and coworkers support and their encouragement of knowledge sharing also increase employees' knowledge exchange and their perceptions of usefulness of knowledge sharing (Cabrera et al., 2006; Kulkarni, Ravindran, & Freeze, 2006). Oosthuizen (2001) stated that it is among the function of managers to motivate the employees successfully and influence their behavior to achieve greater organizational efficiency.

In my study, it was found that there was no significant relationship between Supervisor recognition and Job satisfaction.

Flynn (1998) argued that rewards and recognition programs keep high spirits among employees, boosts up their morale and create a linkage between performance and motivation of the employees. The level of motivation of employees increases when employees get an unexpected increase in recognition, praise and pay (La Motta, 1995).

In my study intrinsic, self-recognition was found to be positively associated with job satisfaction. This corroborates with Bull (2005) whose research highlighted that when



employees experience success in mentally challenging occupations which allows them to exercise their skills and abilities, they experience greater levels of job satisfaction.

The intrinsic motivations are focus on personal inner satisfaction (Deci, 1975). Bock and Kim (2002) argued intrinsic motivation refers reward of employees self-feelings and it is from them obtain satisfaction on work. In addition, Lin (2007) argued intrinsic motivation is in an activity for its own sake, such as out of interest or for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from the experience.

Most often the studies refer to tacit versus explicit knowledge, where explicit knowledge can be transmitted without loss of integrity and at low cost, whereas tacit knowledge implies increased complexity, raising cost and possible agency problems (Connelly et al. 2003; Dyer, Cho, & Chu 1998; Mangematin & Nesta 1999; Simonin 1999a;b).

Previous research has indicated that socialization mechanisms that develop trust and cooperation among individuals and facilitate formal and informal face-to-face relationships positively affect knowledge transfer (Bjorkman et al. 2004; Gupta and Govindarajan 2000).

Our research shows that there is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer and job satisfaction.

Cheng-Hui Chin (2003) showed that job satisfaction and the individual's intention to share knowledge have a significant positive correlation.

## **CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Based upon my research findings , I can indicate that job satisfaction depends on intrinsic or internal self recognition dimensions which can be enhanced by the organization by creating a motivating climate.

Individuals feel satisfied in working in an open knowledge sharing platform. Human beings want to communicate and share knowledge and this can be done when the organization establishes formal and informal learning framework, especially the latter.

This research is also supported by Hidding & Shrieen (1998) who researched that actually man likes to share knowledge by nature; if people are not willing to share knowledge with others that make them form, it may be due to external environmental factors or environmental factors the habit of not wanting to share knowledge.

There are some limitations of the study. Firstly, the sample size could been a large one. Secondly, the cultural implications was not included in the scope of the paper. Thirdly, the



scale used focused only on two areas of knowledge Management, namely knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing. Fourthly, though the research was conducted in different sectors, future research could focus on a single sector with a large sample. Finally, the impact of cross-cultural teams and diverse groups could have been investigated further.

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