

## Chapter 6

# Exploring Knowledge–Sharing Barriers and Their Implications

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter focuses on knowledge-sharing barriers and their implications over knowledge sharing and individual innovative behavior and explores the role of knowledge sharing on individual innovative behavior. Considering limited studies in the literature, this study provides further evidences regarding the implications of knowledge-sharing barriers and knowledge sharing in the workplace. Data was collected from 83 academic staff in a higher education institution and analyzed with Smart PLS. The results showed that organization-related knowledge-sharing barriers were negatively related to knowledge sharing. The results also indicated that individual knowledge-sharing barriers had a negative effect on individual innovative behaviors. There was no link found in this study between knowledge sharing and individual innovative behavior. These findings provided empirical evidences to the further development of knowledge management and innovation research, and insights regarding how to better foster knowledge sharing and innovative behavior in academe.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Organizations have become interested and invested in knowledge management because of increasing competitive pressures for efficiency, growth and cycle time reduction, and flexibility (Ryan *et al.*, 2012; Wang & Noe, 2010). Inkinen (2016) regarded the knowledge management as one of the most discussed new management methods. Knowledge management involves a set of processes aimed at maximizing the outcomes of the knowledge produced within a business unit, a firm, a network of firms (Filieri, 2010). The development and practice of knowledge management related activities is continuously and dramatically increasing in various types of organizations (Halawi *et al.*, 2005; Ramjeawon & Rowley,

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2017; Sözbilir & Yeşil, 2016) due to its link with innovation and performance (Filieri, 2010; Inkinen, 2016; Ramjeawon & Rowley, 2017) .

Knowledge sharing is regarded as an important phase of knowledge management (Chong *et al.*, 2014; Ramjeawon & Rowley, 2017; Wang & Noe, 2010) and determines the success of knowledge management initiatives (Wang & Noe, 2010). Knowledge sharing is defined “the exchange of knowledge between and among individuals, and within and among teams, organizational units, and organisations” (Khalil & Shea, 2012). Previous studies have studied the antecedents and consequences of the knowledge sharing. In reviewing the literature on knowledge sharing, Wang and Noe (2010) have identified a number areas including organizational context, interpersonal and team characteristics, cultural characteristics, individual characteristics, and motivational factors that affect knowledge sharing. Many theoretical and empirical studies argued and found that knowledge sharing has various implications for individuals (Aulawi *et al.*, 2009; Mura *et al.*, 2013; Radaelli *et al.*, 2014; Wang & Noe, 2010), teams (Maccurtain *et al.*, 2008; Weber *et al.*, 2011) and organizations (Chong *et al.*, 2014; Kamasak & Bulutlar, 2010; Lin, 2007; Mehrabani & Mohamad, 2011; Sözbilir & Yeşil, 2016). Unfortunately, barriers towards knowledge sharing prevent organizations to capitalize on their knowledge assets and skills (Athar & Evans, 2015; Dee & Leisyte, 2017; Wang & Noe, 2010).

The literature on knowledge management identifies individual (lack of time, trust, social network as well as difference in age, education and expertise), organization (lack of organizational vision, strategy and structure along with hierarchy and competition between departments) and technology (inadequate training and technical support regarding IT and various system related issues) related barriers that inhibit knowledge sharing and management initiatives and implementations (Athar & Evans, 2015; Chong *et al.*, 2014; Dee & Leisyte, 2017; Khalil & Shea, 2012; Ramjeawon & Rowley, 2017; Riege, 2005). Among the others, knowledge sharing barriers can also diminish innovative capability of the individuals in the workplace (Athar & Evans, 2015; Patterson *et al.*, 2009).

Current study concentrates on the knowledge sharing barriers and their impact on knowledge sharing and individual innovative behavior, and also explores the role of knowledge sharing on individual innovative behavior. Data for the research was collected from academics working in a public higher education institution in Turkey. The data was analyzed by using Smart PLS and the results were presented and discussed with regard to theoretical and managerial implications. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to the related literatures in many ways as explained below.

Despite the presence of the knowledge sharing barriers discussed and identified in the literature (Akgün *et al.*, 2017; Athar & Evans, 2015; Barson *et al.*, 2009; Lilleoere & Hansen, 2011; McLaughlin *et al.*, 2008; Riege, 2005; Santos *et al.*, 2012), there seem to be very few empirical studies testing the effect of these barriers on knowledge sharing (e.g., Khalil & Shea, 2012), thus showing the importance of undertaking this type of research. Besides, to our knowledge, there seems to be no empirical study investigating the effect of knowledge sharing barriers on individual innovative behavior. Hence, this provides a great impetus to undertake the current study.

Moreover, studying the effect of knowledge sharing on individual innovative behavior can contribute to the literature because only few studies (Hu *et al.*, 2009; Kang & Lee, 2017; Radaelli *et al.*, 2014; Mura *et al.*, 2013) have attempted to look at the proposed link through empirical studies despite the theoretical association between these two constructs (Aulawi *et al.*, 2009; Kang & Lee, 2017). Supporting this, Radaelli *et al.*, (2014:400) recently argued that “in the literature, the potential link between employee’s knowledge sharing and their own innovative behaviors remains both under-theorized and empirically untested”, thus encouraging future studies in this research domain.

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