

Mediating Role of Knowledge Inertia on the Relationship Between Knowledge Sharing Capabilities and Organizational Strategic Learning Capabilities

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Abstract: Both as power and as a resource knowledge is strategically important for individuals and enterprises. The third industrial revolution is based on knowledge which changes the way an individual, an enterprise or even a nation can create wealth and prosperity. All together we can say that knowledge is so important to each organization. So, knowledge is considered as an effective resource for organizations and individuals to survive. However, individuals usually make use of their experience and prior knowledge when they encounter problems and solve similar problems. These managerial predictive behaviours may endanger an organization which is in a competitive environment and this common routine problem-solving strategy is called “Knowledge Inertia”. The aim of this research is to see the effect of knowledge inertia on the relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities. This research was designed as quantitative study. The sample size is 150 teachers in ZEO Valikamam in Jaffna District. Sample is collected through convenience sampling method. The collected data analysis using the SPSS version 20.0 software. According to the results obtained through the data analysis, the knowledge inertia has negative relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities. As well as the knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities have positive relationship. On other hand it can be found that Knowledge inertia plays a role as a mediator between knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities.

Keywords: *Knowledge Inertia, Knowledge Sharing Capabilities, Organizational Strategic Learning Capabilities*

Background of the Study

Knowledge is strategically important for individuals and enterprises (Kumaraswamy & Chitale, 2012). The third industrial revolution is based on knowledge which changes the way an individual, an enterprise or even a nation can create wealth and prosperity. Thus, successful knowledge management can be the chief determinant for the survival of an enterprise in a knowledge-based economy (Liao et al., 2008). Drucker (1985) considers knowledge as the only source of

an enterprise’s competitive advantage. Hence, to meet current challenges, enterprises should seek ways to strengthen the research and development of knowledge, to manage it efficiently and to utilize it effectively. To create value for an organization, knowledge sharing at an organizational level should not chiefly concern communicating knowledge but involve activities to categorize knowledge or information. Therefore, managing knowledge has become an important aspect for companies (Friedrich et al., 2020). The success of organizational knowledge sharing is determined by the



quality of knowledge sharing processes, employees and customers' satisfaction, and goal achievement (Kulkarni et al., 2006). As such, it can be said that an organization's success in knowledge management is based on its knowledge sharing capabilities (Friedrich et al., 2020; Huysman & De Wit, 2004). Furthermore, in the knowledge management field, a concept is introduced called knowledge inertia which can obstruct the organization's capability in learning and resolving issues (Liao et al., 2008). Inertia may lead to a lack of innovation and relevant behavior which may jeopardize the organization's survival or severely undermine the organization's advantage in a highly competitive environment. Thus, it is vital for organizations to avert the negative effects of inertia on its learning capabilities to effectively and efficiently enhance organizational knowledge (Xie et al., 2016). An assessment of scientific literature indicates that the role of knowledge inertia regarding corporate strategic learning has remained neglected. Moreover, when concerning relevant literature, attention has not been focused on knowledge inertia about the knowledge sharing capabilities of organizations (Rezaee & Shirazian, 2020). In this vein, the following study attempts to cover such gap and aims to answer the question of whether knowledge inertia has a significant effect on knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities.

Research Problem

Knowledge inertia may inhibit an organization's capability to learn and solve problems. Given the significance of organizational learning in knowledge management, organizations should focus their efforts to avert knowledge inertia. Knowledge inertia not only negatively affects the use and application of knowledge within an organization but may also lead to the disclosure of business secrets and in other words, may lead to

losses and eventually the failure of an organization. Inertia hindered organization capability to learn and could be considered as a barrier for organizational learning. When individuals feel that by applying past experience and knowledge, there is no need to acquire new knowledge, thereby, they face inertia in learning and teaching stages. In fact, learning inertia is the opposite of organizational learning (Liao, 2002). Educators still facing problems in managing their knowledge effectively to plan and execute diversified teaching and learning activities. Accordingly, this issue needs to be tackled as soon as possible to avoid the impact on organizational excellency especially in the education sector. Ramayah et al. (2014) also expressed the same concern and mentioned that lack of knowledge and expertise will affect the achievement of educational institutions' objectives. Fullan (2015) has mentioned that school teachers were not really showing their interest in practicing knowledge management. For instance, teachers were hesitated to share the knowledge as they had the fear of losing of the ownership and privilege. Subsequently, Tippins (2003) also stated that academic staffs viewed knowledge as a source of distinction, and thus refused to share all types of knowledge and experiences. Contrary, some of the teachers were reluctant to receive new knowledge from others as they thought it will bring threat and burden (Jusoff et al., 2011). Therefore, these two groups of teachers contributed to the existence of knowledge hoarding culture in schools. This culture seems to be problematic as it impedes knowledge sharing among teachers and hindered the creation of new knowledge. Based on the above evidence, it is clear that the presence of knowledge inertia is affecting the knowledge sharing among the teachers and this reduces the organizational learning which was proposed by Liao (2002) in his work on knowledge inertia. This theoretically

proven concept needs to be emetically tested in several contexts. So far, most of the researchers have linked the knowledge inertia with the organizational innovativeness and its impact on organizational learning needs to be investigated more innovativeness (Collinson & Wilson, 2006; Liao et al., 2008) and the impact on knowledge sharing capabilities of employees also need to be addressed in the literatures. Considering these empirical gaps, this research intends to explore the effect of knowledge inertia on knowledge sharing capabilities and organization strategic learning capability.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capability of teachers in Valikamam zonal education office in Jaffna district?
2. To identify the relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and knowledge inertia of teachers in Valikamam zonal education office in Jaffna district?
3. To identify the relationship between knowledge inertia and organizational strategic learning capability of teachers in Valikamam zonal education office in Jaffna district?
4. To identify whether knowledge inertia is mediating the relationship between Knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capability of teachers in Valikamam zonal education office in Jaffna district?

Significance of the Study

Knowledge is becoming much more important for individuals and organizations than before. Knowledge management (KM) has been proposed as a methodology that can manage knowledge

in organizations. Knowledge inertia (KI), stemming from the use of routine problem-solving procedures, stagnant knowledge sources, and following past experience or knowledge. It may enable or inhibit an organization's or an individual's ability on problem solving. Therefore, this study intends to explore, to what extent the knowledge inertia is mediating the relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning. Teachers in 21st century need to be more responsible on assessing and enriching the existing knowledge. Therefore, an effective effort on knowledge management among school teachers is much needed as a foundation in transforming educational system along with globalization. Since knowledge is considered as the most important asset of organizations these days, and since it creates the greatest competitive privilege, it is necessary to promote the organizational knowledge using learning and innovation regarding the frequent environmental changes and avoid using the archaic knowledge to solve new problems. Thereby, this study will help to identify the importance of reducing the knowledge inertia and boost the knowledge sharing to enhance high level of organizational strategic learning.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is to assess the mediating effect of knowledge inertia on knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities. Knowledge is of strategic importance for organizations as a source of power. Inertia may lead to a lack of innovation and relevant behaviour which may jeopardize the organization's survival or severely undermine the organization's advantage in a highly competitive environment. Thus, it is vital for organizations to avert the negative effects of inertia on its learning capabilities and to apply organizational knowledge effectively and efficiently. So, the present

research study has been designed to answer the question of whether knowledge inertia has a significant effect on knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities.

Literature Review

Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing is one of the most vital components in designing and implementing knowledge management strategies. Knowledge sharing is a social phenomenon that involves interpersonal relationships and social interactions. Knowledge sharing may occur at an individual level; however, for it to lead to creativity it should be managed at an organizational level, considering strategies, organizational structure, activities and culture. (Lin et al., 2012).

Organizational Strategic Learning

Schulz (2017) defines organizational learning as a method for organizations to create, complete and organize to develop normal work flows relevant to activities and to improve organizational efficiency through the utilization of extensive employees' skills. Work of Kumaraswamy and Chitale (2012) has mentioned that the collaborative knowledge sharing culture in an organization can induce the knowledge and learning process at the organizational level and this in turn will improve the organizational learning. Nugroho (2018) has also mentioned that the knowledge sharing practices have significant impact on the organizational learning practices. Having a positive culture that boost

knowledge sharing will improve the level of organizational learning and this in turn will make it possible for an organization to gain competitive advantages and survive amidst a competition. Based on this evidence it could be said that the knowledge sharing capabilities may have an effect on organizational strategic learning capabilities.

Knowledge Inertia

Knowledge inertia refers to reliance on the current knowledge structure, experience and resources when faced with an unprecedented situation or issue to achieve a reaction. Knowledge inertia and the use of common problem-solving perspectives prevents the acceptance of risks despite saving time and energy (Liao et al, 2008). Knowledge inertia creates barriers in organizational learning, reduces legitimate options, and hinders the development of appropriate strategies. Persistent adverse impacts of inertia may last for decades (Baker & Collins, 2010). Further the work of Collinson and Wilson (2006) has mentioned that the presence of inertia in the organization will result in hindering the knowledge management practices of a firm, which includes the knowledge sharing. From these evidences it could be said that the inertia hinders the organizational learning and knowledge sharing practices of organizations.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presents the model of the study and conceptualization focuses on creating a relationship between the key variables. As this research is conducted to identify the effect of Knowledge inertia on knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities.

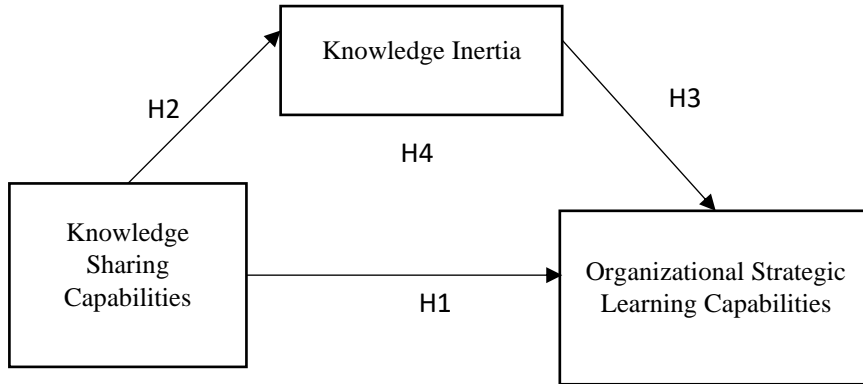


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors, 2023

H1: There is a significant relationship between Knowledge sharing capabilities and organization strategic learning capabilities.

- H2: There is a significant relationship between Knowledge sharing capabilities and knowledge inertia.
- H3: There is a significant relationship between Knowledge inertia and organization strategic learning capabilities.
- H4: Knowledge inertia has the mediating effect on the relationship between Knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities.

Research Methodology

Research Approach

Based on the evidence from the previous literature (Sharifirad, 2010) the current study is also intended to examine the proposed relationship between the constructs of gamification artifacts, intrinsic motivation, knowledge sharing attitudes, subjective norms and knowledge sharing intention. The hypotheses are being developed for the study based on the literature support and then tested using data collected. Therefore, it could be

concluded that this study is also focusing on the deductive approach.

Research Methods and Research Strategy

This study is intended to use mono-method of quantitative research method. Among the different research strategies that are available for quantitative research choice, the survey is being considered as the most commonly used strategy in the field of social sciences (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). When considering the previous studies conducted in the field of knowledge inertia, organizational learning and knowledge sharing most of the studies have used the survey method for collecting data for analyzing the relationship between those constructs (Sharifirad, 2010; Collinson & Wilson, 2006). In harmony with those previous literatures, this study is also intended to choose survey under quantitative research method to explore answer for its research question of identifying the relationship between Knowledge Sharing Capabilities and Organizational Strategic Learning Capabilities with the mediation role of knowledge inertia.

Data Collection Source

This Study uses the 5-point Likert Scale to measure the variables within Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) range. The independent variable of the study is Knowledge sharing capabilities, and it was measured using its three components such as Knowledge sharing readiness, Interchanging knowledge and Knowledge integration. The questions to measure these components were adopted from Kokanuch and Tuntrabundit (2017). The dependent variable of the study is Organizational strategic learning capabilities, and it was measured using commitment to learn, shared vision and open mindedness. The questions to measure this variable was adopted from the work of Baker and Sinkula (1999). The mediating variable (knowledge inertia) is being measured using its two components such as Learning inertia and experience inertia. The questions to measure these components were adopted from Liao (2008).

Method of Data Collection

This study depends on the primary data. Data were collected through the closed structured questionnaire with 38 questions from 150 teachers working at Valikamam zonal education office in Jaffna district. Therefore, the questionnaire for this study is structured as a closed-ended questionnaire. Questionnaires were issued in English language as per the respondents' wish. A pilot study was undertaken to evaluate the list of questions prepared to assess the reliability and validity of the research instrument designed and determine the time taken to complete the questionnaire. Based on the pilot study, suitable alterations were adopted in the questionnaire for data collection.

Population and Sampling Method

The population of this study is teachers who are working in the Valikamam zonal education office in Jaffna district. A sample of 150 teachers was selected from public schools. The stratified random sampling method was adopted for this study purpose.

Methods of Data Analysis

In this study, the collected questionnaires were analyzed and evaluated using Reliability analysis and Multiple regression analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 22.0 version) was used to simplify the analysis work of this study.

Results and Findings

The demographic profile of the respondents reveals that most of the teachers who represents in the sample are relatively young female teachers with the experience of 10-20 years. In detail, based on the analysis carried out among 150 respondents 42.7% (64) of respondents are Male and 57.3% (86) of respondents are Female. Most of the respondents in the employees, that means 51 (34%) of them are in the age group of 35-45 years. The next largest respondents in the employees are in the age group of 25-35 years, these consist of 47 (31.3%) respondents. Rests of the respondents in the employees are in the age group of 45-55 years that consist of 39 (26.0%) respondents. Rest of the age group of 55-65 years, consists of 13 (8.7%) respondents, respectively. Regarding the respondents, the length of service, majority of employees in the zonal education office have (40 %) experiences for 10-20 years. Around 28% of the sample are employed for 20-30 years. In-addition, 24.7% of the sample are employed for 1-10 years, and 7% of the respondents are employed over 30

years representing the minority of the sample.

Table 1: Correlation of Variables

Correlations				
		Knowledge sharing capabilities	OSL	Knowledge inertia
Knowledge sharing capabilities	Pearson Correlation	1	.791**	-.247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.002
	N	150	150	150
OSL	Pearson Correlation	.791**	1	-.329**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	150	150	150
Knowledge inertia	Pearson Correlation	-.247**	-.329**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	
	N	150	150	150

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author

According to the details in the above table, the significant value is 0.000 in all three variables. Therefore, the researcher can identify that there is a relationship between the variables. By seeing the Pearson correlation values, researchers can identify that organization strategic learning capabilities and knowledge sharing have positive correlation ($r=.791, p<0.01$). This indicate that when Knowledge sharing increases in an organization, the organization strategic

learning capability will also increase. Knowledge inertia and Organization strategic learning capability have negative correlation ($r=-.329, p<0.01$). This shows that when knowledge inertia increases, the organization strategic learning capability will decrease. The Knowledge inertia and Knowledge sharing have negative correlation ($r=-.247, p<0.01$). This indicate that with increase of knowledge inertia the knowledge sharing capabilities will be decreased.

Table 2: Multiple Regressions with Dependent Variable

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.904	.242		3.730	.000
	Knowledge inertia	-.146	.052	-.142	-2.810	.006
	Knowledge sharing capabilities	.769	.052	.756	14.918	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OSL

Source: Authors, 2023

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803 ^a	.645	.641	.835

a. Predictors: (Constant), Knowledge sharing capabilities, Knowledge inertia

Source: Authors, 2023

The standardized regression coefficient between knowledge inertia and Knowledge sharing capabilities was statistically significant and the standardized regression coefficient between organizational strategic learning capabilities. Base on above table 3 as indicated R square, 64.5% of the variance of Knowledge sharing capability and Knowledge inertia is explained by Organization Learning capabilities. The B value for the Knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic

learning capabilities is .769 and is significant ($p < 0.05$). Which means Knowledge sharing capabilities has positively significant effect on organizational strategic learning capabilities. The B value for the knowledge inertia and organizational strategic Learning capability is -.146 and is significant ($p < 0.05$). If in the organization Knowledge inertia increases organizational strategic learning capabilities will be decrease by 14.6%.

Table 4: Total, Direct, and Indirect effect of X on Y

	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Total effect of X on Y	.8047	.0511	15.74	0.000	.7037	.9056
Direct effect of X on Y	.7689	.0515	14.91	0.000	.6670	.8707
	Effect			Boost SE	LLCI	ULCI
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y (Knowledge inertia)	.0352			.0182	.0071	.0772

Source: Authors

The above show the total, direct and indirect effect of the knowledge inertia on knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities. The estimates show that the total effect $B = .8047$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI

[0.7037, 0.9056]. Direct effect $B = .7689$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [0.6670, 0.8707]. Indirect effect $B = 0.0352$, $p < 0.01$, 95% CI [.0071, .0772], direct and indirect effect is significant, which mean Knowledge inertia is partially mediating.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5: Hypothesis Analysis

No	Hypothesis	P Value	Results
H1	There is a significant relationship between Knowledge sharing capabilities and organization strategic learning capabilities.	$p < 0.05$	H1 Accepted
H2	There is a significant relationship between Knowledge sharing capabilities and knowledge inertia.	$P < 0.05$	H2 Accepted
H3	There is a significant relationship between Knowledge inertia and organization strategic learning capabilities.	$P < 0.05$	H3 Accepted
H4	Knowledge inertia has the mediating effect on the relationship between Knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities.	$P < 0.05$	H4 Accepted

Discussions

The present research was aimed to address the effects of knowledge inertia on knowledge sharing capabilities and organization strategic learning capabilities. The first objective of the study is to measure the impact of knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capability of teachers. The data analysis of this present study has revealed that the knowledge sharing capabilities possess a statistically significant positive relationship ($r = 0.791$) with organizational strategic learning capability with the p value less than 0.000. This is in line with the findings on previous literatures (Dimitriadis, 2005; Rezaee & Shirazian, 2020; Thomas et al., 2001). Analyzing the relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and knowledge inertia is the second objective of the study. The study results show that the knowledge inertia has negative

relationship with knowledge sharing capabilities and supported by the work of Collinson and Wilson (2006). The third objective of the study explored that knowledge inertia has a negative relationship with organizational strategic learning capabilities ($r = -.329$, $p = 0.000$). This result is similar in argument with results of Liao (2008), and Aqeela and Victor (2017). Fourth objective focuses on the mediating role of knowledge inertia between knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capability. Based on the findings of the mediating analysis the researcher can find that the knowledge inertia is partially mediating between knowledge sharing and organizational strategic learning. Hence both previous and present findings show similar results. This study concluded that the knowledge inertia mediates on the relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and organization strategic learning capabilities.

Conclusion

From the study of “The mediating effect of knowledge inertia on the relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and organizational strategic learning capabilities” it is concluded that the knowledge inertia mediates on the relationship between knowledge sharing capabilities and organization strategic learning capabilities.

Limitation of the Study

Convenience sampling was adopted by the researcher for this research, which may have resulted in underrepresentation of some people in the target group. Another restriction that might have contributed to same source bias as the data corresponding to various variables being gathered from the same source. Furthermore, the current study's cross-sectional strategy, in which responses are self-reported based on respondents' perceptions, may have contributed further bias. As a result, even when statistical treatments are used, the limitation in

generalizing the findings to the population is unavoidable.

Practical Implications

From the results of this study, it is being recommended that all the organizations should keep the knowledge inertia at a lower level. It can be achieved through using different approaches to different problems and avoiding the dependence of old thinking, old knowledge, and experience in dealing with new and unprecedented issues. When promoting organizational learning, care must be taken to avoid learning inertia, and efforts should be made to encourage acquisition of new knowledge and exploring new ideas and approaches.

Future Directions

As the current study only considered the education sector, the future researchers could conduct same study by using different industries and can compare the effect of KI on OSL among different industries and in-addition, future researchers can focus on comparing private organizations with public sector organizations as well.

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