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A STUDY ON THE ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING BEHAVIOUR AMONG RESEARCH SCHOLARS IN BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the knowledge sharing behaviour of research scholars among Bharathidasan University. The study adopted a survey method and self designed questionnaire was distributed to the respondents. The total population of the study is 150 research scholars of Bharathidasan University. The findings of the study revealed that face to face communication was found to be most used mode of sharing knowledge and portal was the least mode of sharing knowledge among research scholars and the factor lack of social network skill stands as a barrier to share knowledge among research scholars. Further, Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

Keywords: Knowledge Sharing, Research Scholars, Bharathidasan University

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is generally considered as facts, information and skills acquired through experience or education. It can also be referred as theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. According to the extent at which knowledge is shared among persons, knowledge may be classified as explicit or tacit. An academic knowledge or know how that is described in formal language, print or electronic media is termed as explicit knowledge. It is easy to communicate, store and disseminate. The practical, action oriented knowledge or know how based on practice or acquired through personal experience is termed as tacit knowledge. It is seldom expressed often resembles institution. It is difficult to communicate because it is deeply rooted in action, commitment and involvement.

Several studies proved that knowledge sharing is the vital element to sustain the growth and development of an organization. In an organization both the explicit and tacit knowledge

is commonly shared by means of social interaction with other workers which resulted with increase in organizational productivity. It is very difficult to provide accurate definition of knowledge sharing because different scholars defined from their own point of view.

Knowledge sharing is an activity in which knowledge from one person, group or organization transfer or spread to another person, group or organization (Heng-Li yang et.al 2000). Knowledge sharing is the process considered through various modes of communication which disseminate knowledge to members in the best time place and form (Junjun Zhang et.al 2008).

Studies revealed that majority of the students possessed a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing and were aware to its importance in the learning process. Students also recognized that active and voluntarily sharing of Knowledge is essential element of effective and meaningful learning (Ting jer yuen et.al 2007)

In tune with the above discussion, the present study is undertaken with the view to analyze the knowledge sharing behaviour among research scholars.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To the individual, the possession of information or the ability to locate it, especially in the information technology era (Samuel Johnson). Knowledge is an intangible resource that exists with the mind of the individual (sveiby 1997).

Research studies proved that if opportunities for exchange of Knowledge are given between students, there will be a remarkable improvement in their domain of knowledge.

Like in any organization, knowledge sharing is the most important to enhance the required knowledge in the field of research and analysis among research scholars. Hence, the present study focused on the knowledge sharing behaviour among research scholars.

3. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives have been framed for the present study:

- To identify the various modes of knowledge sharing by the research scholars in Bharathidasan University

- To locate what areas of Knowledge been shared by the research scholars in Bharathidasan University
- To list out the benefits of knowledge sharing by the research scholars in Bharathidasan University
- To find out the factors that are affecting the knowledge sharing process by the research scholars in Bharathidasan University
- To study the significant difference between male and female research scholars with respect to mode of sharing knowledge, areas of sharing knowledge, benefits of sharing knowledge and factors affecting sharing knowledge
- To identify the relationship among the different variables under study

4. METHODOLOGY

The present adopted a survey technique and the data were collected from 150 research scholars of Bharathidasan University. The research scholars are pursuing either Mphil or PhD programme. The data were collected using a self developed questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was ensured by test-retest method. The questionnaire contains the following sections:

- Details about gender
- Details about mode of sharing knowledge
- Details about area of sharing knowledge
- Details about benefits of sharing knowledge
- Details about factors affecting knowledge sharing

Further, Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

5. ANALYSIS

The data was tabulated and was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics

5.1. SAMPLE

Table 1: Sample of the Present Study

S.NO	GENDER	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
1	MALE	80	53.3%

2	FEMALE	70	46.7
	TOTAL	150	100

The data for the present study were collected from the research scholars of Bharathidasan University. Out of 150 research scholars 80 (53.3%) were male research scholars and 70 (46.7%) female research scholars. The research scholars are pursuing either M.Phil; or Ph.D; programmes.

5.2. MODE OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores on Mode of Sharing Knowledge and Its Dimensions With Respect to the Entire Sample

Mode of sharing knowledge	Mean	S.D	Mean Percentage
Face to Face	1.57	0.67	15.67
Internet	1.33	0.66	13.33
Portal	0.97	0.79	9.73
Social Network	1.52	0.69	15.20
Mode of Sharing Knowledge	6.46	3.36	64.60

Table 2 reveals the mean and SD of the overall mode of sharing knowledge which were 6.46 and 3.36 respectively. Among the dimensions, face to face communication scores the highest mean 1.57 and the same was lowest for the dimension through portal 0.97.

5.3. AREA OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores on area of sharing knowledge and its dimensions with respect to the entire sample

VARIABLE	MEAN	S.D	MEAN PERCENTAGE
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Sharing Knowledge about Research Resources	1.53	0.68	15.33
Sharing Knowledge about Present Research Work	1.40	0.72	14.00
Sharing Knowledge about Research Statistics	1.24	0.77	12.40
Sharing Knowledge about Information Technology	1.55	0.67	15.53
Sharing Knowledge about Reference Materials	1.51	0.64	15.13
Area of Sharing Knowledge	7.24	3.29	72.40

From the table 3, it is observed that the mean and SD of overall area of sharing knowledge was 7.34 and 3.29. Among various areas, sharing of knowledge About Information technology scores the highest mean 1.55 and the same was lowest for the area of sharing knowledge about statistics applied in research. Generally the overall mean score analysis reveals that different areas of knowledge towards research is equally shared by the scholars.

5.4. BENEFITS OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviations of the Scores on the benefits of sharing knowledge and its dimensions with respect to the entire sample

Variable	Mean	S.D	Mean Percentage
Enhancing Research Aptitude	1.38	0.74	9.86
Increasing Efficiency	1.47	0.74	10.52

Development of Self Confidence	1.44	0.74	10.29
Improving Thinking Ability	1.28	0.83	9.14
Participation in Team Wok	1.16	0.79	8.29
Strengthening Problem Solving Ability	1.06	0.79	7.57
Awareness of Technology knowhow	1.55	0.67	11.05
Benefits of Sharing Knowledge	9.34	4.95	66.71

From the table 4, it is inferred that mean and SD of overall benefits of sharing knowledge was 9.34 and 4.35. Among the dimensions, awareness of technology know how scores highest mean of 1.55 and the same was lowest for the dimension strengthening problem ability 1.06.

5.5. FACTORS AFFECTING SHARINGF KNOWLEDGE

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviations of the scores on factors affecting sharing knowledge and its dimensions with respect to the entire sample

Factors Affecting Sharing Knowledge	Mean	S.D	Mean Percentage
Lack of Group Behaviour	0.58	0.67	5.80
Lack of Communication Skill	0.83	0.85	8.27

Lack of Social Network Skill	1.35	0.72	13.47
Lack of Time	0.99	0.86	9.93
Lack of Awareness of Recent Development	0.83	0.71	8.33
Factors Affecting Sharing Knowledge	4.58	3.12	45.80

Table 5 reveals that the mean and SD for overall factors of affecting knowledge was 4.58 and 3.12. Among the dimensions, lack of social network skills affects more with a mean of 1.35 and the same was less for the dimension lack of group behavior with a mean score of 0.58.

5.6. MODE OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviations and t - values of the scores on mode of sharing knowledge and its dimensions with respect to Gender

Variable	Male N = 80		Female N = 70		t- Value	Level of Significance
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Face to Face	1.63	0.60	1.50	0.74	1.13	P > 0.05
Internet	1.29	0.62	1.39	0.71	0.90	P > 0.05
Blog	1.06	0.80	1.07	0.82	0.07	P > 0.05
Portal	1.01	0.79	0.93	0.79	0.65	P > 0.05
Social Network	1.56	0.67	1.47	0.72	0.80	P > 0.05
Mode of Sharing Knowledge	6.55	3.22	6.36	3.52	0.35	P > 0.05

Table 6 depicts the Mean, Standard Deviations and 't' values of the scores on Mode of Sharing Knowledge and its dimensions with respect to Gender. It is inferred from the table that

the calculate t-value is less than the table value, which reveals that there is no difference between male and female research scholars in different modes of sharing knowledge. From the mean score analysis it has come to know that both male and female research scholars have got equal awareness towards different modes of sharing knowledge.

5.7. AREA OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Table 7: Mean, Standard Deviations and t - values of the scores on area of sharing knowledge and its dimensions with respect to Gender

Variable	Male N = 80		Female N = 70		t- Value	Level of Significance
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Sharing Knowledge about Research Resources	1.56	0.65	1.50	0.72	0.56	P > 0.05
Sharing Knowledge about Present Research Work	1.49	0.73	1.30	0.71	1.59	P > 0.05
Sharing Knowledge about Research Statistics	1.29	0.78	1.19	0.75	0.81	P > 0.05
Sharing Knowledge about Information Technology	1.60	0.67	1.50	0.68	0.91	P > 0.05
Sharing Knowledge about Reference Materials	1.59	0.59	1.43	0.69	1.50	P > 0.05
Area of Sharing Knowledge	7.53	3.25	6.91	3.34	1.13	P > 0.05

Table 7 presents the Mean, Standard Deviations and 't' values of the scores on Area of Sharing Knowledge and its dimensions with respect to Gender. As the 't' values calculated are found to be less than the table value, hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference between male and female research scholars in overall areas of sharing knowledge. From the mean score analysis, it is found that both male and female research scholars are found to be equal in different dimensions in area of sharing knowledge.

5.8. BENEFITS OF SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Table 8: Mean, Standard Deviations and t - values of the scores on the benefits of sharing knowledge and its dimensions with respect to Gender

Variable	Male N = 80		Female N = 70		t- Value	Level of Significance
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Enhancing Research Aptitude	1.48	0.73	1.27	0.74	1.69	P > 0.05
Increasing Efficiency	1.59	0.69	1.34	0.78	2.03	P < 0.05
Development of Self Confidence	1.41	0.77	1.47	0.70	0.49	P > 0.05
Improving Thinking Ability	1.41	0.82	1.13	0.82	2.12	P < 0.05
Participation in Team Wok	1.24	0.82	1.07	0.75	1.30	P > 0.05
Strengthening Problem Solving Ability	1.04	0.80	1.09	0.78	0.37	P > 0.05
Awareness of Technology knowhow	1.65	0.62	1.43	0.71	2.02	P < 0.05
Benefits of Sharing Knowledge	9.81	4.92	8.80	4.96	1.25	P > 0.05

Table 8 displays the Mean, Standard Deviations and t - values of the scores on the Benefits of Sharing Knowledge and its dimensions with respect to Gender. The calculated 't' values for the overall benefits of sharing knowledge is found to be less than the table value, hence it is concluded that male and female research scholars do not significantly differ in the overall benefits of sharing knowledge even at 0.05 level; whereas in the dimensions, increasing efficiency, improving thinking ability and awareness of technology knowhow, the p values are less than 0.05 level, hence it is inferred that male and female research scholars differ significantly in these dimensions. From the mean scores analysis, it is found that in all these three dimensions male research scholars have better benefits than female research scholars. In the remaining dimensions, development of self confidence, participation in team work and in strengthening problem ability, the t values are less than the table value, hence it is concluded

that male and female research scholars do not differ significantly in the above dimensions and they both are found to be equally benefited.

5.9. FACTORS AFFECTING SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Table 9: Mean, Standard Deviations and t - values of the scores on the factors affecting sharing knowledge and its dimensions with respect to Gender

Variable	Male N = 80		Female N = 70		t- Value	Level of Significance
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
Lack of Group Behaviour	0.35	0.62	0.84	0.63	4.83	P < 0.01
Lack of Communication Skill	0.35	0.58	1.37	0.78	8.99	P < 0.01
Lack of Social Network Skill	1.29	0.77	1.41	0.67	1.08	P > 0.05
Lack of Time	1.31	0.79	0.63	0.78	5.32	P < 0.01
Lack of Awareness of Recent Development	0.98	0.66	0.67	0.74	2.65	P < 0.01
Factors Affecting Sharing Knowledge	4.28	2.98	4.93	3.26	1.28	P > 0.05

Table 8 exhibits the Mean, Standard Deviations and t - values of the scores on the factors affecting Sharing Knowledge and its dimensions with respect to Gender. It is clearly observed from the table that the calculated 't' value for overall factors affecting sharing knowledge is less than the table value, hence male and female research scholars do not differ in overall factors affecting sharing knowledge; whereas the p values are found to be less than 0.01 for the dimensions namely lack of group behaviour, lack of communication skill, lack of time and lack of awareness of recent development, hence it is concluded that male and female research scholars differ significantly at 0.01 level in the above four dimensions. It also reveals that in dimensions group behaviour and communication skills, female research scholars are better than male research scholars, whereas in the dimensions lack of time and awareness of recent development male research scholars are found to be better than female research scholars.

In the dimension of social network both male and female research scholars do not differ significantly even at 0.05 level.

5.10. CORRELAATION

Table 10: Correlation(r – values) of the scores on Variable with respect to Entire Sample

Variable		r Value	Remark
Mode of Sharing Knowledge Vs	Area of Sharing Knowledge	0.96	High Positive Correlation
	Benefits of Sharing Knowledge	0.96	High Positive Correlation
	Factors Affecting Sharing Knowledge	- 0.94	High Negative Correlation
Area of Sharing Knowledge Vs	Benefits of Sharing Knowledge	0.98	High Positive Correlation
	Factors Affecting Sharing Knowledge	- 0.92	High Negative Correlation
Benefits of Sharing Knowledge Vs	Factors Affecting Sharing Knowledge	- 0.94	High Negative Correlation

Table 10 presents the Correlation(r – values) of the scores on Variable with respect to Entire Sample. It is visibly seen from the table that the variable modes of sharing knowledge is positively correlated with two variables namely areas of sharing knowledge and benefits of sharing knowledge and the same was negatively correlated with the variable factors affecting sharing knowledge. It was also found that the variable areas of sharing knowledge was positively correlated with the variable benefits of sharing knowledge and the same was negatively correlated with the variable factors affecting sharing knowledge. It is further

inferred that the variable benefits of sharing knowledge was negatively correlated with factors affecting sharing knowledge.

6. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The summary of the findings is as follows:

- The face to face communication was found to be most used mode of sharing knowledge and portal was the least mode of sharing knowledge among research scholars.
- The knowledge about information technology was mostly shared and knowledge about statistics used in research was least shared among research scholars.
- Awareness of technology know how was the most benefit derived through sharing of knowledge among research scholars
- The factor lack of social network skill stands as a barrier to share knowledge among research scholars

7. CONCLUSION

The present study is undertaken with the view to analyze the knowledge sharing behavior among research scholars in Bharathidasan University. The findings of the study helped to identify that research scholars are in need of encouragement to share knowledge through portal. Further it is recommended that if research scholars' knowledge on statics and social network enhanced, there will be a considerable improvement in sharing of knowledge.

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