

## Prediction of obstacles and facilitating of sharing the knowledge in public part

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**Abstract:** Nowadays, managers in different countries such as Iran are eager to establish systems of knowledge management in organizations using their useful results. Sharing the knowledge is one of the most important and common process in different structures introduced for knowledge management, and also people provocation is one of the priorities in the knowledge management in the world for sharing knowledge in organizations. Managers use the knowledge management in organizations in order to improve the knowledge sharing in organization and also among people and organization to create competitive advantage. The object of the article is paying attention to one of the most important aspects of knowledge management in organizations and obstacles in knowledge sharing and its facilitating. Recognizing the main pharynxes, take a proper action in improvement and affection on the knowledge sharing and help the knowledge management to settle properly in its organization. In this article the potential obstacles of knowledge sharing could be classified in three categories of individual obstacle, organizational obstacle, technological obstacle and their recognition would help the managers of knowledge management to establish the culture of knowledge sharing in organizations and exploit their results. According to different organization missions and goals (for instance , private, public, non-beneficial, big, and small) a general decision wouldn't be effective to all organization, although having a general insight related to obstacles and facilitating of knowledge sharing for each manager and in each organization for taking goals and creating special strategies of the knowledge management in organization would help effectively which prevent the experiencing many hardships in the improvement of knowledge management's path.

**Keywords:** Knowledge management, knowledge sharing, obstacles of knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing facilitating

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### I. 3. INTRODUCTION

There are many contexts about differences of data, information, knowledge, and implied knowledge and the explicit one which are told in different ways and we are not going to repeat again. In most of the books and articles written about knowledge management it is focused in proper knowledge distribution of proper people to proper people and in proper time as a most important challenges.

Knowledge sharing as a complicated activity but worthy, is the basis of many strategies in organization knowledge management, so there is a need to recognize and omit or limit the obstacles to establish a more appropriate background for knowledge sharing as the affection of this subject on the establishing competitive advantage. Recently, we can see a growing development in the knowledge sharing by researchers and organization managers especially in using of best methods of practises in world and in Iran. The reason is that competitive advantage acquisition and gaining many successes by organization has a root in applying the knowledge resulted from the knowledge management process and the activities and initiatives of knowledge sharing in the individual and organizational learning are main factors.

In a knowledge centered economics, organization non tangible assets (especially in serving organizations) convert to a determined competitive factor growingly. Such assets like chops, organizational fame, technical skills and knowledge of stuff, and organizational culture seem as competitive advantage nature (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Although these non-tangible assets are creating and possessing the organization gradually, there is no direct possession or direct control of organization on the staff knowledge as the main resource of the assets. If the staff knowledge isn't acquired by the organization, knowledge may abolish for many reasons or it may be out of access simultaneous to staff leaving. For example, production marketing needs a deep knowledge about customers, exhibitors, distributors, competitors and laws. However, required knowledge in each field probably change rapidly because of market dynamism.

Notwithstanding of growing conscious about the benefits of knowledge sharing, still there are limitations in the field of access to knowledge in people's mind which is called implied knowledge or it can be in some special hands in a documented and written form. (Explicit knowledge) This fact is one of the most important reasons that why lots of organizations believe that saved implied knowledge by staff are an organizational worth capital. In fact sharing the implied knowledge among people with different fields, insights, inceptives, is a main and basic step toward producing the organizational knowledge.

Sharing knowledge is defined by Mac Dermot as a person share his knowledge, it means that person instruct the other using his own knowledge, insights and thoughts in so as to help him having a better situation. Moreover, a person who shares his knowledge should be aware of this shared knowledge and its application also the needs and information gaps of the receiver and this is ideal. This indicates the point that all stuff don't require the knowledge sharing, because it is possible that their knowledge isn't applied or isn't used again. In other words, knowledge sharing is useful when all stuff need it or at least they use most of the knowledge they receive.

There are many studies about different aspects of knowledge sharing. For example, study the organizational environment and culture shows six Russian companies which the governing culture in those companies is opposite of knowledge sharing. Another study shows that amelioration the knowledge progresses in organization help the development of strategic methods by organization through the staff relationship with customers and shareholders (Sivula et al. 2001). So customer's knowledge is very important since it can help companies in different ways which are: better recognition of customer requests, developed relationship with customer through acquisition of deeper knowledge, and recognition of new trade opportunities. Another study shows that sharing the existence knowledge is very useful in improvement of general organization performance.

## **II. A REVIEW ON THE LITERATURE OF STUDY**

There are different views about the behavior of knowledge sharing that some assume it normal and some others abnormal. For example Davenport says: "knowledge sharing is often abnormal and usually people don't share their knowledge, because they think their knowledge is important and worth" (Davenport, 1997, p. 189). Other researchers believe that knowledge sharing is a normal desire in people who have knowledge. Knowledge sharing in some organizations is also natural and in some others which are affected by this standard "Knowledge is power", is abnormal.

Some other studies have focused on organizational theories and public knowledge on the organizational culture which is related to nature of companies and social groups or the importance of social capital and social interactive in facilitating of knowledge producing and sharing. Others deal with the subject of confidence among costumers and its effect on knowledge sharing (Urch-Druskat and Wolff, 2001). Some others deal with the general level of oneness in organization and have studied the effect of these items on the knowledge sharing: way of thinking, age, education and experience level, and support of the head and group (De long and Fahey, 2000; Sveiby and Simons. 2002).

These mentioned differences may be related to people (as in lack of individual skills), or to inter organizational systems and process (as in hierarchy structures), or to technologies (as in lack of appropriate software tools). Also there are discussions about if the knowledge management generally and also knowledge sharing activities typically should be human centered or technology centered. Authors in the management field believe that knowledge sharing mostly is related to people and their conformity with the social dynamism in workplace rather than technology.

These people focus on the establishing of knowledge sharing culture in the organization (Cross and Baird, 2000). Information have an important supporting role in knowledge sharing and without them, knowledge sharing activities have a few effectiveness. General agreement in knowledge sharing field is that the main challenge in organization knowledge sharing activities is protecting and optimizing the worth of implied knowledge which are out of the staff, customers and beneficiaries' authority.

Most of the authors agree that individual knowledge is effective in the organization public knowledge and the effectiveness in knowledge centered fairs directly depend on producing new knowledge and useful knowledge sharing through the interactive between implied and explicit knowledge. Dixon believes that choosing a proper knowledge sharing process in an organization depend on these items: knowledge type (implied or explicit), usual way and the frequency of knowledge sharing process, and knowledge receiver (individual, group or the whole organization) (Dixon, 2000). Dixon recognize four different ways of effective group knowledge sharing which are: serial knowledge transfer, close knowledge transfer, far knowledge transfer and special transfer (Dixon, 2000, pp. 144-5). Serial transfer is a situation in which implied or explicit knowledge of the group is shared in a different work situation and in another time in that group. Close transfer is applying and re-performing of group explicit knowledge in other groups which do the same. Far transfer is re-applying of group implied in other group do the same? Special transfer is a situation in which work group is looking for required explicit knowledge in the organization in order to complete the work.

### **Potential obstacles in knowledge sharing**

WE deal with potential obstacles in knowledge sharing in organization in this part according to previous subjects which consists of organizational obstacles, individual obstacles and technological obstacles. The obstacles are mentioned which there are public agreement about them waiving their different characteristics such as size, type of organization possession. Recognition if these obstacles in knowledge sharing in organization are a natural part of their culture or not, has an important role in a successful knowledge management strategy.

#### **A) Potential obstacles in individual knowledge sharing**

Obstacles which come from individual manners or performances and concepts could be related to people or groups in practical units of organization. According to differences among organizations, indicating these obstacles doesn't mean that each can perform individually or are found in a same amount in all organization, rather it is possible that according to organizational characteristics different compounds of these obstacle could be found in different organization. Potential obstacles in individual knowledge sharing are:

**Time:** lack of time for knowledge sharing is one of the usual obstacles in knowledge sharing. It consist of lack of required time for knowledge sharing, or lack of time for recognizing colleagues need special knowledge. In spite of existence of managers who are aware of the knowledge sharing benefits, they face many problems in this case because of time limitations. Time limitation causes prioritizing in knowledge sharing and other activities which stuff think are more useful and consequently deal with other activities rather than knowledge sharing. Lack of enough time for stuff for interactivity could cause knowledge sharing obstacle(Gold.et al, 2001).

**Concern of people who have knowledge about reduction of their job safety arises from knowledge sharing:** Some are following this old theory that they believe " knowledge and information bring power" and because of that they try to hide or conceal their knowledge and assume that knowledge is a mean for improving in their jobs so they think knowledge sharing causes weakening in their job situation, power and organizational situation (Probts et al., 2000). Many of stuff are afraid of reduction in their job safety, so they don't share their knowledge. One of the reason is that they don't know enough about their goals and intentions about knowledge sharing. Some low and average level stuff also don't share intentionally, because they think if the heads understand about growing the knowledge of inferiors, it would prevent their promotion (Michailova and Husted, 2003).

**When the person who has knowledge is not aware of the benefits of his knowledge for others:** Some stuff aren't aware of how their knowledge does worth for others. In this case no body - nor the person having the knowledge neither the person receiving the knowledge- is concerned about who needs the knowledge or who owns the knowledge. It ii also called reciprocal ignorance which is one of the biggest obstacle in knowledge sharing in most organizations.

**Sharing of explicit knowledge predominate the sharing of implied knowledge in organization:**This means that in an organization it is more focused on the documented knowledge sharing and sharing of implied knowledge such as methods and experiences which need to practical learning, observations, discussions and interactive solving has less significance. Many researchers believe that it is needed that organizations emphasis on the basic reasons related to necessity of knowledge sharing, specially sharing of implied knowledge (methods and experiences) and methods of sharing of implied knowledge such as to practical learning, observations, discussions and interactive solving. (O'Dell and Grayson,. 1998).

**Using the hierarchical order and organizational situation and formal power in organization by individuals:** The more formal is the workplace, the more it causes reduction in being friendly and lack of confidence among stuff especially between inferiors and heads. Lack of confidence causes reduction in knowledge sharing.

**Inadequate recognition, evaluation and tolerance of past mistakes and its feedback:**In an organization or the people that could cause improvement in individual or organizational learning. One of the knowledge sharing obstacles is lack of tolerance of mistakes and not learning of those ones. Studies have shown that the lessons organization takes as a result of recognition and evaluation of pas mistakes have the most effect on the applying methods in the future (De Long and Fahey, 2000). It seems that national culture is a limited factor in the relationship of practical learning. For instance, Russians don't talk about problems or mistakes out of the workplace, while in some Asian and western culture believe that positive feedback of mistakes help the individual and organizational learning and improvement.

**Differences about the level of experience of people who are on the both sides of knowledge sharing process:** The person who owns and who receives the knowledge.

**Shortage or absence of relationship and interactivity between the person who owns and who receives the knowledge:** Absence in the relationship between knowledge resource and knowledge receiver, in situations that are working nor together neither in a group, but the required knowledge of receiver is on knowledge resource which is one the obstacle.

**Individual skills and weak relationships (written or oral):** Most of researchers mention that stuff abilities for knowledge sharing firstly and mostly depends on their relationship skills. Effective relationship, in written or orally (which is the most common way of sharing implied knowledge), is very important, effective and basic for knowledge sharing. (Meyer, 2002).

**Absence of social networks:** The importance of relationships between individuals in management knowledge is a lot that someone says: " if you've got a dollar and you want to spend it for management the scientists in this field, it's better to spend it for establishing relationships between people." many studies have been carried on this subject indicate that there is a perfect connection between stuff social networks and their personality (introversion against demonstrative) and their interactive ability with others (Agrote et al, 1990. Baron and Markman, 2000).

**Differences about sex, age, and the level education.**

**Keeping intellectual property because of fear of lack of appreciatory and trusting by managers and colleagues:** Stuff tend to keep their possession on their knowledge in a way that can acquire trust of their colleagues (Murray, 2002).

**Lack of confidence:** Having discussed the knowledge sharing without paying attention to confidence is impossible. Most of people don't share their knowledge when there isn't confidence. Confidence in an organization and its subsidiaries and among the members has adirect effect on relationships in organization.( Stauffer, 1999) Thus, the amount of shared knowledge in organizations unit and also among units and branches of organization.( De Long and Fahey, 2000).

**Differences between National and organizational culture(values and beliefs related to or previous language and race field):** Culture has many different defines, one of them is "values, manners and costumes". Culture is accepted between organization members. There are many studies about cultural obstacles in knowledge sharing in organizational levels. While, there are a few ones about the effect of national culture in the knowledge sharing activities (Moeller and Svahn, 2004).The role of colloquial language on the knowledge transfer is also recognized. (Fai and Marschan-Piekkari, 2003).

## **B) Organizational potential obstacles in knowledge sharing**

One of the main subjects about knowledge sharing in an organization is a relevant background to proper organizational environment and conditions. Potential obstacles which can cause reduction in knowledge sharing in an organization are:

**Uncertainty of knowledge management strategy or lack of compatibility with organizational goals and strategic organization methods:** Failure or success in knowledge sharing strategy depends on the compatibility of this strategy with organization goals and strategies. (Hansen et al, 1999). This compatibility is as emphasized as someone says: " Putting aside that how a knowledge sharing plan starts or which structures it has, those knowledge sharing plans are successful that are completely related to organization and its strategic goals.

**Absence of management leadership and guidance in knowledge sharing benefits and values:** Absence of management leadership and guidance can decrease the knowledge sharing activities. According to more effectiveness the voluntary knowledge sharing is and awareness knowledge sharing is a new behavior that some need to learn, it seems that permanent instruction and supporting and presenting definite practices is a certain prerequisite for effective knowledge sharing in all organizational levels. (Gurteen, 2000).

The solution is that people should improve their ideas in collaborating with others through groupwork. (Gurteen, 1999).

**Absence of formal and informal space for knowledge sharing and new knowledge production:** The difference between formal and informal groups is that in formal ones their size is limited and these groups are focused on subjects which are important of the organization's point of view. Whereas, the informal ones are unlimited and members' favorite subjects are the important subjects which each one could define and instruct. One of the most important subject in knowledge sharing, is combination of human networks.(McDermott and O'Dell, 2001).

**Absence of aware definite systems which encourage stuff to share more knowledge:**using aware is an increasing way in stuff activity which causes better organizational results, because of human's competitive natures. While, most of organization's motivation is their profits, encourager factor for stuff. (Ellis, 2001) Rights and advantages and appreciation of their operation are done by organization and it is necessary that managers take action in changing organizational culture to the culture which appreciate knowledge sharing. In this way, it's not important that which aware and appreciation system is chosen because both accentuate knowledge sharing. One of the knowledge sharing activities appreciation is that pay attention to it as a criteria in evaluation of stuff operation in some companies (BP, Ernest & Young, KPMG, HP).

**Lack of enough organizational culture support of knowledge sharing activities:**organizational culture is a complicated issue which is past manifestation and organization memory and has an effect on the current organization condition and transfer its past to its future. Organizational culture is determinative of individual and group manner and has a great role in the success of knowledge management plans and it could operate as a key obstacle in relationships with knowledge sharing. Organization culture defines the interactive level among individuals in operations vertically and horizontally. A proper organizational culture also could cause successful performance of knowledge management plans in organization (Park, et al, 2004). Moving toward culture interchange and cooperation is a very hard work for many organizations. For successful knowledge sharing in organization we should firstly, coordinate the knowledge sharing activities with existence cultural values in organization instead of effort for culture change (McDemott and O'Dell, 2001). Culture intellects also in organization may influence knowledge sharing activities in a way that different groups have different definitions and values for knowledge which cause deficient communication and contradiction among group works and decrease the knowledge in organization (De Long and Fahey,2000).

**Lack of high priority in organization for protection and keeping the knowledge of high experienced and high skilled stuff:**An important challenge for receiving organizations, is keeping those stuff who have knowledge with high quality. When these people leave the organization, they take the improvement factor out of the organization (Stauffer, 1999). Also in recent business world, specialists are well aware of their specials value and has high movement in business. Thus, for improving the knowledge management methods it is necessary that keeping knowledge strategies settled in priority specialists or human resources specialist's lists.

**Lack of appropriate substructure for supporting knowledge sharing activities:**Inappropriate allocation of human resources or process resources such as specialists, financial resources, and information and communication technology could have a negative effect on establishing an effectiveness knowledge sharing. Establishing a proper substructure and providing enough resources for facilitation knowledge sharing activities in the units and among them are the basis of a successful knowledge management plan(Coleman, 1999. Schlegelmilch and chini, 2003). While, failure in knowledge sharing activities even before they start has a root in lack of main substructure and necessary abilities for knowledge sharing in organization(Gold. et al, 2001).

**Insufficient organization resources for creation enough opportunities for knowledge sharing:**Importance of organization financial commitment in knowledge management which has a lot of costs, is one the emphasized subjects (Davenport, 1997), so necessary knowledge management resource allocation is necessary for supporting knowledge currents in organization and cooperation among people.

**High competition level among organizational units or branches with each other:**Sometimes high competition among people, groups, units and branches of an organization cause improvement in conflict goals and desires. One of the result of this constructive competition is " not- invented- here" syndrome which limit the knowledge sharing, because people and groups don't accept the ideas and innovations out of the organization or unit, so results in resistance against knowledge sharing and decrease in units and branches.

**Physical work place and work units arrangement:**One of the obstacles which often is not paid attention is the way of arrangement of work units in the way limit or complicate the knowledge sharing. In tradition arrangement methods, work places mostly were found according to hierarchy and master of management. Especially for those organizations which their units are settled in varied geographical situations, there are serious obstacles in knowledge sharing. Using practical group computer plans is the solution (Ives. et al, 2000).

**Organization hierarchy structure:**There are many studies in benefits and problems of different organizational structures. Some show that a flexible organizational structure the best for knowledge sharing, (De Long and Fahey, 2000. Probst. et al, 2000) even there are findings which indicate that organizational structure is more important than organizational culture and information technology for effective for knowledge sharing (Zhou and Fink, 2003).

**Unilateral communication current and knowledge in organization (up to down):**In a structure organization, hierarchy and multipart, in which communication is up to down, it is unlikely to exist effective knowledge sharing in compare to a flexible one. In an organization which the communication isn't limited to a certain direction and probably has units and small operation scopes or project team it is more likely to exist effective knowledge sharing (Ives. et al, 2000).

**Large organizational units in a way that there is no management possibility for improving communication and facilitation in knowledge sharing activities:**Studies show that the size of organization and its units influence the effectiveness of knowledge sharing activities in and among units(Connely and Kelloway, 2003. Sveiby and Simons, 2002). There is no special advice for the size of formal knowledge sharing groups, because this size for different companies could be different and it is impossible to present the same solutions for all organizations. Some of the researchers suggest that instead of isolated knowledge sharing, it's better to choose persons as the head a small groups and ask them to meet permanently and give them the responsibility of knowledge sharing (Ellis, 2001).

### **C) Potential technology obstacles in knowledge sharing**

Knowledge interchange is as related to individual and organization as to a technologic challenge. The expression hybrid solutions means necessary interactivities between people and technology for facilitation the knowledge sharing activities waving organization size, (Ruddy, 2000, p 38) so many of knowledge sharing activities are related to substructure of information technology. There are lots of substructure which support the organizing, saving, marketing, searching, display, distribution, and recreating information. So, organizations cannot claim that have created a knowledge management system and knowledge sharing strategy solely having a perfect information base a complicated electronic post system (Sarvary, 1999). Some of the Potential technology obstacles in knowledge sharing are:

**Incompatibility of information technology systems with existence process in organization:**Even if the technology isn't the last way and the prompt strategy in knowledge sharing, Incompatibility of information technology systems with existence process in organization is very important. There is no doubt that information technology like internet, intranet, electronic post systems or group software have a great effect on decreasing the formal communication obstacles. Trailing the knowledge resource inside and outside the organization, stuff, producers, customers and safety technologies (Gold et al. 2001).

**Absence of technical support (inside and outside the organization) and lack of rapid repairmen of uniform information technology systems which cause a pause in usual procedure of performance and communication currents:**It seems none of the software package or the hardware ones is perfect and flawless. Break down in computer systems could be irritating because it causes waste of time and cost. So, it is necessary to exist a support unit inside and outside the organization which not only support the efficient and in time solutions for problems, but also predict the potential problems, too.

**Nonrealistic stuff's expectations about technology abilities:**some people often exaggerate about the role of technology and contrastingly, some others underestimate other technology abilities which causes ambiguity about whatever technology could do and whatever couldn't. Non realistic expectations about technology can also causes reluctance in using them. Therefore, it seems it's better stuff be intervened in design levels or choosing new systems or reformation of existence systems.

**Incompatibility between processes and varied existence information technology systems in organization:** Incompatibility in new systems and information technology systems can be a potential obstacle in knowledge sharing. It occurs when a kind of software or hardware for special usage must be used in another new system or another different one n another place. It seems in world organizations, systematic choice is impossible which is proper for all duty scopes.

**Unconformity of duties about meeting needs with processes and uniform information technology systems:** This could cause an obstacle. Software systems should support the working process and people in making decision field in what information they access or which information they save or to whom they send (O'Dell and Grayson, 1998).

**Reluctance in working with information technology systems because of lack of acquaintance and experience of working with these systems:** Sometimes people are reluctant in using new or reformed systems because of complicated technology. Even though, most of people aren't reluctant. Acquaintance with information system or information technology or lack of it could be an obstacle in knowledge sharing.

**Absence of instruction for getting familiar with new information technology systems or process.**

**Not to communicate or reveal the new information technology system benefits compared to existent systems by organization for staff:** Proper using the new information technology systems increase the tendency of knowledge sharing, because these systems cause improvement the knowledge sharing process and put the owner and receiver in a virtual place, An in this way eliminate the time and physical borders and social gaps between them (Hendriks, 1999).

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Those organizations that want to have a successful strategy in knowledge management and uniform strategy in knowledge sharing, have to pay attention to most of these obstacles. Managers need to pay attention to something beyond the organization culture and basic values while evaluating the knowledge. Moreover, managers should be aware that a special knowledge sharing strategy or definite management actions in one organization are not as efficient as the others because of differences in organizations such as the size (small, average, large) possession (private, public) and mission (beneficial, non-beneficial). Thus, knowledge sharing goals and strategies in each organization are different according to strategic planning and thoughts.

It is possible that existence of each of these obstacles and their intensity and weakness to be different in each organization according to different characteristics. Obstacles introduced here are an initiative structure point for great management in evaluation level, knowledge need, and relationships in organizational knowledge. Evaluating the effect of all these obstacles on different organizational levels, organizational units and different organization (small, average, large) and different industry parts in different national cultures, we need to study more. There are a few experience studies in the field how to overcome different obstacles or modeling the organizations which have taken efficient methods.

Organizations need to more study for establishing knowledge sharing culture and increase in knowledge sharing activities and increase in competitive ability, which depend on its special characteristics. Each organization that want to gain a stable growth in business has to change the knowledge sharing activities to routines. Success in gaining knowledge sharing goals and strategies, centered around knowledge sharing culture in an organization depends on these factors:

- 1- Encouraging, provocation and stimulation in organization in a way that cause acquisition, distribution, transfer and applying the useful knowledge and new knowledge specially implied knowledge purposefully.
  - 2- Inflexible organizational structure which facilitate the knowledge currents.
  - 3- Process and resources that create a permanent organizational culture
  - 4- Communicate the certain organization goals and strategies about knowledge sharing activities and their benefits
  - 5- Heads who instruct the staff creating instruction process and its feedback.
  - 6- Advanced technology which uniform the mechanisms and systems purposefully and provide a proper background for knowledge sharing; and provide the access to different resources for all need knowledge.
- Shortly, knowledge sharing isn't worth for staff and organization unless they need useful knowledge, they receive, they accept, and also they apply. Because formal and informal knowledge sharing networks are available in organization and it should settle this environment on these networks. First step is recognition of knowledge sharing obstacles and the existence gap between existence condition and flavored condition of knowledge sharing activities; and taking proper action toward meeting the obstacles and moving forward flavored condition.

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