

ABSTRACT

Lack of knowledge sharing is one of the major issues distressing the knowledge intensive industries driven by knowledge workers. Although the lack of knowledge sharing is an issue at global level at present, the literature on the factors affecting individual's knowledge sharing intention is still emerging and consideration on the socio psychological factors such as social norms is seldom explored. Since this had not gained sufficient attention in the management literature, the managers were not provided with sufficient knowledge to manage this issue. Thus, the aim of this study is to contribute to the existing knowledge in the field of knowledge sharing, by exploring the socio psychological factors such as social norms which may lead to the lack of willingness or intention to share knowledge among the software practitioners. Accordingly, the objectives of this study were; firstly, identifying the impact of personal factors affecting knowledge sharing intention of the software practitioners, secondly identifying the impact of social factors affecting knowledge sharing intention of the software practitioners and thirdly, to examine the impact of knowledge self-efficacy as a moderator in these relationships. This study attempted to achieve this purpose by specifically referring to the software practitioners in the software industry in Sri Lanka.

Consequently, based on the in-depth literature survey, the variables such as attitudes, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, descriptive norms and knowledge self-efficacy were identified as factors that could affect the software practitioner's knowledge sharing intention. The relationships between these variables were established based on several previous works such as the 'Theory of Planned Behavior' by Ajzen, Focus Theory of Normative Social Conduct by Cialdini and colleagues, Theory of Normative Social Behavior by Rimal and Real and Self-Efficacy Theory by Bandura. Accordingly, it was hypothesized that the attitudes, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms and descriptive norms have a positive impact on the knowledge sharing intention of software practitioners and knowledge self-efficacy interact with attitudes, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms and descriptive norms on the knowledge sharing intention and moderate their positive impact on the knowledge sharing intention.

In the present study, a survey was conducted among 400 software practitioners in Sri

Lanka and among them 302 usable responses were used to test the research hypotheses. Subsequently, the data was analysed, following the two-step process recommended in the literature, using AMOS 20.0 software. The data analysis revealed that attitudes, perceived behavioral control and descriptive norms have a positive impact on the software practitioner's knowledge sharing intention while the subjective norms did not show a statistically significant impact on the knowledge sharing intention of the software practitioners. Further, it was found that the knowledge self-efficacy interacts with attitudes, perceived behavioral control and descriptive norms while no interaction effect was showed for subjective norms.

This study contributed to the existing literature on knowledge sharing by providing more rigorous theoretical explanation and providing empirical support to the personal factors and social norms (attitudes, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms) that already identified in the existing literature. Further this research extended the existing theoretical literature by introducing the descriptive norms as an additional social norm affecting knowledge sharing intention. In addition, knowledge self-efficacy was considered as a cognitive mechanism which explains how the knowledge self-efficacy interact with other factors affecting knowledge sharing intention to influence the software practitioner's knowledge sharing intention

Finally, the research findings brought out valuable managerial and industrial implications, specifically regarding the Knowledge Management practices and Human Resources Management practices that could support to improve knowledge sharing. Such implications highlighted the importance of having training and development programmes and incentives to shape the attitudes of employees; as well proper knowledge management systems. The study was concluded by mentioning the directions for future research; for example, testing this theoretical model in different contexts and extending this theory by introducing new social factors.