

CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF VALUE CURVE IN KNOWLEDGE SHARING OF ORGANIZATIONAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT: *The knowledge sharing is the core of knowledge management in organizational training and education, but we pay few attentions to the value of knowledge sharing in the past. This research aims at some confuse idea related to knowledge sharing, then we propose more explicit knowledge value categorization, and infer the hypothesis of the value of knowledge owner curve. The main contribution of present study is to classify the value in knowledge sharing process into the knowledge value and knowledge owners', and explaining what the value of organization increased is come from knowledge owner decrease, finally knowledge owner value can be divided into expert's power value and the value of sharing will and ability. Put these two above values together, the knowledge owner value becomes a concave upward curve. It is to say the value of knowledge owner is under the influence of expert's power and descend in the early stage, and then raising thereafter because this sharing will and ability are predicted to get applauses. The present study proposed related hypotheses, it still have to carry on some testing to verify in the future. However these hypotheses still show some new concept of value in the subject of the knowledge sharing currently, it enable us to find different thinking. We hope the results of present study can suggest a better way to encourage knowledge sharing according to different viewpoints of value of organizational training and education in the future.*

KEYWORDS: Value curve, Knowledge sharing, Training, Education

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, academics and the business community have paid more attention to the topic of knowledge management. More and more companies are beginning to regard knowledge as an asset, focusing on how the organization can increase the effective use of intelligence properties and the value of intellectual assets (Davenport and Prusak, 1998). However, the core of knowledge management is knowledge sharing, the development of knowledge sharing topics, and how knowledge sharing works in an organization and its possible benefits. Therefore, the knowledge sharing in organizational education and training is need academics and industry to further study.

The value of knowledge sharing in the past researches often confused some concepts. For example, knowledge does not wear out, and the value of knowledge increases with sharing. However, it is impractical to use this argument to encourage the members of the organization to share their knowledge. Though the knowledge does not wear out when shared, the argument that knowledge value will increase is based on the organization's point of view. Moreover, knowledge sharing has threat to the knowledge owners (Pfeffer, 1998; Hollander and Offerman, 1990). Although knowledge does not wear out, but the knowledge owners wear out; knowledge sharing increases the value of the organization, but the value of the owner of knowledge is declining. Therefore, when an organization attempts to share

knowledge, it may be a kind of behaviour that is harmful to people. In a market for knowledge exchange, there will be exist great resistance (Davenport and Prusak, 1998).

The reason for the above phenomenon is that in the past, the value of knowledge, the value of organization, and the value of the knowledge owner were not clearly separated. Furthermore, the value connotation of the knowledge owner was not analyzed in depth. Therefore, this study combined with past literatures and tries to investigate the relationship between the value of knowledge, the value of the organization, and the value of knowledge owners when knowledge sharing. Enabling the understanding of changes in the value of knowledge under different divisions, in turn, promote the effective operation of the knowledge market and enable more effective practice of knowledge sharing in organizations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge sharing means that the employees or internal and external teams of an organization exchange and discuss knowledge with each other through various channels within or across organizations. The purpose is to expand knowledge through the exchange of knowledge and use value and generate a synergy of knowledge.

Castanias and Helfat (1991) pointed out that whether a company's performance is high or low is based on whether the company's personnel are willing to share the knowledge owned by individuals with other members of the organization and transform the knowledge gained from other parties into new capabilities or technologies.

Dutta (1997) pointed out that the effective management of knowledge is important for the competitiveness of organizations. Rapid technological progress over the last decade has made knowledge based systems (KBSs) an integral part of every organization's effort to manage its knowledge assets effectively, KBSs have an important impact on all levels of organizational knowledge: individual, group, organizational, and knowledge links. Dutta (1997) also believes that many organizations are currently working on coordinating cross-team and inter-departmental work. This is to make knowledge transfer and dissemination easier. This can help organizations design better products, shorten the time to market, and meet customers need.

Nancy (2000) regard that the sharing is "knowing" and sharing one's knowledge with others is like sharing knowledge out, and then sharing this knowledge with each other, than the whole organization will "know" this knowledge.

The Knowledge Value and the Value of Knowledge Owners

Stewart et al. (2006) pointed out that knowledge will not be derogated from use, and the cost of producing knowledge will not changed due to changes in the number of users.

Hidding and Shireen (1998) argued that knowledge sharing and economics are very different in terms of goods, when person A gives a pen to person B, person B gets a pen and person A loses a pen. However, in terms of sharing knowledge, when person A shares some knowledge with person B, both have the knowledge and the original knowledge value will not be affected. Therefore, when knowledge holders pass the knowledge completely to the others, the knowledge owner's own knowledge is still intact and has not been reduced or

compromised. The value that the knowledge can generate is constant, so its meaning is shown in Figure 1. As shown, the value of knowledge itself does not change with the amount of knowledge sharing (the number of people or the number of times).

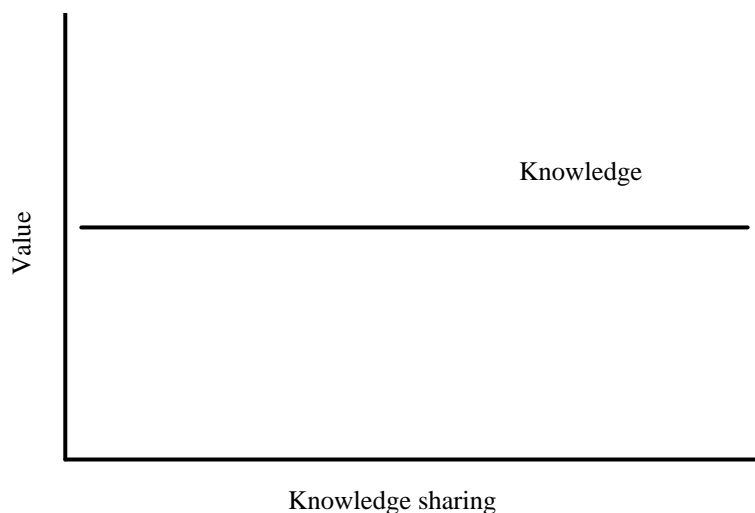


Figure 1. Value of knowledge does not change

In the above discussion, after the so called knowledge sharing, the intellectual value of the knowledge owner is constant, and it means that the value created by the knowledge is also constant; not that the value of the knowledge owner is constant and neither means that the total value of the organization or society is constant.

However, the knowledge market is similar to the principle of supply and demand in economics. Assuming other conditions remain unchanged, when the supply of goods in a market increases, the price will decrease. Similarly, in the knowledge market, the share of knowledge shared by knowledge holders is equivalent to the increase in the supply of knowledge. Although the knowledge possessed by oneself has not been reduced, but its own power and value have been reduced accordingly. This is also the traditional economic thinking that rare things are expensive.

Hollander and Offerman (1990) argued that when individuals share knowledge with others, knowledge owners will regard that their power is lost.

Pfeffer (1998) also argued that the power comes mainly from possessing knowledge. Once experts' knowledge has been acquired, the expert power will be reduced.

Davenport and Prusak (1998) regards that voluntarily sharing knowledge with others does not meet human nature, and the degree of knowledge sharing in the organization affects the knowledge owner's sense of power and security. For knowledge workers, the sharing of expertise will result in the spread of knowledge, which will make the knowledge worker's no more unique and its rights and interests compromised (Hendriks, 1999).

Owners of knowledge in the organization are often unwilling to share their knowledge because of self-defence protection mentality. The reason is that once the knowledge is released, it will have no more unique and will produce great threat in the organization.

Relationship between Value of Organizational and Knowledge Owners

Probst et al. (2003) believed that employees of general organizations think that knowledge is the basis of power. Who owns know-how will has the expert power, then can obtain resources and influence others. So that the employees unwilling to lose their power because of sharing the knowledge.

Dixson (2000) regarded that asking individuals to sharing the knowledge is tantamount to paying for some of their own private property. Some people are more likely to lose any substantial benefits from sharing knowledge and are therefore unwilling to share (Martin, 2000).

Therefore, according to the above literatures review, the present study proposes the viewpoint in Figure 2. If there is more knowledge sharing (number of people or times), the value of the knowledge owner's is lower. Moreover, the value of knowledge and the value of the knowledge owner are separated. As mentioned above, the value of knowledge itself is not reduced with the sharing of knowledge, but the value of the expert of the knowledge owner (the vehicle of knowledge) is in accordance with the law of supply and demand in economics. When there is more supply, the value (price) is declining.

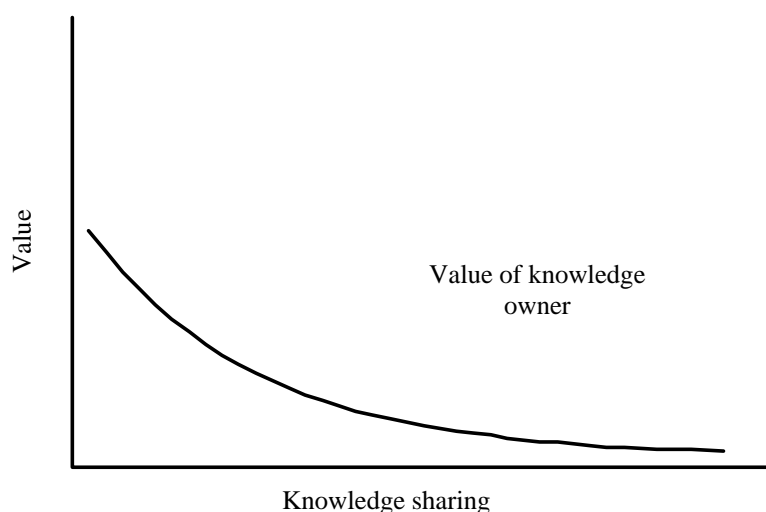


Figure 2. The value decreased of knowledge owner

Probst et al. (2000) pointed out that knowledge is the only resource that will increase when used in the organization. It can be divided into two concepts, one is to increase due to reproduce and share, the other is the concept of knowledge creation in the process of sharing. The present study first eliminates the concept of knowledge creation that stimulates the

creation of new knowledge. Only discuss the part of knowledge that increases the value of reproduction and diffusion. Therefore, the so-called concept that knowledge increases as a result of sharing is due to the increase in the total amount of knowledge in the organization, that is, the individuals that own the knowledge increase. Not every knowledge owner's knowledge increases.

Therefore, as stated in the previous section, the knowledge value of the knowledge owners decreases with the increase of knowledge sharing (Figure 2). However, the overall knowledge value of the organization is increased. Therefore, the present study regards that the increase of knowledge value in organizational comes from the decrease in the value of knowledge owners, as shown in Figure 3.

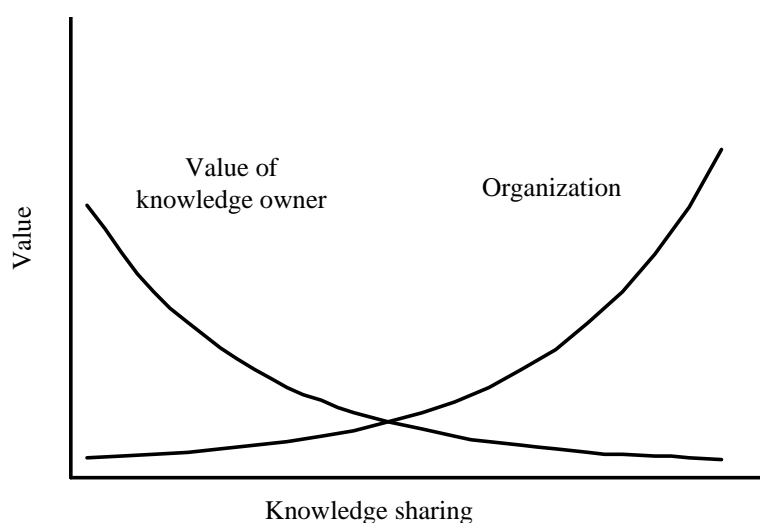


Figure 3. Relationship between value of knowledge owner and organization

Nonaka et al. (2000) also believe that the new know-how has always been initiated by individuals, and that the conversion is to transform personal knowledge into organizational knowledge that has value for the entire company.

The knowledge owners in the organization share their knowledge and become the basis for the increase overall value of the organization, such form a trade-off relationship. The more knowledge sharing, the lower the value of the knowledge owner, but the total knowledge value of the organization's is rising. Therefore, the increase in the value of organizational knowledge is in return for the reduction in the value of knowledge owners as a result of knowledge sharing among the members of the organization.

Therefore, the present study believes that if organizations want to improve organizational performance through knowledge sharing. They cannot just emphasize the benefits of knowledge sharing, because most of the benefits contribute to organizational rather than personal. They need to eliminate the personal value reduction and job threat perception of knowledge sharing. If employees are convinced that knowledge sharing will receive tangible

and intangible rewards, there will be more positive attitudes to share knowledge (Bock and Kim, 2002)

Willingness and Ability on Knowledge Sharing of Knowledge Owners

Based on the above discussion, knowledge owners lose value due to knowledge sharing unless the organization provides relative incentives. In an organization, knowledge sharing is also a kind of exchange of resources. Like the social exchange theory (Homans, 1958), the interaction process between the two parties is actually exchanging remuneration. Only the exchange relationship is attractive, they will continue to cooperate with each other. Nancy (2000) studies the knowledge sharing strategies and regards that people share knowledge because individuals think that they can gain some benefits or rewards when sharing. If one party does not continue to provide compensation, this exchange relationship does not attract the other party. Therefore, it will stop sharing behaviour.

However, if organizations implement the design without incentives, they can still have some active knowledge sharers. Therefore, the present study believes that these knowledge sharers must have a strong expectation of remuneration.

Although knowledge sharing is in front of the audience and the organization, and the recipient of the knowledge do not have specific returns. The reason why the knowledge owner will continue to share knowledge is that they expect that there will be reward exchanges in the future, such as preferment within the organization, or affirmative outside the organization.

Davenport and Prusak (1998) believes that there are knowledge markets in the organization, the rewards of knowledge sharing, from high to low summed up in three categories, namely, mutual benefit, reputation, and altruism. The mutual benefit and reputation are the exchange of expected compensation.

With the increase in the number of knowledge sharing participants, the willingness of sharer's will be more recognized by the organization and its value will be higher. The more willingness of knowledge sharing with others result the more confident and able to share knowledge with others.

Others benefit can also gain appreciation from managers, and personal values are relatively high. Therefore, the present study believes that the willingness of knowledge owners to share knowledge and the value of their capabilities increase with the degree of knowledge sharing, as shown in Figure 4.

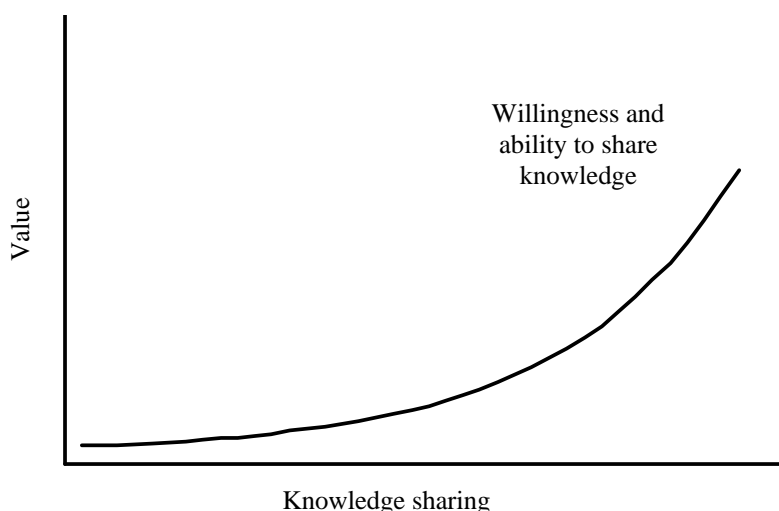


Figure 4. The value of willingness and ability to share knowledge increased of knowledge owner

Lee (2001) also suggested that after the sharer's ability to enhance self-sharing, the expected appreciation and future rewards will encourage the sharer's to continue to share behaviour without real incentives.

Value Curve of Knowledge Owner on Knowledge Sharing

Based on the discussion in the previous sections, knowledge owners in the knowledge sharing behaviour will make them worthless in the organization due to have more members with those knowledge, that is, knowledge sharing leads to knowledge owners will decline the value of expert status with the increase of knowledge sharing, as shown in Figure 3.

On the other hand, if knowledge owners are willing to share knowledge with other members, their ability to share in the long term can be improved, and their attitude of willingness to share can also be recognized by their peers and managers, as shown in Figure 4. That is, the value of knowledge sharers willingness and ability to share increases with the increasing level of knowledge sharing.

Combining these two curves can illustrate that knowledge owners are attracted by two factors of knowledge sharing. First, the decreasing curve due to the decrease of knowledge owner value, and the increment curve due to the willingness ability to sharing knowledge. This resulted in a dilemma struggle situation.

The so called dilemma struggle situation is a panic that knowledge owners fear loss of value after knowledge sharing. On the other hand, knowledge owners also expected the improvement of the ability to share knowledge and gain affirmation and reward. In present study, the two value curves were merged to obtain the total value curve that was decreased and then increased as shown in Figure 5. And the hypothesis is the knowledge sharing causes short-term value decreases and then increases long-term value for knowledge owners.

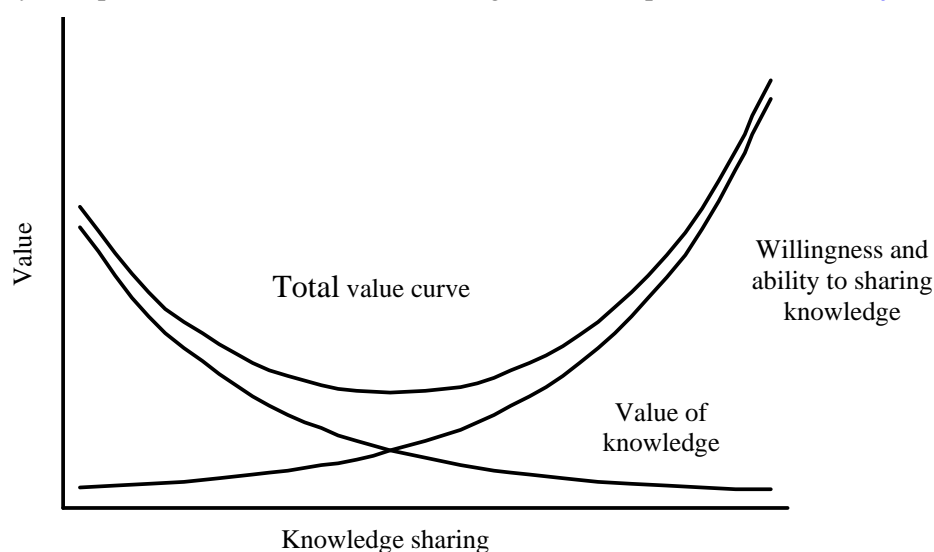


Figure 5. Total value curve of knowledge owner

However, if the subjective remuneration expectations of knowledge owners are not high, or the organizational atmosphere in the objective environment does not have a strong sense of expected rewards for the knowledge owner, then the result of this inference cannot be obtained.

If knowledge owners are positively expected compensation for knowledge sharing, and if they can't make up for previous disadvantages, sharing behaviour of knowledge owners will stop.

In other words, if the knowledge owners cannot pass over the value decline period of knowledge sharing, it will not be able to enter a positive cycle of value increase, to achieve a win-win situation for both the organization and the knowledge owners.

CONCLUSION

Based on previous researches on knowledge sharing, the present study first clarified the difference between the value of knowledge and the value of knowledge owner. Also clarified that knowledge sharing would increase the organizational value because of the decline in the value of the knowledge owner. The organization should not only emphasize the total value of the organization after knowledge sharing to encourage members of the organization to share knowledge.

The hypothesis derived from the literature in present study is that there still have knowledge sharing behaviours without incentive design in organizations. It is because of the reward expected from organization after the knowledge sharing.

Thus, the value perception of knowledge owners is influenced by the reduced of expert value and the increased of reward expected value of the knowledge sharing.

Therefore, the value curve of knowledge sharing of the knowledge owner is a hypothesis that descends first and then rises.

The present study currently deduces hypotheses based only on the literature. These hypotheses are still to be verified in the future. However, these inferences have helped to clarify the confusion in the value of knowledge sharing behaviour in the past. The present study separates the value of knowledge from the value of knowledge owners and separates the value of the knowledge owner from the value of the organization. And then divides the value of the knowledge owner into two dimensions: the value of the expert and the value of the willingness and ability to share. If these ideas are verified, they will contribute to understanding the value of knowledge sharing in organizational training and education.

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