ROLE OF TRUST AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION IN RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL NETWORK AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING BEHAVIOR: A MODERATED MEDIATION MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Current study investigated the moderated mediation effect of Trust between Social Network and Emotional Exhaustion among academicians of public sector Universities of Quetta, Balochistan by examining the influence of Emotional Exhaustion on Knowledge Sharing Behaviors of employees. Sample of 221 full-time academic staff members was considered to investigate the connection between variables. The findings of current research suggested that social network and knowledge sharing behavior was partially mediated by employee exhaustion. Trust moderates the negative association among Social Networks and academicians' Emotional Exhaustion. The indirect negative influence of Emotional Exhaustion on Knowledge-Sharing Behaviors of academicians' is also decreased. All hypotheses were accepted. The limitations and implication of the study, in addition to recommendations for future research, were discussed.

Key words: Social Networks, Emotional Exhaustion, Trust, Knowledge Sharing Behavior.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The behavior of transmission of the significant knowledge among group members as well as to other employees of the organization is termed as Knowledge Sharing Behavior. Sharing of knowledge generates relationships among colleagues and all group members (McDermott & O'dell, 2001). It has been observed that establishments are trying to expedite the process of knowledge sharing among their workforces. Transfer of knowledge among group members may provide help to the individuals to improve the quality of their performance as well as the performance of the organization (Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000)

Although individuals can acquire valuable knowledge from society, employees, and group members, they are reluctant to share that knowledge. It means that knowledge sharing from individuals to other group members comprises of several challenges (Ipe, 2003; Wang & Noe, 2010).

Previous studies has found associations among Emotional Exhaustion and Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Ryu, Ho, & Han, 2003). Emotional Exhaustion is a prolonged state of emotional and physical fatigue that results from unnecessary job stresses and nonstop aggravations (Lewig & Dollard, 2003; Shirom, 1989; Zohar, 1997). Emotionally exhausted personnel are reluctant to share their knowledge because they want to save their treasured resources (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998)

Earlier research has found that social networks and Trust can be significant factor for Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Chow & Chan, 2008). The process of knowledge sharing is surrounded by social networks. The entrance and departure of the network members influence the amount of knowledge sharing (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005)

Theory of Conservation of Resource (COR) was used for current study (Hobfoll, 1989). By applying a moderated mediation, this study investigates how Trust safeguards the effects of Social Networks on Emotional Exhaustion and deteriorates the indirect negative association among Social Networks and Knowledge Sharing Behaviors of academicians. Present research claims that the mediating influence of Emotional Exhaustion among Social Networks and Knowledge Sharing Behavior fluctuates due to Trust. As the negative influence of Social Networks is possible to be weakened with the increased level of Trust.

By considering these noteworthy components, the study has numerous objectives. First, objective of this study is to investigate the influence of Social Networks on Knowledge Sharing Behavior among teaching staff members of state-owned universities (, Sardar Bahadur Khan Womens University (SBK), Balochistan University of Information Technology and Management Sciences (BUITEMS) and University of Balochistan(UOB) of Quetta Balochistan Pakistan. Secondly, the mediating effect of Emotional Exhaustion as a significant instrument connecting Social Networks to academician's Knowledge Sharing Behaviors was also investigated by present study. Finally, the study offers Trust as a moderator that could weaken the negative relation between Social Networks and Emotional Exhaustion. Present research not only enhance the current literature but also creates unique understandings that academic institutions can use to improve the process of Knowledge Sharing Behaviors of their employees

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In context with organizational success, competitive advantage and long term sustainability of company, knowledge sharing plays a key role (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Stewart & Ruckdeschel, 1998). Many companies strive to expedite the process of sharing knowledge among their work groups (Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006). Researchers gradually know that people are the central impediments to the practice of knowledge management than in any other factor (Cabrera et al., 2006; Earl, 2001). While sharing knowledge is a discretionary behavior it would be useful to study the circumstances in which workforces might be hesitant to share knowledge. As knowledge sharing embraces the sharing of specific information, exceptional expertise, know-how, and facts. Individuals might choose not to stake their valued knowledge to preserve their competitive advantages (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). Consequently, encouraging to share knowledge could be incomprehensible except individuals recognize that involving in it will yield countless returns (Kim, Lee, Park, & Yun, 2015).

3. KNOWLEDGE SHARING BEHAVIOR

The course of conveying ones knowledge to colleagues is termed as knowledge sharing behavior (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Ryu, Ho, & Han, 2003). Knowledge sharing is the dispersal of conceptions, philosophies, realities, readings, findings, interpretation, thought, and techniques from one to the other person for the sake of improved task performance (Bock & Kim, 2002; Wasko & Faraj, 2000).

Knowledge sharing helps organization to practice and develop their knowledge-based capitals (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; Damodaran & Olphert, 2000). Positive relationship had been shown amid knowledge sharing and group performance, firm performance, faster completion of projects, reduction in production cost in earlier researches (Arthur & Huntley, 2005; Collins & Smith, 2006; Cummings, 2004; Hansen, 2002; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009). Furthermore, knowledge sharing behavior was influenced by the interpersonal group features for instance strong social ties (social network), and motivational factors for example interpersonal Trust, and perceived paybacks (Emerson, 1981; Wu, Hsu, & Yeh, 2007).

3.1 Social Network

The strength of social relations amid group members denotes to social network. These social relations amongst individuals exist in the realm of social environment they are tied up in (Boissevain, 1974). Concerned with the individual's perceptions, social network characterizes the essential element of social capital that signifies the objective conformed relations among individuals and the degree of these relations among employees within their group or organization.

3.2 Social Network and Knowledge Sharing Behavior

Interpersonal characteristics such as social networks have a vast influence on Knowledge Sharing Behavior among members. A few studies have explored on interpersonal relations and group characteristics as social networking in relation to Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Sawng, Kim, & Han, 2006; Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006). Sawng et al., (2006) tested the relationship of Knowledge Sharing Behavior and group interrelations (e.g social networking) and found that it facilitates knowledge sharing among employees. The agreeableness among the group members, communication style, and extravert styles of group members were shown to be linked with Knowledge Sharing Behavior (De Vries, Van den Hooff, & de Ridder, 2006). If we look at the other side of the picture it can be clearly stated that if employees experience weak social network ties, they would be unwilling to share their knowledge. Thus we tend to

explore this notion that weak social network ties lead to low levels of Knowledge Sharing Behaviors among the employees. Therefore, our first hypothesis is

Hypothesis 1: Weak social network ties among employees is negatively related to knowledge sharing behavior.

4. MEDIATING ROLE OF EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

By way of knowledge sharing, some supplementary resources are asked for, comprising time, energy, emotional exhaustion and efforts. Emotional Exhaustion is probably a significant means relating low levels of social network with the behaviors of sharing knowledge. Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) submitted that Emotional Exhaustion follows after emotional loads go as far as whatever an individual may come up with interpersonal workplace relations. Likewise, Cropanzano, Rupp, and Byrne (2003), theorized Emotional Exhaustion as “a type of strain that results from workplace stressors” (p. 160). One of the countless undesirable psychological effects, is the emotional depletion and work-related fatigue (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Research put forward that emotionally exhausted individuals most probably withdraw from their jobs trying to carry out only those explicitly given to be performed (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004). Social environment in which coworkers are engaged, is often associated with Emotional Exhaustion. Former research supported negative relationship between workgroup relations and employee’s Emotional Exhaustion (Jackson, Turner, & Brief, 1987). Additionally, Leiter and Maslach (1988) testified a negative relationship between the informal interaction among the members and Emotional Exhaustion.

The process of Emotional Exhaustion affecting Knowledge Sharing Behavior is still to be explored. In this paper we attempted to present on the perspective of discretionary serving behavior not the actual tasks specifically assigned to the employees in the work environment (Somech, 2016). Employees experiencing burnout are unwilling to engage in any kind of voluntary behavior (Cheung & Lun, 2015; Salehi & Gholtash, 2011). Aryee, Sun, Chen, and Debrah, (2008) established that employees who undergo Emotional Exhaustion are expected to lessen their hard work involving interpersonal assistance and job devotion. Therefore, we predict hypothesis 2 as follows

Hypothesis 2: Emotional Exhaustion mediates the relationship between weak social networks and knowledge sharing behavior.

5. MODERATING EFFECT OF TRUST

Trust might affect the association between weak social networks and knowledge sharing, as mediated by way of Emotional Exhaustion. Trust has emerged as a vital aspect in comprehending coworkers’ experiences gained in demanding work conditions arising from weak social network ties. The flow of information among coworkers more willingly than the expectation of reward or punishment to be known as trustworthy is termed as information based trust (Lander, Purvis, McCray, & Leigh, 2004). The familiarization amongst coworkers ensures predictable behavior from the other party that diminishes the sense of risk and uncertainty, is the main basis for information based trust (Ba, 2001). Therefore, people try to behave and become trustworthy in response to the trust others have in them. Emotional Exhaustion is reduced and emotional stability is achieved when people share their information with coworkers having a confidence that they will not exploit their information.

Emotionally attached individuals experience trust. Coworkers show unbiased and genuine interest and take care of others wellbeing and welfare and believe these emotions to be reciprocal (McAllister, 1995). Hence, these strong emotional ties that coworkers develop over time supports them to work together (Panteli & Sockalingam, 2005; Lander et al., 2004).

Stress can be amplified by low intensities of Trust that consequently leads to higher extent of exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004; Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Lewicki and Bunker (1996), claimed that outspreading Trust prompts reciprocity consequently low levels of Emotional Exhaustion is experienced in work place.

It is proclaimed, in this paper, that prevalence of Trust will weaken the negative relation between Social Network and Knowledge Sharing Behavior mediated by Emotional Exhaustion. For instance, individuals anticipate that their coworkers will realize their involvement in terms of devoting time and energy and will reciprocate. Rendering to the effort-reward imbalance model (Siegrist, 1996) fairness among coworkers as perceived by employees effects in a reduced amount of stress and burnout experienced by them (Taris, Peeters, Le Blanc, Schreurs, & Schaufeli, 2001, Halbesleben & Buckley, 2004). Hence, we formulate our third hypothesis as:

Hypothesis 3: Trust moderates the strength of the relationship between Social Network and knowledge sharing mediated by Emotional Exhaustion, such that the mediated relationship is stronger under low Trust than under high Trust.

Conceptual Model

Figure 1 Conceptual Model

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 Sampling procedure and characteristics

Data were collected from academic staff of three public sector universities of Quetta. Through survey method, structured questionnaire has been distributed to 247 employees. After eliminating 26 invalid questionnaires a total of 221 responses were retained for further data analysis. Of the 221 respondents, 68% were male, the average length of tenure was 10.09 years, and the average age of respondents was 38 years (SD= 2.3).

6.2 Measures

To measure the study variables, the items of questionnaire were adopted from previously tested instruments.

Social Network: Social network was measured by five items taken from, Borges (2012). This scale measures social network on five point Likert that ranges from “very accurate” (5) to “very inaccurate” (1).

Employee Exhaustion: Employee exhaustion was measured by nine items taken from (Maslach, Jackson, Leiter, Schaufeli, & Schwab, 1986). These scale measures Emotional Exhaustion on five point likert scale that ranges from “strongly agree” (5) to “strongly disagree” (1).

Knowledge Sharing Behavior: Knowledge Sharing Behavior was measured by four items taken from Davenport and Prusak (1998). This scale measures knowledge sharing behavior on seven point Likert scale that ranges from “strongly agree” (7) to “strongly disagree” (1).

Trust: The construct information-based Trust and identification-based Trust were measured by items taken from Smith (1996); and Ridings, Gefen, and Arinze (2002) respectively. This scale measures Trust on seven point likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” (7) to “strongly disagree” (1).

6.3 Hypothesis testing

Mediation and moderated mediation was assessed through “PROCESS” for SPSS developed by Hayes (2018). This macro determines the path coefficients as well as bootstrap confidence interval (CI) for conditional indirect effect of independent variable on dependent variable by one or more mediator variable. We used these procedures to determine that Social Network indirectly affects Knowledge Sharing Behavior via Emotional Exhaustion, and the strength of hypothesized indirect effect of Social Network on Knowledge Sharing Behavior is conditional across different levels of Trust.

6.4 Results

SPSS “PROCESS” was employed to test the hypothesis that employee exhaustion mediates the relationship between Social Network and Knowledge Sharing Behavior. It estimated the (i) path coefficient from Social Network (independent variable) to Employee Exhaustion (mediator), (ii) path coefficient from Emotional Exhaustion (mediator) to Knowledge Sharing Behavior (dependent variable), (iii) path coefficient from Social Network (independent variable) to Knowledge Sharing Behavior (dependent variable), (iv) total effect (i.e. sum of direct effect and indirect effect) (v) and 95% confidence interval (CI) for the indirect effects by bootstrapping 10,000 samples.

We used the criteria proposed by Barron and Kenny (1986). According to this approach, by the inclusion of mediator the insignificance of direct effect (c' path) implies full mediation and if it is significant but lower than the total effect (c path) then it implies partial mediation.

The path coefficient from social network to Emotional Exhaustion is significant ($-.46, p < .01$), the path coefficient from Emotional Exhaustion to knowledge sharing behavior is significant ($-.18, p < .01$). In comparison to total effect ($.60, p < .01$), the direct effect is ($.51, p < .01$). Therefore, these results suggest that relationship between Social Network and Knowledge Sharing Behavior is partially mediated by Employee Exhaustion (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Indirect effect of Social Network on Knowledge Sharing Behavior through Emotional Exhaustion

Knowledge Sharing Behavior is statistically significant in our proposed model. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was accepted (see Table 1).

Table 1 Bootstrap results for Indirect Effect

	Value	SE	Boot LL CI	Boot UL CI
Effect	.08	.03	.02	.15

Note: Bootstrap sample size = 10,000, CI = Confidence Interval LL= Lower Limit, Sample Size (N) = 221, SE= Standard Error, UL = Upper Limit.

The third hypothesis of this study posited that the mediated effect of Employee Exhaustion in relationship between Social Network and Knowledge Sharing Behavior is weakened by high Trust. We set high level of Trust at one standard deviation above the mean, and low level of Trust at one standard below the mean. The results indicate that the interaction term between Social Network and Trust on Emotional Exhaustion is significant ($-.86, p < .01$). As it can be seen in table 2 that the conditional effect of social network on Emotional Exhaustion at high level Trust is weak ($-.75$) and significant ($p < .01$); whereas strong ($-.18$) and significant ($p < .01$) for low level of Trust.

Table 2 Conditional effect of Social network on Employee Exhaustion at values of Trust

Moderator	Level	Emotional Exhaustion			
		Conditional Effect	SE	LL 95% CI	UL 95% CI
Trust	High	-.75	.14	-.1.04	-.47
	Low	-.18	.13	-.44	-.07

Note: Bootstrap sample size = 10,000, CI = Confidence Interval LL= Lower Limit, Sample Size (N) = 221, SE= Standard Error, UL = Upper Limit.

Next, we examined the moderated-mediation between Social Network and Knowledge Sharing Behavior via Emotional Exhaustion at high and low level of Trust. As posited that the mediated effect of Emotional Exhaustion in relationship between Social Network and Knowledge haring Behavior is conditional on the values of Trust. The indirect effect was weaker (.03) and significant (CI ranges from .00 to .09, exclude zero) at a high level Trust, but was stronger (.13) and significant (CI ranges from .04 to .23, exclude zero) for low level of Trust. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was supported.

Table 3 Moderated-mediation results for Knowledge Sharing Behavior across levels of Trust

Moderator	Level	Knowledge Sharing Behavior			
		Conditional Indirect Effect	Boot SE	Boot LL CI	Boot UL CI
Trust	Low	.13	.04	.04	.23
	High	.03	.02	.00	.09

Note: Bootstrap sample size = 10,000, CI = Confidence Interval LL= Lower Limit, Sample Size (N) = 221, SE= Standard Error, UL = Upper Limit.

Table 4 Index of moderated-mediation

Moderator	Index	Boot SE	Boot LL CI	Boot UL CI
Trust	.15	.06	.03	.28

Note: Bootstrap sample size = 10,000, CI = Confidence Interval LL= Lower Limit, Sample Size (N) = 221, SE= Standard Error, UL = Upper Limit.

7. DISCUSSION

In this dynamic world for the sustainability and competitive advantage of organizations Knowledge Sharing Behavior is very much integral (Wang & Noe, 2010). Social networking plays a vital role in terms of sharing knowledge at workplace, these networking capabilities predict the efforts associated with knowledge sharing. This study derived from Conservation of Resource Theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989).

As our first hypothesis was that weak Social Network ties among employees is negatively related to Knowledge Sharing Behavior. The findings of the current study are consistent with Hobfoll (1989) who worked on Conservation of resource theory where he articulated that the more we avoid networking ties the more a person will be hesitant in terms of sharing their knowledge. In accordance with the present results, previous studies have demonstrated that different notions like personality traits and different styles of communications develop the willingness behavior among employees to share their knowledge (Srivastava et al., 2006; Sawng et al., 2006). The results of our first hypothesis demonstrated that weak Social Network has negative effect the Knowledge Sharing Behavior. Findings of this study suggests the positive role of social networking on numerous work related upshots. Our results confirm the findings of other research studies that demonstrate as that social networking incremental consequences not for individuals but for organizations such as the willingness to unveil optional behavior of Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Zellars et al., 2002).

Our second hypothesis evaluated the mediated role of Emotional Exhaustion among the weak Social Networks and Knowledge Sharing Behavior. This finding confirms the association between Social Networks and Knowledge Sharing Behavior and examined the role of social networks with context of Emotional Exhaustion on discretionary behavior of individuals in an organization i.e Knowledge sharing behavior (Wang & Noe, 2010; Tepper, 2000). While it has been suggested that Emotional Exhaustion hinders the Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Bartol, Liu, Zeng, & Wu, 2009; Harvey, Stoner, Hochwarter, & Kacmar, 2007) and our study confirms the findings of previous studies where it has been proved that direction of emotional mechanism determine the level of Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Lin, 2007), thus Emotional Exhaustion discretionary serving behavior confirms its role as a mediator between social networking and Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Flood, Turner, Ramamoorthy, & Pearson, 2001; Somech, 2016). This finding corroborates the ideas of Aryee, Sun, Chen, & Debrah (2008), who suggested that emotionally exhausted employees were less involved in sharing knowledge when their social ties also worsen. In this knowledge based environment it is always considered as difficult to identify the factors to which boost and hinders knowledge sharing (Hobfoll, 1989). Knowledge could not be transmitted until the conducive environment support this behavior. This can be done only through the level of Trust and social networking of an employee (Hobfoll, 2002; Wang & Noe, 2010).

As our third hypothesis was about the Trust which moderates the relationship between Social Network and Emotional Exhaustion. Past research in the field of Knowledge sharing behavior investigated certain factors that strengthens this behavior at work place, (Quigley, Tesluk, Locke, & Bartol, 2007). Similarly, our results are in line with Lander et al., (2004) where this was indicated that the positive dimension of Trust is associated with Knowledge Sharing Behavior. We proposed that social networking and Trust minimize the level of Emotional Exhaustion of employees and increase the Knowledge Sharing Behavior which is a discretionary behavior. Our results extend our understanding regarding this discretionary behavior of Social Network depicted that social networking as a workplace relaxer phenomenon may result into less Emotional Exhaustion state and that leads to increase level of Knowledge Sharing Behavior. Emotional ties amongst colleagues develop Trust which developed a sense of

reliability among coworkers. Our findings depicted that social networking had indirect relationship via Emotional Exhaustion with Knowledge Sharing Behavior proved the notion that workers who are emotionally worn out are tend to minimize the conservation of resource as Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Lin, 2007). This expands the indirect relationship of Emotional Exhaustion with knowledge sharing behavior.

8. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the factors that effects knowledge sharing behavior. Specifically, this study addressed moderated mediation effect of Trust in relationship between Social Network, Emotional Exhaustion and Knowledge Sharing Behavior.

Besides of this several researchers addressed the support systems that individuals have increase the level of willingness of Knowledge Sharing Behavior (Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006 ; Lin, 2007). In prior research there is dearth of knowledge that address different behaviors of employees in influencing the knowledge sharing (Srivastava, Bartol, & Locke, 2006), in order to address this gap, we explored the relationship between social networking (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003), Trust, Emotional Exhaustion, and Knowledge Sharing Behavior by using COR theory.

Our research study expands our understanding regarding the outcome behavior of certain variables like social networking, Emotional Exhaustion and Trust. Furthermore, this provides an addition in literature of knowledge sharing behavior. Our results provided the evidence of our proposition that Emotional Exhaustion mediates between the Social Network and Knowledge Sharing Behavior and Trust act as a moderator between the relationship of Social Network and Knowledge Sharing Behavior.

9. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite of significant addition to the literature on Emotional Exhaustion and Knowledge Sharing Behavior it is admitted that the current study has numerous limitations. Generalization of the results is the significant limitation because the research used the responses obtained from academic staff of public sector universities of Quetta city. However, it is recommended that the responses from academic staff of private sector universities can be used for cross verification of the results. Present study considered Social Network and Emotional Exhaustion as key factors that influence Knowledge Sharing Behavior. In future additional constructs will be required to explore detailed slants for sustaining structure that expedite knowledge sharing and lead to upsurge in the efficiency of universities and performance of academia.

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