



AMC Journal

Link : <https://doi.org/10.3126/amcj.v4i1.63708>

ISSN: 2717-4808 (Print), 2738-9987 (Online)

Research Management Cell  
Adarsha Multiple Campus

## Experience of Knowledge Sharing Among the Teachers in Higher Education

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### Abstract

*Knowledge sharing experience among teachers in higher education practice is important now a days. This study aims at exploring the experiences of the knowledge-sharing process among teachers in a higher education institution. It highlights teachers' professional experience professionally in knowledge sharing. Social-constructivist perspectives and phenomenological study frameworks are used. Data was collected by conducting in-depth interviews with two people from a college under Tribhuvan University, an institution of higher education. Data were analyzed by coding, creating themes, showing interrelationships, and reasoning. Results show that institutional culture and politics, teacher rewards, beliefs, status, and professional ethics and standards influence decisions to share or withhold knowledge with some teacher colleagues. The outcomes focus on professional conditions, political influences, and incentives all have a significant impact on knowledge sharing, with institutionalized processes and hierarchies affecting the willingness of educators to share expertise. Trust and ethical considerations are also important, with trust and perceptions of ethical standards affecting active involvement and cooperation. This study recommends that knowledge sharing is a productive topic to carry out research in the future.*

**Keywords:** Higher education, Institutional Culture, Knowledge-sharing, Professional Ethics, Teacher Experience

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## Introduction

I completed my school education from public school and my graduation is from Tribhuvan University. After graduation, *i.e.*, in 2013, I started my career as a teacher at Tribhuvan University. When I started my role, I felt differences. In the college environment, priority of the majority of teachers had on income and personality. Teachers were more involved in different external assignments, and college job got their least priority. The relationship between students and teachers was very poor, with limited and necessary interactions. Educational development activities such as seminars, workshops, meetings, presenting papers externally and internally, discussion forums, inter-department discussions, and writing and sharing about the teaching discipline for knowledge enhancement and capacity development were observed to be limited. I reflect myself that knowledge-sharing process helps develop common understanding among teachers regardless of age, sex, ethnicity, faculty, geography, etc. in higher education. Knowledge sharing within organizations enhances intangible knowledge, ideas, feedback, and tangible values through the effective transfer of knowledge between people in different roles and relationships (Annansingh et al., 2018). Therefore, the sharing of knowledge is necessary for the professional growth and development of the educational institution as well as of individuals. It also demonstrates the conduct of the activities in a lively manner and improves the confidence of the members of the education sector. Knowledge sharing among others and between the teachers will also affect the academic and institutional culture. Knowledge sharing is an institutionally necessary and important task. Knowledge focuses on helping others, solving problems, and identifying and developing new idea through knowledge sharing (Amayah, 2013).

Knowledge sharing is a process of information and ideas sharing as well as demonstration of the process. Similarly, knowledge sharing is a mental and social process that intertwines a person's sense of belonging or internal perception and any sense of free choice. Social constructionist theorists maintain that ". . . a culture provides the context in which tools and signs (such as language and numbers), and knowledge (the body of affective and cognitive information available to an individual) are shaped" (Sivan, 1986, p. 214). Furthermore, it exchanges personal experiences and knowledge which is acquired through professional and knowledge-searching processes. The teacher is the best professional knowledge provider through research and development, and share this knowledge with each other. In this regard, knowledge-sharing perceptions, excesses, and experiences are different from teacher to teacher individually.

Knowledge sharing is the spread of cognitive and experience-based ideas. Knowledge-sharing includes intellectual action, which is the dissemination of experiences in work-

related circumstances (Savolainen, 2017). Furthermore, knowledge sharing is a complex intellectual process as well as a process of refining knowledge. Research identifies that, directly and indirectly, knowledge-sharing processes improve teachers' overall performance (Shah and Mahmood, 2016). Knowledge is knowledge for the knower, whereas sharing is a process of updating the knowledge (Wilson, 2000). Knowledge sharing is a process of inquiry, sharing new information is searched, added, and updated the new information. It is based on a complex intellectual process that is related to personal knowledge and experience.

Institutional internal trust and the educational environment influence knowledge sharing. Internal motivation, networking, and trust influence academics' and researchers' attitudes toward sharing in a Higher Educational Institute (Chedid et al., 2020). Sharing knowledge needs collaboration; in higher education, professional trust is an important component of knowledge sharing that promotes both quality and efficiency inside the educational institution (Mutahar, 2022). In addition, institutional factors influence knowledge sharing. The organizational environment, behaviors, and psychological factors affect the organization's members. Reward systems, top management support, openness, and trust influence employees' knowledge-sharing performance (Nezafati et al., 2023). On the other hand, knowledge management consists of an accumulation of actions led by management to produce, store, transmit, and utilize knowledge; nevertheless, the efficacy of knowledge management is dependent on institutional culture, which can encourage or inhibit learning and knowledge exchange (Harorimana, 2010). Organizational management and institutional factors impact knowledge sharing. However, organizational culture and knowledge sharing are interrelated. This process is expected to maintain professional ethics and ensure trust in the higher education institutions.

Institutional culture is an important basis for knowledge sharing. Institutional administrative cooperation, collaboration, and institutional culture create trust among members of higher education institutions. Establishing trust in faculty willingness for knowledge management improves institutional performance (Kumari et al., 2023). Institutional environments such as culture, collaboration, and rewards act as motivation for members to share knowledge. In addition, the organizational reward system could potentially influence knowledge-sharing discretionary reasoning, potentially playing a significant role in this process (Van Houten, 2023). There have been some studies related to knowledge management in Nepal's Higher Education Institutions. Those studies are based on the relationship between knowledge management and academic process. The research results show the relationship between knowledge management and knowledge use, acquisition, production and dissemination processes (Poudel et al., 2023; Poudel, 2023). However previous studies have less priority of higher education teachers'

experiences of knowledge-sharing through experiential learning and knowledge production using different processes. Therefore, this research focuses on the experience of knowledge sharing among teachers in higher education institutions in Nepal.

### **Objectives**

Based on the experience of knowledge sharing among teachers in higher education institutions, this article aims to explore the experiences of knowledge sharing process among teachers in higher education institutions. University teachers have been taken as the focus of the study. It focuses on teachers' experience in knowledge sharing. It addresses the research question 'How do teachers experience knowledge sharing in higher education institutions?'

### **Theoretical Basis**

In this study, Vygotsky's social constructionism is made the theoretical basis of the research. While analyzing the received information and creating meaning, it will be constructed mainly based on the social constructionist approach. Social and cultural factors influence knowledge and understanding, emphasizing the importance of social interaction, language, and shared experiences in creating ideas, values, and knowledge (Schunk, 2012). The transformation of knowledge occurs through social processes, shaping cultural affiliations. People create meaning through social practices guided by institutional culture. "It is a dimension of social interaction" (Pritchard, 2009, p. 24).

Social constructivism embraces a frame of knowledge construction that emphasizes a view of collectively constructed meaning rather than the individual construction of knowledge (Sivan, 1986). The process of sharing experience or knowledge among teachers is based on participation in their work. It is influenced by their knowledge, culture, hierarchy, and other variables. This may not be a pre-determined process; it is a process of teacher perception and the teacher's personal experience. While it depends on their organization and personal interests.

### **Method**

In this research, an interpretive paradigm is used, which understands other cultures, from the inside (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Similarly, it incorporates a relativist ontology with a subjectivist epistemology (Levers, 2013). Qualitative phenomenological study is a well-established approach in qualitative research design for experiences of knowledge sharing. The study uses qualitative analysis to gain insights into teachers' experiences of

knowledge sharing in higher education institutions at Tribhuvan University, through phenomenological approach. Patton (2015) states that the phenomenological core question is “What is the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?” (p. 190). The phenomenological research approach is that which aims to gain depth inside or understanding of the phenomenon. It is more subjective and related to human beings' perceptions which are felt in everyday life. The process of a purposive sample of college professors with two TU affiliated college teachers (one male and one female) were selected from the total population of the selected institution of the Tribhuvan University. The sample was chosen based on expertise and involvement in knowledge-sharing current practice (teaching-learning experience, writing and publication, and position of the profession). Information was gathered through an in-depth interview, and the interview was recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed using a manual process. Google Translate software was used for the data translation. Data were analyzed through thematic processes such as coding, categorizing, comparing, grouping, and creating themes. The results of the study are analysed and conclusions have been drawn through the lens of social constructive theory.

## **Results**

This study reveals that professional conditions significantly impact knowledge sharing among teachers, with incentives and institutional decisions influencing this process. Trust in teachers' knowledge sharing influences active participation, but passive participation and educational benefits are also observed. Designation hierarchies and status also influence knowledge sharing, with higher hierarchy wanting control over language acceptance. Professional ethics also play a crucial role in knowledge sharing procedures and content. The findings were analyzed under five areas: organizational culture and politics, incentive for teachers, trust, status, professional ethics, and standard.

### **Organizational Culture and Politics**

Knowledge management and knowledge sharing among teachers are increasingly seen as means of professional development. Teachers' professional situations and exchange of expertise depend on their expertise. Professional conditions and organizational culture and politics have a significant effect on knowledge sharing among teachers. Knowledge sharing among teachers is concerned with communication and collaborative behaviors. The study presents different processes of institutional culture within the college contexts under the university. The professional structure and politics within the organization is found to affect the sharing of personal and educational knowledge of teachers. Teacher A said “There is a tradition of obtaining leadership in organizations based on political

beliefs. Discussion, writing, and publishing in an organization should be an institutional effort, but the effort has not been institutionalized". Teacher B said that, "Non-academic politics has controlled the institution, with writing, publishing and disseminating being group-based rather than institutional, teachers' professional status and exchange of expertise has been controlled." Teacher participation and professionalism and expertise should play an effective role in the knowledge management and sharing of educational institutions, but the politics and leadership within the institution were found to hinder the sharing of knowledge.

Teachers' professional situations and exchange of expertise depend on their expertise and institutional structure. Teacher A said that "the professional designation has become an institutional and professional structure that discourages other knowledge exchange." Institutionalized processes of knowledge sharing, which are often implemented institutionally, have become structures that discourage motivation. The leader of the organization is interested in the politics of the organization rather than the culture of sharing knowledge. political influences in writing and publishing, the culture of knowledge sharing is not being developed. The influence of politics on institutional culture means that the teachers working in the institution build their inner circle in terms of who to communicate with personally and who to trust instead of sharing knowledge. This institutional communication ignores institutionally exchanging knowledge. Teacher A indicated that "they were not interested in sharing knowledge." Teacher B indicated that "ideology is associated with color." The meaning of the statement... Whose statement should I accept or not? Analyzing the basis of the preceding responses revealed that institutional politics and culture influenced teachers' knowledge sharing rather than fostering their professionalism and expertise.

### **Incentive for Teachers**

Knowledge-sharing-related policy decisions are linked to institutional decisions. Have you received encouragement from your college to share knowledge or write and publish? In reply of the question, a participant gave a negative answer, teacher B, said that, "the short research required by the college was not requested and he admitted that he was not encouraged even when publishing articles in the journal published within the college." Never got it? When asked, the participant showed a change in facial expression and attempted to present a blunt answer. When asked again, the participants said that they were able to publish that they had received a small incentive. In the same way, teacher A said that, "if there is no reward, the work of writing and publishing will be reduced. When you get a reward, the willpower to work increases. The reward acts as a natural motivation. However, I have not received any additional financial support from the

college to date.” These results show that teachers agree that knowledge sharing is influenced by incentives.

### **Trust**

Conservation and trust in teachers' sharing of knowledge influences active participation. Cooperation takes the form of a conservation process that accelerates action. Teacher B said that, "although new teachers are professionally self-confident, there seems to be a reluctance among some teachers to share knowledge, which I have experienced." It represents a crisis of faith. Teachers are concerned about the safety of their work. It is unfair to use the knowledge of others and it does not mean that someone uses it unfairly. Teacher A said that, "there are some teachers who try to take advantage of their position in the work of sharing knowledge, who make them act according to their own preferences and take the leading place in publishing ownership." It indicates that there are also teachers who passively participate in the sharing of teachers' knowledge and take educational benefits.

Regarding teachers who share knowledge with experience and reduce participation in knowledge sharing, teacher B said that, "because of teachers who seek some benefit, others have also benefited from their work." This result shows that teachers cannot be trusted in the search and sharing of knowledge.

### **Status**

Designation hierarchies and status were found to be factors influencing teachers' knowledge sharing: seniority based on designation and the constructed perception of a scholarly individual. Teachers in the lower hierarchy based on designation are found to be willing to share knowledge through interaction. Individuals in the higher designation hierarchy want control over the language of acceptance of knowledge sharing. Teacher A, presenting his long experience, said that, "Young teachers are very self-confident and they want to share their knowledge, even if they are approved by high-ranking people, they want to control it by making negative comments because they want their sharing of knowledge not to affect their designation". In the other teacher, B's words, "the 'senior side' in this task wants to take permission to share knowledge and keep his own. It seems to try to control the youth group that is active rather than allowing the sharing of knowledge". Teacher A agreed with Teacher B in stating that, "even within the junior designation, academic standing and professional experience indicated familiarity with the situation in which knowledge-sharing and publication-related work had an impact." As a second element, the findings show that knowledge sharing provides teachers with a

respected position in their organization and the teacher community, in that teachers go to the knowledge sharer for advice and support to share the necessary knowledge, which indicates the knowledge sharer's respect (Teacher B). These results indicate, knowledge sharing is affected by the hierarchy of designations.

### **Professional Ethics and Standard**

Professional ethics and standards influence knowledge sharing within organizations and institutional groups. Professional ethics and standards refer to performance or day-to-day professional tasks related to knowledge sharing. Regarding professional ethics and standards of knowledge sharing in Higher Education Institutions teacher A illustrates:

“My understanding is that knowledge sharing is a complex task. This work of learning, teaching, developing, and disseminating from each other is a highly moral work as well as a professional mind, but the moral value is very high in this work, which easily increases and decreases professional ethics, so sharing knowledge in a professional manner is the teacher's religion. Gamification of query-driven.”

Knowledge sharing is a highly ethical, intellectual, social and institutional act. Knowledge sharing requires personal competence, behavior and action as well as organizational ethics and standards. Professional ethics and standards influence both the event and the content of knowledge sharing. As indicated by teacher B, the sharing of subject matter is done only on moral grounds. It is not within the ethical boundaries to share beyond your limits, conflictingly, as is often the case in our institutions. In the same way, teacher B says that if professional respect is forgotten, the name will fall into the abyss. In the further question of how do you do this? Both teacher (A) and (B) indicated that they prefer to work in groups but rarely follow professional ethics.

### **Discussion**

The study analyzes teachers' experiences with knowledge sharing in higher education institutions using a phenomenological approach. Organizational culture and politics, incentives for teachers, trust, status, and professional ethics and standards were the major factors found during this study which influence knowledge sharing. These findings were analyzed employing qualitative approach.

Institutional culture and politics have affected the process of knowledge sharing. Institutional culture has a profound effect on many aspects such as professional structure, teachers, and knowledge sharing process. When selecting institutional leadership, having

a strong will to provide educational culture, if selected through the educational process, knowledge sharing can be made institutionally effective, but if the selection is made based on political beliefs, the meaning of knowledge sharing cannot be understood. Politically biased protection may not play role in knowledge sharing. This means that writing, and disseminating are the important means of sharing knowledge. Influenced by politics, it reveals the culture of the organization. Knowledge sharing is naturally affected when organizational culture is weak. This finding resembles with Van Houtan (2023)'s argument i.e. active devotion is crucial for knowledge sharing and organizational identity. It further emphasizes that sharing culture and practice are influenced by political state and culture, which contradicts with the importance of reciprocity in social exchange theory. In my understanding, knowledge sharing may not be free from mainstream political influence; it has been fragmented by institutional culture and politics.

Making a provision of incentives to teachers that affects teachers' knowledge sharing in both direct and indirect ways. According to the results, teachers act with the expectation of getting rewards. Similarly, institutional incentive culture plays an important role in the knowledge-sharing process (Lyu & Zhang, 2016). Although teachers are an integral part of the knowledge-sharing process, they express reluctance to be involved in the knowledge-sharing process due to the lack of rewards. Of course, incentives increase knowledge sharing practice. It is a motivating factor of the knowledge sharing within and beyond the institution.

Personal trust and conservation are essential aspects of knowledge sharing. Protection and trust influence active participation. Collaboration takes the form of a conservation process that accelerates action. Junior teachers are reluctant to participate and share, while those with more knowledge and senior teachers share their knowledge easily, but those people doubt the contribution of junior teachers (Van Houtan, 2023). Whereas, teachers can be assigned higher designations to provide support and security for their work, and those with more knowledge can provide assistance and participate in knowledge sharing at the highest level, where those with more knowledge should act as supporting trainers. Partially, some teachers who are higher in the designation hierarchy interfere in knowledge sharing and take advantage of it, which creates mistrust in knowledge sharing. This work seems quite different from Vygotsky's theoretical view of More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) (Schunk, 2012). It seems that the teachers do not believe in knowledge sharing with the tradition of being a passive participant and taking advantage.

Contrary to the above arguments, some people opine that knowledge sharing requires confidence, not designation. How a person shares knowledge is based on the motivation within the person. Rank is not a motivation in itself. This result contradicts the claim that

status induces employees to generously share their tacit knowledge (Park et al., 2017). Professional designation controls but cannot motivate the sharing of knowledge among teachers. In this sense, all teachers involved in the teaching profession do not have to get a designation to share knowledge, they can seek and share knowledge with the desire to acquire knowledge and confidence. A designation is merely an institutionally acquired social reputation that may not involve internal activism, discovery, and sharing. Similarly, findings show that knowledge sharing does not significantly affect teachers' designation hierarchy, but provides social identity and recognition. The sharing of knowledge discovery depends on personal confidence, experience, and proactivity, so the result is closely related to learning as an active process of constructing knowledge (Adams, 2003) to make sense of the world.

Knowledge sharing is a complex task based on high ethical standards. The result is professional mental process-based work with high ethics, which includes institutional and individual minds. Based on this there should be knowledge sharing. A teacher's job is to share knowledge, if it can be respected, it increases professional and personal standards and keeps life alive. Finally, it affects the professional and personal reputation which affects the existence of the entire organization. The obtained results agree with the theoretical view that knowledge sharing is an important organizational behavior that affects the continued existence and development of the organization (Curado et al. 2021). However, it is also found that professional ethics are not fully followed in knowledge sharing, which threatens to lead professional knowledge sharing to personal loss.

### **Conclusion**

The study focuses on the experiences of knowledge sharing among teachers. Professional conditions, political influences, and incentives significantly influence knowledge sharing, with institutionalized processes and hierarchies influencing teachers' willingness to share expertise. Trust and ethical considerations are crucial factors, with trust and the perception of ethical standards affecting active participation and cooperation. The hierarchy and status based on designation also affect knowledge-sharing dynamics, with seniority impacting control and value perception. Personal confidence, experience, and proactivity drive the desire to acquire and share knowledge. The study emphasizes the complex relationship between professional ethics and knowledge sharing, as sharing knowledge is complex and not always aligned with ethical standards. Overall, this study is different from other studies, which claim that knowledge sharing or knowledge sharing within the institution is affected by multiple factors such as culture, political influences, incentives, trust, and ethical considerations collectively shape teacher knowledge sharing, impacting individual behaviors and organizational/institutional culture.

Knowledge-sharing is an intellectual activity for the professional development of an individual. Institutional cultural practices are most important in knowledge sharing. Institutional culture and politics have weakened higher education institutions in knowledge sharing. The professional designation provides social approval for knowledge sharing. However, the failure to meet the designation in knowledge sharing indicates the weak side of the educational activity. It is understood that the experience of knowledge sharing among teachers is weak due to the lack of incentives for teachers to participate less in knowledge sharing and the lack of professional ethics.

### **Recommendation**

Organizational culture and political influence on knowledge sharing is a huge and multifaceted topic, this study scope for the future research of knowledge sharing. It encourages to explore about mentioning model of knowledge sharing. It provides a basis for the future study of how institutional culture plays a role in knowledge sharing in higher education institutions.

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deepest appreciation and heartfelt thanks to my teacher who is an educational philosopher in the Department of Education, Tribhuvan University Graduate School of Education, who taught and guided me about how to explore different research issues in the educational sector and processes. I sincerely thank my research respondent for providing me the data for the study by allowing me the record of the interview and for their time contribution. Overall, I thank to campus chef of Butwal Multiple Campus, Butwal who gave the permission to select respondents and collect the data for my research.

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