

A STUDY ON GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER MOTIVATIONS AMONG EMPLOYEES

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Abstract

This study investigates the dynamics of knowledge transfer among employees in a private limited company in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, focusing on generational differences and the influence of demographic variables. Knowledge transfer, essential for organizational continuity and innovation, involves the sharing of skills and expertise among employees. The study sampled 75 employees using a snowball sampling technique and gathered data through a questionnaire. Demographic variables included age, gender, generation, marital status, education level, job role, and length of employment. Knowledge transfer was measured using an 18-question six-point scale.

Analysis of the demographic profile showed that the majority of respondents were aged 18-24 years, from Generation Y (1995-2009), male, undergraduates, single, with 0-5 years of experience, and working as engineers. The study found that 74.7% of respondents had a moderate level of knowledge transfer, 13.3% had a high level, and 12.0% had a low level.

The ANOVA and t-test results indicated that knowledge transfer was significantly influenced by generational differences, with Generation Y showing a higher propensity for knowledge sharing. However, other demographic variables such as age, gender, marital status, education level, job role, and years of experience did not show a significant impact on knowledge transfer.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of understanding generational dynamics in knowledge transfer processes within organizations and suggests that targeted strategies to enhance knowledge sharing among different generations could improve organizational performance and innovation.

Keywords: Innovation, Knowledge Transfer, Knowledge Sharing, Mentorship.

Introduction

Knowledge transfer is when experienced employees share their knowledge, skills, and behaviors with those replacing them. In organizations, this involves disseminating information, skills, and expertise among members to ensure continuity, innovation, and improved performance. Effective strategies include mentorship, training programs, documentation, and collaborative platforms to facilitate seamless knowledge flow. Leveraging collective knowledge within the organization boosts performance and innovation. Knowledge sharing is the process by which individuals make their knowledge available to others (Davenport, 1997). Knowledge sharing is regarded as a social interaction in which employees exchange their experiences, skills and knowledge across the firm. (Y. Lee et al., 2021) Argote R Ingram (2000) define knowledge

transfer as "the process through which one unit (e.g., group, department, or division) is affected by the experience of another. "Knowledge sharing is "a human behaviour, which apprehends activities such as exchanging explicit and/or implicit experiences, embedding ideas and skills that facilitate knowledge for innovation at the workplace" (Kumar & Che Rose, 2012). Knowledge sharing is employee-to-employee learning procedure to assist one another to enhance their potential, solve problems and boost work performance (Nguyen et al. 2021). Knowledge sharing deals with the process of readily making available the relevant knowledge to coworkers in the organization (S. -W. Lin & Lo, 2015; S. B. Grant, 2016; Z. Wang et al., 2014; Zhang & Jiang, 2015). According to Valentine (2011) developing the right knowledge system enables organizations to improve work practices, take better decisions and avoid the criticism that comes from failing to learn from previous experiences. Organizations can also enjoy better performance if they occupy a central network position that provides access to new knowledge developed by other units. This unit, however, depends on the units absorptive capacity and ability to successfully replicate new knowledge (Aaker and Keller, 1990).

Review of literature

Asiamah Yeboah (2023) reviews 110 articles on knowledge sharing, highlighting gaps in aligning processes with strategy and market-specific competencies, and recommends aligning knowledge sharing with business objectives. **Mansour Mohammed Saad Abinbuhaybeha (2023)** reviews the literature on knowledge transfer, highlighting its role in organizational competitiveness and summarizing various research approaches to guide future studies. **Linda Argote (2023)** reviews research on knowledge transfer, identifying key factors influencing its success and proposing a theoretical framework to predict when it will be effective. **Ulrike Fasbender and Fabiola H. Gerpott (2022)** develop a conceptual model to explore the challenges and pathways of age-diverse knowledge transfer, emphasizing temporal social comparison and its impact on knowledge exchange between younger and older employees. **Paul J. Woodfield and Kenneth Hushed (2022)** argue that bidirectional knowledge sharing between generations in family winegrowing businesses fosters innovation, with the next generation playing a key role in introducing new knowledge. **Widen et al. (2020)** find that generational differences have a mixed impact on knowledge sharing in organizations, with professional age and organizational socialization playing more significant roles than generational traits. **Francisca Zamfir (2020)** explores the impact of knowledge transfer on organizational performance, finding that effective knowledge management enhances vision, learning, project success, and self-improvement, contributing to a competitive advantage. **Andrea Bencsik, Peter Molnar, Timea Juhasz, Renata Machova (2018)** examine the impact of cultural determinants on Generation Z's knowledge-sharing willingness in Hungary and Slovakia, finding that intrinsic goals foster cooperation, while materialistic goals hinder knowledge-sharing by increasing competition and self-interest.

Objectives of the study

- To study the demographic profile of the respondents.
- To examine the generational differences (e.g., Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z) in knowledge transfer.
- To analyze the influence of demographic in Knowledge Transfer.

Methodology

The nature of study is descriptive study. The private limited company employees in Coimbatore district is taken as the universe of the study. Employees of the company are included in the study. A sample of 75 employees was included in the study by using snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique. Questionnaire method was adopted for the data collection. The Questionnaire consists of demographic variables namely age, gender, generation, marital states, education level, job role, length of employment. The knowledge transfer which consists of 18 questions used by six point scale. The data was analyzed using SD, mean, percentage analysis, t-test, and ANOVA to analyze the data.

Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Variable

The demographic profile of the respondents shows that majority 49.3 percent belong to 18-24 years, 69.3 percent respondents are from Generation Y (1995-2009), male respondents constitute 57.3 percent, 54.7 percent of them has Under Graduate qualification, 65.3 percent are single, 84.0 percent of them within 0-5 years of experience, 56.0 percent of employees are working as a engineer.

Table 1: Knowledge Transfer

Variable	Particulars	No. of. Respondents	Percentage
Knowledge transfer	Low	9	12.0
	Moderate	56	74.7
	High	10	13.3
	Total	75	100.0

Table 1 shows that, 74.7 percent of respondents had moderate level of knowledge transfer, 13.3 percent of respondents had high level of knowledge Transfer, 12.0 percent of respondents had low level of knowledge transfer.

Table 2: Difference in Knowledge Transfer based on Demographic Variables

Variables	Test	Value	Result
Age & Knowledge Transfer	ANOVA	F=2.416 (P=0.005)	NS
Generations & Knowledge Transfer	T-test	P=2.383(P=0.005)	S
Gender & Knowledge Transfer	T-test	P=1.552(P=0.005)	NS
Marital status & Knowledge Transfer	ANOVA	F=1.244(P=0.005)	NS
Education Level & Knowledge Transfer	ANOVA	F=2.568(P=0.005)	NS
Job Level & Knowledge Transfer	ANOVA	F=1.484(P=0.005)	NS
Years of Experiences & Knowledge Transfer	ANOVA	F=6.067(P=0.005)	NS

NS- Not Significant

S - Significant at 0.005 level

Table 2 reveals that, Knowledge transfer is significant with Generations.

Discussion

The study explores the significant role of knowledge transfer and sharing within organizations, focusing on the methods and benefits of these processes. The findings highlight the importance of experienced employees passing on their knowledge to successors through mentorship, training programs, documentation, and collaborative platforms. The study emphasizes the need for a robust knowledge system to improve work practices and decision-making, fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation. It also addresses the challenges posed by generational differences, cultural determinants, and language barriers in knowledge sharing. Effective strategies to overcome these challenges include internal mobility, communities of practice, and adapting communication methods. By aligning knowledge sharing with business objectives, organizations can enhance competitiveness and innovation. The study underscores the importance of creating an environment that encourages bidirectional knowledge sharing and values the contributions of all generations. Overall, effective knowledge management is shown to significantly impact organizational performance, vision, and project success, contributing to a sustainable competitive advantage.

Conclusion

The study has concluded that the effective knowledge transfer is for organizational success. It requires a thoughtful approach that consider the unique characteristics and preferences of different generations. By embracing diverse strategies, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and utilizing technology appropriately, organizations can optimize knowledge transfer, ensuring a seamless flow of expertise across generation and maintaining a competitive edge in the evolving business landscape.

Generational difference in knowledge transfer motivation among employees highlight varying preferences and value across age groups. Younger generations obtained seek Innovation and tech-driven learning methods, while older generation may prefer traditional approaches. To Foster effective knowledge transfer, organization should implements diverse strategies scattering to the preference of different age cohorts, a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that bridges generation gaps.

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