

Exploring Tacit Knowledge Sharing Enhancer Factors in Non-Profit Organizations

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Abstract. Purpose - This paper aims to explore how tacit knowledge (TK) sharing occurred among volunteers in Non-Profit Organizations and drivers of TK sharing (TKS), including individual and organizational factors.

Design/Methodology/Approach - This study explores the above-mentioned topics through in-depth interviews with volunteers utilizing open-ended questions to acquire deep insights into the TKS issue. Thematic analysis has been carried out using data coding to extract themes.

Findings - This study shows how TK is shared and transferred among volunteers in local non-profit organizations. Various drivers for the smooth transfer of TK have been identified based on individual and organizational elements.

Practical Implications - The findings of this study can advise non-profit organization managers to pay greater attention to their volunteers' motivators and organizational practices when adopting tacit knowledge-sharing routines.

Originality/Value - This study will be beneficial to academics and practitioners looking for accurate data on the enabling aspects of TKS based on two elements (individual and organizational) and the use of knowledge management in the NPOs, filling a gap in the literature on the topic.

Keywords: *Knowledge sharing; Non-Profit Organizations; Tacit knowledge.*

1 Introduction

The principles of knowledge management have begun to be applied in the non-profit sector. While certain elements remain the same, such as the need for management support for the deployment and use of KM systems and the importance of users of KM systems that are similar to For-Profit Organizations (FPOs), other elements within the Non-profit Organization (NPOs) domain distinguish it from the FPO domain. The NPO area, in particular, is distinguished by a varied mix of organizational structures, highly knowledge-intensive organizations, and high turnover rates as a result of vast numbers of volunteers

(Lettieri et al. 2004), as well as a general shortage of money for critical activities. Realizing that non-profit organizations need to grow over time, the process of flourishing should consider the human element in them. Today, NPOs are breaking away from the traditional passive function and taking on a more active (that of influencers) role in the process. They see the necessity to be involved in the many stages of creating value for an organization. Therefore, the vital role in improving reliability and mutual understanding within an organization is recognized by knowledge sharing. Many additional researchers made the notion that knowledge is not only essential but has also become a significant source of value, and it had become widely acknowledged by the end of the twentieth century. A knowledge-based organization's primary goals include innovation, creativity, and inventiveness. The public and private sectors have dominated research on the topic of knowledge management. It is possible to refer to the knowledge-sharing work by Shandu et al. (2011) and Zawawi et al. (2011) for public sector organizations.

Further, in private sector organizations, Del Giudice et al. (2015) contributed to figuring out factors that influence knowledge exchange in two different companies. However, most of the research in knowledge sharing mainly focuses on the employee sector rather than volunteering and knowledge management. For example, Zhang et al. (2015) study the context of bonding and self-monitoring on tacit employee knowledge sharing settings. Another case done by Kuzu and Özilhan (2014) examined the relationship between employees and knowledge sharing can increase performance in businesses. In the works, details of research in the topic of knowledge sharing for the third sector, especially non-profits, are discussed by several authors such as; Rathi et al. (2014), and Oliveira and Pinheiro (2020). These and other reference works, on the other hand, are starting steps in a field that has enormous study potential, especially when compared to the profusion of studies in other fields and the yet scant research in this third sector. According to Gavurová, B et al. (2019) that non-profit organizations (NPOs) play a crucial role in the knowledge management process, particularly when it comes to reaching the most disadvantaged social groups. In addition, knowledge sharing opens up new avenues for environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to achieve long-term development goals. Environmental non-profits will benefit from this innovation in adaptability and flexibility (Masuda Y. et al., 2018). To conduct this research, we found that most of all, the literature on knowledge sharing in organizations has mainly focused on shared knowledge, but not considering why and how non-profit organizations might enhance people's intention to share and sustain mutual understanding within an organization.

On the other hand, there has never been any detailed research focusing on sharing tacit knowledge in non-profit organizations that blend volunteer and paid work,

especially in Indonesia. According to Small and Sage (2005), tacit knowledge sharing is highly beneficial since it increases organizational productivity. As a result, the current research focuses on determining the prevalence of indicators for tacit knowledge exchange among educational volunteers in Bandung. As a strategy, knowledge management would enable NPOs' long-term viability and swift adaptation to changing surroundings. For non-profit organizations, tacit knowledge is a valuable resource that enables them to act in complex and unpredictable situations. Therefore, by understanding a primary empowerment subject's emphasis on community service time. However, such information is frequently only known by volunteers. As a result, if that volunteer leaves the organization and is replaced by another volunteer, the client relationship and performance may suffer. As a result, organizations benefit from the sharing of such knowledge. Therefore, the aims are to identify the key elements that influence the sharing of tacit knowledge in these organizations. This article summarizes essential details concerning the objectives, research methodology, preliminary results, study limitations, and research novelty or significance. Here is a brief overview of the topic and critical terms. First, the concepts of knowledge sharing and the elements that influence NPOs' willingness to share knowledge are defined in a theoretical framework, with a focus on the role of the volunteer. The results will be presented and discussed in the next section. Finally, we offer our findings and suggestions for future research.

2 Literature review

Knowledge may be classified into two sorts based on how much it can be structured and codified. For Nonaka (1994), explicit knowledge is codified and can be easily communicated and transferred, and presented in the form of manuals, plans, procedures, among others. Tacit knowledge is implicit, semiconscious, and unconscious knowledge held in people's heads (Leonard and Sensiper, 1998). Nonaka and Krogh (2009) explained the process is characterized as "learning by doing." Several researchers have been contributing to understanding the impact of tacit knowledge, such as Ganguly, A et al. (2019) about understanding the role of tacit knowledge sharing in building an organization's innovative capability; Huie, C et al. (2020) investigated the impact of tacit knowledge sharing on job performance; Cai, Y et al. (2020) figured out on employee vigour as a psychological mechanism that mediates the effect of social capital on tacit knowledge-sharing intention; and Perumal, S., and Sreekumaran Nair, S. (2021) about employee's perception towards tacit knowledge sharing (TKS). Hence, tacit knowledge can provide a source of long-term competitive advantage for organizations. After all, as mentioned previously, the study of tacit knowledge sharing is stronger in profit company and employee sectors than non-profit organizations and volunteers. Because of the nature of Tacit Knowledge and its accumulation through time, communicating it

across volunteers and employees in any organization is always tricky. Tacit Knowledge is occasionally lost in organizations due to volunteer and employee turnover or project completion. To better understand how tacit knowledge sharing works, we must analyse indicators and their categorization into elements and typologies.

Indicators of Tacit Knowledge Sharing in Organizations

By studying the literature on tacit knowledge sharing, the following factors that serve as units of analysis were identified. The first factor to be discussed is related to the individual aspect. The willingness and capacity of individuals to share what they know and use what they learn is critical to both formal and informal tacit knowledge transmission. As a result, it is critical to comprehend the specific characteristics that drive people to share their knowledge.

Time Management on an Individual Level - Individual time management has emerged as a critical predictor of tacit knowledge sharing. As previously explained, tacit knowledge is the direct product of experience, thought, and dialogue — three time-consuming tasks. As a result, the first indicator of tacit knowledge sharing aims to demonstrate whether or not workers have enough time to communicate tacit information inside the organization (Castellani, P, 2019).

Altruism & Other-Oriented Behaviour - Some individuals have a proclivity to share their knowledge without asking anything in return. According to the literature, individuals working in the public and non-profit sectors have more excellent altruistic reasons, such as serving the public and assisting the underprivileged, than for-profit workers (Chen, C.-A., and Lee, Y., 2014). Therefore, understanding that altruistic people are predisposed to share knowledge gladly, managers can respond by allocating particular roles for altruistic people within teams, assigning them activities to cooperate and engage in socialization with other people. Such decisions may improve group knowledge sharing (Obrenovic, B, 2020). It is in line with research conducted by Burns, DJ (2006), Briggs, E (2010), and Carpenter, J., & Myers, CK (2010) regarding the effect of altruism (other-oriented attitude) on volunteer motivation in non-profit organizations.

Social Ties & Trust - Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) demonstrated that as individuals get closer in their relationships, they become more motivated to act in ways that benefit the other. Moreover, the lower the risks and uncertainties in tacit knowledge sharing, the stronger the trust between the organization's members. Building a trusted network is dependent on shared social and cultural norms, as well as mutual expectations.

The second factor to be discussed is related to the organizational aspect. In this case, we will look at the role of management support and the relationship between volunteer members interacting with each other in non-profit organizations.

Management Support (Mentoring) - Previous research has found that management support is one organizational factor that influences knowledge sharing (Seba et al., 2012; Han & Anantatmula; 2008). By using a mentoring approach, mentor programs provide more personalized knowledge sharing and allow experienced volunteers/senior employees to transmit their experience directly. Most of all, in non-profit organizations, mentoring is often done informally. However, it can be more effective when organized, allowing for a more equitable distribution of mentoring opportunities and enabling organizational guidance in the knowledge exchange process (Mayfield, 2010).

Management Support (Recognition and Reward) - Support can come in praise, recognition, performance appraisals that include knowledge-sharing behaviours or motivating goals. Organizations should recognize and appreciate their volunteers to motivate them to continue sharing their knowledge and experience. Sharing tacit knowledge as know-how should be rewarded in the same way as sharing knowledge through formal education. In this context, the importance of intrinsic rewards or internal rewards that volunteers receive directly from performing the task. It can also be mentioned that the enjoyment or satisfaction derived from knowledge sharing is referred to as intrinsic reward in knowledge sharing.

3 Research Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the elements that encourage tacit knowledge sharing among volunteers in non-profit organizations. This study employed a qualitative research method to explore volunteer experiences involving Tacit Knowledge Sharing. Qualitative research is typically unstructured, exploratory and focuses on understanding and acquiring insights. In order to provide a more accurate and clear understanding of the interviewee's position in an unrestricted context, in-depth structured interviews to ask a series of open-ended questions were undertaken to find enablers and impediments to tacit knowledge sharing (TKS). Furthermore, respondents are directed to explore how collaboration and skill-sharing occur when volunteering rather than directly discussing knowledge management and knowledge sharing. Before the interview, the participants provided written consent, and the goal of the research was explained to guarantee ethical concerns. Several questions were asked during the interview, but only three questions relevant to the topic were examined for this paper. First, respondents were asked about how TKS occurred in their

organization. Second, TKS or transmission drivers were investigated. The final one is the importance, value, and benefit of contributing to TKS.

The ideal interviewee profile for the interviews was a volunteer from each program batch, resulting in a stratified purposeful sample. The criteria for volunteers recommended by the organization are those who complete the program period to completion and those who continue to participate for more than six months. In qualitative research, sample sizes should not be too large, making extracting thick, rich data (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007). Because the purpose of this study is to provide understanding, develop explanations, and generate ideas rather than to estimate the prevalence of a phenomenon or make generalizations, only a limited number of respondents were required. The sample size (n=8) was also justified because the interviewees possessed 'information power.' The more information the sample has, the fewer interviewers are needed.

Table 1 – Summary of Informant Profiles

Participant	Volunteering Duration	Volunteering Entry Year	Current Profession
IK	12 Months	2018	Private Sector Employee
RW	4 Months	2018	Engineering
MR	12 Months	2019	Trainer
NS	5 Months	2019	State-Owned Employee
WN	4 Months	2019	State-Owned Employee
TI	5 Months	2018	Start-up Employee
WD	4 Months	2019	Private Sector Employee
SL	4 Months	2019	Academic Assistant
DD	6 Months	2020	Non-Profit Organization Staff

The data were analyzed using an inductive technique. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) was employed in the study to analyze interview transcriptions qualitatively. Thematic analysis is flexible, and researchers can use theory or any theoretical framework. According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017), the thematic analysis consists of six critical processes in analyzing transcribed data. The initial stage is to read and re-read transcriptions to become acquainted with the facts. It allows researchers to develop themes or initial codes for interview data based on the interview guide. The interview guide also aids researchers in developing the initial coding framework, as it is based on the study topic, the researcher's personal experience, and published literature (King et al., 2004). The data is reported using a structured interpretative technique that draws interpretative examples from the interview transcripts. The coding system aids in the organization of data in a comprehensible manner. As a result of the coding system, exciting and noteworthy patterns in data are recognized. The researcher

reviewed the themes in order to extract as much information as possible from the data.

4 Findings

The study extracted various themes and subthemes of the TK phenomenon, drivers of transmission or sharing in a non-profit organization, and value given to new ideas and innovation.

Table 2 – Summary of Thematic Analysis

Research Questions	Main Theme	Sub-Theme
<i>How TKS occurred in Non-Profit Organization?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentorship/Face-to-Face Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Evaluation • Performance Feedback • Learning by Modelling
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine Sharing of Knowledge and Experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly Preparation Meeting • Socialization • Direct Conversation • Simulation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment New Roles • Engaging With New Challenges
<i>Drivers Factors of TKS in Non-Profit Organization?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Time Management • Social Bonding • Self-Disclosure • Empathic Behaviour
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization Drivers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciative Culture • Personal Guidance/Mentorship • Learning Opportunity

How tacit knowledge sharing occurred in non-profit organizations?

The informants shared about the TKS phenomenon in non-profit organizations where they taught young orphans at the Orphanage. They reported that TK was distributed by the organization to them and their role in sharing TK to the subject of empowerment. Many resource persons realized that during their time as volunteers, the management team in the organization provided more insight into the wisdom and ways to become an empathic educator. On the one hand, they are also expected to provide knowledge, share experiences and teach the value of kindness gained from the management team in the organization. Thus, the TK obtained by participants mainly came from story-telling, experience in the field, and mentoring. One of the informants said that while being a mentor, the TKS

process shared from heart to heart and was often difficult to describe in words. Consciously, the participants learned by observing the examples applied by the management team. On the other hand, they also stated that they received positive lessons to be totally and fully committed. All participants acknowledged that the initial and weekly educational program before the activity further matured the concept of the material syllabus and a means to TKS. It was acknowledged by **Participant NS**, who considered that weekly briefings played an essential role in preparing herself before the activity, but also trained her brainstorming skills and gained additional insights from senior volunteers. Not much different, one of the participants also considers that there is a simulation session in the weekly briefing that further strengthens her experience and knowledge.

The TKS process also runs when they are challenged to get used to getting out of their comfort zone by experimenting with different roles in each teaching meeting. As stated by **Participant SL**, during his time as a teaching volunteer, she has experienced three different roles. Experience in the field gave her more opportunities to learn new things. However, the management team did not hesitate to teach the volunteers precisely without hindering their exploration abilities. Not only that, exploring new challenges and roles is part of learning by doing. Thus, the flow of the non-profit organization's method for conducting TKS started with socialization at the beginning of the program, followed by weekly briefings before the teaching activity, inserting personal guidance/mentoring, and continuing to share knowledge and wisdom experiences with youth orphans (mentee).

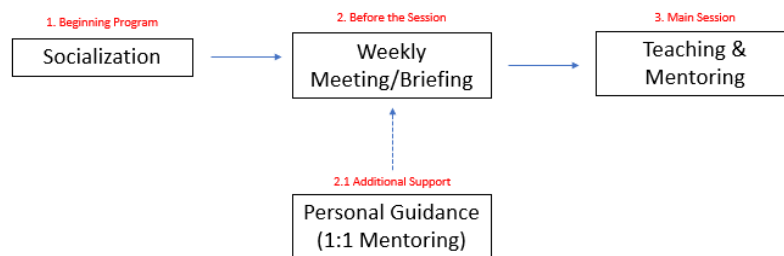


Figure 1 -TKS Method in Site Study

What are the individual & organizational drivers of tacit knowledge sharing specific to non-profit organizations?

The participants mentioned various drivers of effective and improved TK transmission based on individual and organizational perspectives. Many participants mentioned that the frequency of meetings between the management

team, volunteers, and their mentees at the Orphanage determines the depth of knowledge and experience that can be shared. Participants also felt that it was not difficult to take the time to share tacit knowledge with mentees at the Orphanage if the schedule had been determined/prepared. For example, it is done every weekend. However, they admit that sharing tacit knowledge such as experiences and wisdom needs to be prioritized, which matters are relevant to the intended subject.

The participants emphasized the relationship of the management team and volunteers also between them and mentees in the Orphanage. TK transmission will be smooth and effective if both people are closely associated. **Participant IK, Participant TI, Participant RW, and Participant MR** emphasized the importance of being open to each other (self-disclosure) and being yourself (authentic). For example, self-introduction to each other will make it easier for relationships to be closer so that there is no distance between them. They are associated with social ties also closely with aspects of trust, especially in tacit knowledge sharing. Aiming that knowledge can be conveyed maximally to recipients, trust is the basic foundation for non-profit organizations towards volunteers and volunteers to mentees at the Orphanage. In addition, to improve the quality of trust with mentees at the Orphanage, several participants mentioned the importance of appreciation and physical touch as a sign of empowerment. They believe that with trust, TKS will be more internalized into their lives. Not only that, trust is built by perspective-taking with one's condition. **Participant SL** emphasizes that empathetic behavior makes her mentoring group get closer. **Participant WL** also conveyed this in the following statement.

In addition, the trust that is built on a solid foundation makes them not reluctant to share more. That means participants realize that sharing knowledge and experiences with others is without any doubt. Instead, it is an embodiment of selfless kindness (altruism). In building trust, there is the importance of appreciating to build a more bonded relationship. It can be seen from the organizational side as a driving force for tacit knowledge sharing. Although not explicitly stated, most participants realized that a mutually supportive organizational culture instead of blaming and appreciating the process could encourage them to share tacit knowledge toward mentees and outside the volunteer's role. Participant WD mentioned that being recognized for her presence and her process drove her to be more actively engaged in tacit knowledge sharing.

Moreover, the role of personal support from mentoring activities is to provide evaluation and give more insight, especially the application of wisdom in daily life. This was stated by Participant MR that recognizing this organizational activity made her more reflective on the process she did as a volunteer as well as

future improvement strategies. It was also acknowledged by Participants SL, who illustrated that organizational support through mentoring had a significant impact on changing herself to become a better version. Thus, the positive experiences gained from the mentoring activities became the impetus for the participants to continue tacit knowledge sharing with mentees and people outside non-profit organizations.

Participants also emphasized the opportunity to learn new roles in teaching that could improve their soft skills supported by the organizations, which made them eager to share knowledge. As stated by **Participant NS**, another driver motivates her to share the knowledge and positive experiences with the mentees at the Orphanage, besides seeing positive outcomes from her mentees, also exposure to maximize the self-potential. Therefore, management support such as an appreciative culture, personal guidance that evaluates and provides strategic advice, and exposure to learning more challenges in teaching methods become enhancers from the organizational side.

5 Discussion

According to Teegen et al. (2004), people inside NPOs are people-driven and involve task-oriented groups with similar interests, frequently reflecting humanitarian or community-level activities. Talking about non-profit organizations (NPOs) focus on activities that add social value to society and can be classified as knowledge-intensive units. As explained in the discussion section, volunteers who are involved in non-profit organizations gain knowledge and experience from the organization and how they can pass on to the subject of empowering and including the people around them. Therefore, inside NPO, the knowledge is created and circulates through four distinct cycles (Lettieri et al., 2004). The first cycle is concerned with an individual level, followed by the second cycle, which incorporates activities of transfer/sharing from the individual to the group level. The third cycle makes knowledge available to the entire organization, while the final cycle is an integration phase in which the organizations share with wider communities. During the meeting process, there were activities to share knowledge and experiences carried out by volunteers with the organization's management team. Referring to Hawryzkiewicz and Lin (2003), "meetings are only effective if it follows methods that foster idea development appraisal, and discussion while adhering to well-defined learning steps." Moreover, the TKS method is limited to mentoring and direct meetings and observing behavior, conversing, and storytelling until learning by doing.

When discussing the factors that drive TKS behavior, individual factors are also essential because tacit knowledge is directly linked to a person's experiences,

thoughts, and beliefs. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), knowledge sharing will not be successful within an organization unless humans are involved. For example, behavior that reflects some individuals may share their experience and knowledge with others without thinking of the benefit they may gain from it. In another sense, giving out something without expecting any return is an altruistic behavior that is part of individual drivers. Given that willingness is an attitude impacted by social capital, which includes reciprocity, links, shared values, and language, altruistic people naturally tend to rely on social capital components in their interactions with others. Thus, individuals inside an organization can freely share their knowledge without regard for any strings attached (Okyere-Kwakye, E., & Nor, K. M., 2011). Another driving factor for individuals to share knowledge is the element of mutual trust. Song (2009) claimed that the existence of mutual trust among participants directly impacts the success of tacit knowledge sharing. Therefore, to support mutual trust, a positive communication climate is needed. Communication climate refers to the behavioral characteristics of a work environment, such as trust in knowledge being transmitted throughout the organization (Guzley, 1992). Listening, persuading, teaching, learning, presenting, cooperating, and coordinating are components of communication as one of the five competencies in organizations, according to (Davenport et al., 2001). As a result, most people are unwilling to offer their knowledge and expertise unless they trust the person in front of them. They must trust that the people will not mistreat their knowledge, and they must trust that the knowledge gained is valid and reliable because of the source of information (Bratianu, C., & Orzea, I., 2010.) From an individual perspective, TKS is also driven by social bonds between individuals as a manifestation of mutual trust. Borges et al. (2019) stated that the social ties between the knowledge source and the knowledge recipient are crucial factors in the desire for tacit knowledge sharing. Small and Sage (2006) predicted that good social ties and a positive organizational culture could lead to knowledge-sharing. The use of encouragement, stimulation or any rewards can help change the organizational culture to one that values knowledge sharing. Organizations that enforce values promoting engagement in knowledge sharing are more likely to accomplish greater levels of success in knowledge sharing (Jalal et al., 2010). In addition, organizational support that makes knowledge sharing a learning opportunity encourages volunteers or individuals in non-profit organizations to do TKS both for internal and external parties.

6 Conclusion

This study investigated the factors that influence TKS in non-profit organizations centered on community service. Previous researchers have discovered factors and elements that influence TKS, and only a few studies have looked into type-organization-specific studies (e.g., NPOs, community service). The highlighted

TKS drivers and challenges provide theoretical foundations for further research. These frameworks can be used to organize knowledge management in a non-profit organization in Indonesia. Furthermore, the tacit knowledge-sharing strategy has helped volunteers realize their desire to share their expertise and foster their capacity to learn and allow the organization's values to be transmitted to the community through the volunteers. This study may also support management teams in non-profit organizations and other relevant organizations by identifying methods of maintaining and encouraging volunteers in order to get the best results out of them. The findings can guide TKS and the execution of programs to improve the smooth transfer of knowledge, competence, and experience. For future work, the research could be conducted to analyze the influence of this tacit knowledge sharing on volunteer engagement and organizational performance, particularly in terms of mission fulfillment. The proposed and argued premises and arguments have also offered a new research direction for future in-depth studies on numerous aspects linked to volunteering activities and organizational characteristics and their relevance to volunteer knowledge sharing behavior. As a result, the authors expect that their analysis has contributed to a better understanding of the phenomenon of tacit knowledge sharing within organizations.

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