

Fostering Knowledge Sharing through Care Culture: A Comparison Study of Membership-Oriented and Service-Oriented NGOs in Malaysia

Nurul Hidayana Mohd Noor, Siti Hajar Abu Bakar Ah, and Mohd Awang Idris

Abstract—The paper aims to examine the influence of care culture (collaboration, trust, and learning) towards knowledge sharing behavior. A purposive sampling and a structured questionnaire survey were employed in approaching 200 social workers from membership-oriented NGOs ($n=100$) and service-oriented NGOs ($n=100$) located in Klang Valley area, Malaysia. A multiple regression and an independent sample t-test were used to test the hypotheses. Findings revealed trust (52.1%) and collaboration (28.5%) significantly predict knowledge sharing. Despite the fact, learning culture does not appear as a predictor variable, this study also discovered service-oriented NGOs have a high level of trust, collaboration, learning, and knowledge sharing as compared to membership-oriented NGOs. The present study contributes to previous literature by providing comparison data of different categories of NGOs.

Index Terms—Care culture, knowledge sharing, service-oriented NGOs, membership-oriented NGOs.

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, there has been a massive proliferation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Unlike public and private organizations, NGOs operate within an unpredictable environment and need to compete for the resources [1]. For example, the demand and supply for funding, grant, volunteer, and support are always changing over a period. They also need to compete among other NGO's for the resources which can affect their organizational life cycle [2]. Based on the theoretical foundation of the resource-based view, NGOs need to utilize its internal resources in order to remain competitive [3]. In this case, we niche our focus on the utilization of organizational culture and knowledge in helping NGOs to be sustained.

In general, organizational culture refers to the way things are done around organization [4]. In other words, it can be described as the shared behaviors, beliefs, symbols, understandings, and assumptions subscribed by the employees within the organization. A significant amount of

scholarly attention has recognized the association between culture and knowledge sharing [5], [6]. Thus, we believe culture acts as imperative factor in enhancing knowledge sharing.

We notice the scarcity of studies on these variables in the context of voluntary organization. Previous studies tend to dictate the subject in the context of public and private organization. This warrants more systematic investigation especially from the perspective of Malaysian NGO. Moreover, the research studies from Eastern perspective are very scant as it has been dominated by Western. Thus, the central aim of the present study is to examine the influence of care culture towards knowledge sharing. In addition, we also seek to compare the level of care culture and knowledge sharing among membership-oriented and service-oriented NGOs due to the differences in the nature of their operation. Perhaps the findings might reveal new knowledge for the current research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) categorized knowledge into two types: 1) tacit knowledge (i.e., from the human brain) and 2) explicit knowledge (i.e., context-specific and documented knowledge) [7]. Therefore, it is essential to inculcate the sharing of both tacit and explicit knowledge, because it helps to provide efficient solution to enhance organization ability to exploits the opportunities [8].

Knowledge sharing is a subset of knowledge management [9] and can be defined as “the act of making knowledge available to others within the organization” [10]. A robust of studies has recognized the linkage between organizational culture and knowledge sharing [11]. For example, based on the theory and research's review related to knowledge sharing, Ipe (2003) discovered culture is a key enabler of knowledge sharing [12]. A culture that inculcates knowledge sharing does enable the organization in increasing its competitive edge [13].

For this study, organizational culture is examined based on “care” concept. Care is a vital element of organizational relationship [14]. Organizational that focus on care relationship probably has more effective knowledge sharing. This is because the knowledge is share voluntarily by the employees. In other words, employees work as a team and view the problems together in order to derive for the solutions. In contrast, when the care relationship is low, employees tend to capture the knowledge by themselves and unwilling to share it. They believed sharing the valuable

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knowledge can affect their reputation and position. In an academic jargon, this is known as knowledge hoarding [15].

In this study, we adopted the research model of care culture from Lee and Choi (2003)'s study which recognized three types of care culture: collaboration, trust, and learning [16]. Collaboration can reduce individual differences and build shared understanding among the employees [17]. This is important because knowledge sharing process cannot runs effectively without shared understanding [18]. Simons, Vaquez, and Harris (1999) also discovered collaboration is a driver for team inclusiveness and assist the exchange of knowledge within an organization [19].

Next, a number of cultural dimensions have been recognized to affect knowledge sharing, and trust has captivated many scholar attentions. For example, a plethora of studies have revealed the significant influence of trust towards knowledge sharing [20]. Cook and Wall (1980, p. 39) defined trust as "the extent to which one is willing to ascribe good intentions to and have confidence in the words and actions of other people" [21]. Trust helps to create a mutual faith which facilitates knowledge sharing [22]. Davenport and Prusak (2000) determined that knowledge management process will fail without trust [23]. Thus, the organization should emphasize in implementing an environment to enhance trust among employees [24].

Miller (1996) defined learning as the accomplishment of new knowledge, and eager to apply that knowledge in making decisions or persuading others [25]. Learning can improve overall organizational knowledge flow [26]. For example, Taylor and Wright's (2004) study discovered organization that focused on learning, positively associated with active knowledge sharing [27]. Korten (1980) outlined three stages of the effective and efficient learning approach for the NGOs [28]. First, NGOs must consider how a task should be best performed. Second, NGOs must asking questions about how a task can be performed at an acceptable cost. The third is the NGOs must find the ways to increase the impact of its work [28].

In addition, we also aim to provide a comparison data due to the nature of the NGOs that is mainly difference among each other'. NGOs can be divided into various categories depending on their degree of autonomy, setting, and scope of activities [29]-[31]. A simple way to classify NGOs is to focus on their primary objectives and functions. In this respect, we followed the categorization developed by Ebrahim (2003) which we focused on the two main categories (i.e., service and membership) [32]. He elaborates membership NGOs primarily focused on the interest of their members (e.g., employment association and sport club). The main source of funding is from profit-oriented activities such as membership fees and sales, and their main focus is on the benefits of their members. Whereas, service NGOs are largely focus on a range of services to their clients or beneficiaries (e.g., World Vision and Mercy Malaysia).

The main source of funding is from nonprofit-oriented activities such as donation and grant. Their main activity mostly focuses on the targeted public [32]. Recognizing these differences, this study provides new insight to the current research by comparing the level of care culture and knowledge sharing among membership-oriented and

service-oriented NGOs. Therefore, based on the brief discussion, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Collaboration culture significantly predicts knowledge sharing

H2: Trust culture significantly predicts knowledge sharing

H3: Learning culture significantly predicts knowledge sharing

H4: Service-oriented NGOs have a high level of collaboration culture than membership-oriented NGOs

H5: Service-oriented NGOs have a high level of trust culture than membership-oriented NGOs

H6: Service-oriented NGOs have a high level of learning culture than membership-oriented NGOs

H7: Service-oriented NGOs have a high level of knowledge sharing than membership-oriented NGOs

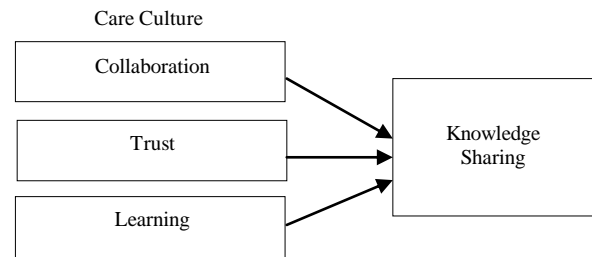


Fig. 1. Research model.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection and Participants

The study employed a self-administered questionnaire. The population of this study is social worker who representing membership-oriented and service-oriented NGOs located in Klang Valley area. This study niches its focus in this area due to a large number of registered NGO [33]. Klang Valley is an area in Malaysia comprising the area in central Selangor, including Kuala Lumpur and its surroundings (see Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Klang valley area.

For the comparison purpose, the distribution of the respondents was selected using a purposive sampling. Out of the 200 selected social workers; 50% were membership-oriented NGOs and another 50% were service-oriented NGOs. A majority of studies preferred sample sizes of 100 to 400 for purposes of testing hypotheses

[34]. Table I summarizes the demographic profile of the respondents. In term of composition of the sample, 50% of the respondents were male, and 50% of them were female. Most 78% of the respondents were Malay and the rest 22% were non-Malay. Next, 77.5% respondents were Muslim and the rest were non-Muslim (22.5%). More than half of the respondents' age was ≥ 30 (83%) whereas the rest were < 30 (28.5%). Among the respondents, 54.9% attained undergraduate qualifications, and followed by postgraduate qualifications, at 15% and others qualifications, at 2%. 55.5% of the respondents had income of \leq RM 3000 and about 44.5% had income $>$ RM3000. In term of the employment status, 86% respondents were employees (i.e., full-time), and 14% were volunteers (i.e., part-time).

TABLE I: PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS (N=200)

Profile	Frequency	%
Category		
Membership-oriented	100	50.0
Service-oriented	100	50.0
Gender		
Male	100	50.0
Female	100	50.0
Race		
Malay	156	78.0
Non-Malay	44	22.0
Religion		
Muslim	155	77.5
Non-Muslim	45	22.5
Age		
< 30	57	28.5
≥ 30	143	83.0
Highest Academic Qualification		
Undergraduate	166	54.9
Postgraduate	30	15.0
Others	4	2.0
Income Group Average		
\leq RM 3000	111	55.5
$>$ RM3000	89	44.5
Employment Category		
Employee	172	86.0
Volunteer	28	14.0

B. Measurement

Survey items were adopted based on the established framework (see Table II). The self-administered questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part comprised of questions on the demographic information. Second part consists of care culture measure; collaboration (5 items), trust (6 items), and learning (5 items). The items were adopted from Lee and Choi (2003)'s study [16]. In the final part, the respondents were asked to evaluate their level of knowledge sharing. Established scale developed by van den Hooff and de Ridder (2004) was used [6].

For validity, a principal component analysis was conducted. Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998) suggested that items with loading greater than 0.30 is considered significant, loading greater than 0.40 more important, and loading 0.50 or greater are very significant

[35]. For this study, the items with loading of 0.50 or greater were accepted. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha was computed to examine the reliability. The α reliability for the scales ranged from .78 to .86, indicating an overall higher reliability factor [36].

TABLE II: OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE CONSTRUCTS

Construct	Operational Definition	Item	Source
Collaboration	The degree to which people in a group actively help one another in their work	5	Lee and Choi (2003) [16]
Trust	Maintaining reciprocal faith in each other in terms of intention and behaviors	6	
Learning	Individual own an adaptive response pattern, in that they persist, increase effort, partake in solution-oriented self-instruction, and claim to appreciate the challenge	5	
Knowledge Sharing	A way of transmitting knowledge to other employees who need that knowledge in the organization An individual collect intellectual capital by talking to other employees	10	Van den Hooff & de Ridder (2004) [6]

Note: N=200; Five-point scale was used with 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

C. Data Analysis

A self-reported data and cross-sectional study may cause systematic measurement error [37]. Thus, the Harman test was conducted prior testing the hypotheses. A multiple regression analysis and an independent t-test were carried out for further analysis. The regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between care culture and knowledge sharing. An independent t-test was to explore whether those variables were related to the category differences.

IV. RESULTS

The result of Harman test indicated that four factors with eigenvalues above 1 were extracted. Of all the variance 66.2% was explained by these four factors, and the first factors accounted for 32.10 % (see Table III). Since single factor does not appear, common method variance is not a major threat for the current data [37]. After rotation, ten items loaded onto Factor 1 (ranged from 0.773 to 0.887). These items all related to the knowledge sharing. On Factor 2, five items were used to measure learning culture loaded satisfactorily (ranged from 0.886 to 0.902). Next, on Factor 3, all five items were to measure collaboration culture loaded satisfactorily (ranged from 0.816 to 0.877). Finally, on Factor 4, all six items were used to measure trust culture loaded satisfactorily (ranged from 0.677 to 0.763). Not a single factor had been dropped out under this circumstance which means the factor analysis ran on an ultimate success [35].

TABLE III: ROTATED SOLUTION FOR OVERALL PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
Collaboration1			.872	
Collaboration2			.860	
Collaboration3			.877	
Collaboration4			.862	
Collaboration5			.816	
Trust1				.677
Trust2				.729
Trust3				.754
Trust4				.755
Trust5				.754
Trust6				.763
Learning1		.902		
Learning2		.892		
Learning3		.886		
Learning4		.895		
Learning5		.888		
Knowledge1	.858			
Knowledge2	.773			
Knowledge3	.835			
Knowledge4	.797			
Knowledge5	.787			
Knowledge6	.820			
Knowledge7	.788			
Knowledge8	.801			
Knowledge9	.810			
Knowledge10	.887			
Eigenvalues	17.21	2.96	2.13	1.08
Total Variance Explained	8.35	5.64	4.87	4.52
Percentage of Variance	32.10	21.70	18.72	17.37
KMO Measure of Adequacy		0.933		
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi Square	10427.84		
	df	325		
	Sig.	0.000		

Note: N=200; Factor loadings > .50

Correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationships among the variables. All variables were positive significantly correlated among each other's (see Table IV) [35].

A multiple regression was conducted to examine the relationship between knowledge sharing and care culture as potential predictors. The three predictor account for 60% of the variance in knowledge sharing, $R^2=.60$, $F(3,196)=98.19$, $p<.001$ (see Table V). Collaboration ($\beta=.285$, $p<.001$) and trust ($\beta=.521$, $p<.001$) were positively significant with the criterion. The findings indicate that those NGOs with these types of care culture able to facilitate knowledge sharing among their social workers. Therefore, H1 and H2 were accepted. As not expected, only learning culture ($\beta=.023$, $p>0.05$) was not significantly predicts knowledge sharing. Thus, H3 was rejected.

Finally, an independent t-test was conducted to compare the study variables for membership-oriented and service-oriented NGOs. Based on the results, there was a

significant difference in the level of care culture (collaboration, trust, learning) and knowledge sharing among membership-oriented NGOs and service-oriented NGOs (see Table VI).

TABLE IV: MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION AND CORRELATIONS AMONG VARIABLE

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Collaboration	3.62	1.25	1			
Trust	3.72	1.33	.60*	1		
Learning	3.97	.93	.45*	.75*	1	
Knowledge Sharing	3.62	1.24	.63*	.74*	.57*	1

Note: N=200; M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation, **Correlations is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

TABLE V: REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Regression Path	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Beta
	Beta	Std. Error	
Collaboration	.285***	.056	.285
Trust	.521***	.072	.556
Learning	.023	.092	.017
R ²	.600		
F	98.19		
p	.000		

Note: N=200; ***p<0.001.

TABLE VI: INDEPENDENT T-TEST

Variable	Membership		Service		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Collaboration	3.31	1.37	3.93	1.04	-3.65	.000
Trust	3.35	1.56	4.09	.91	-4.13	.000
Learning	3.78	.96	4.15	.88	-2.82	.005
Knowledge Sharing	3.26	1.43	3.98	.89	-4.24	.000

First, service-oriented NGOs (M=3.93, SD=1.04) reported significantly higher level of collaboration culture than membership-oriented NGOs (M=3.31, SD=1.37), $t(198)=-3.65$, $p<.001$. Second, service-oriented NGOs (M=4.09, SD=.91) reported significantly higher level of trust culture than membership-oriented NGOs (M=3.35, SD=1.56), $t(198)=-4.13$, $p<.001$. Third, service-oriented NGOs (M=4.15, SD=.88) reported significantly higher levels of learning than membership-oriented NGOs (M=3.78, SD=.96), $t(198)=-2.82$, $p<.001$. Finally, service-oriented NGOs (M=3.98, SD=.89) also reported significantly higher level of knowledge sharing than membership-oriented NGOs (M=3.26, SD=1.43), $t(198)=-4.24$, $p<.001$. Therefore, H4, H5, H6, and H7 were accepted.

V. DISCUSSION

The results showed collaboration and trust culture predict

knowledge sharing. A body of knowledge believed that trust and collaboration could be considered as the important enablers for knowledge sharing [38]-[41]. In this study, trust culture is the strongest predictor to knowledge sharing. Thus, trust culture acts as the central care culture. The findings are consistent with Lopez, Peon, and Ordas's (2004) study that revealed trust is an essential element for the creation of new knowledge [42]. One well-known scholar in the management field, Kanter (1993) believed trust is vital in establishing a mutual consensus [43]. Trust also associated with collectivism, rather than individualism [44]. In addition, Mayer, Davies, and Schoorman's (1995) study revealed that trust increases the likelihood that knowledge shared is adequately understood which necessarily important for the exchange of tacit knowledge [45].

In term of collaboration culture, Karia and Ahmad (2000) believed collaboration lead to the effective teamwork [46]. Logically, when two or more parties trust each other's, it will contribute to the active collaboration as they were keen to share resources [47]. The active partnership explains why trust appears as a primary predictor on knowledge sharing [48]. Even though this study discovered learning culture does not significantly predict knowledge sharing, we cannot ignore the role of learning culture as the enabler for knowledge sharing. Lopez, Peon, and Ordas (2004) discovered collaboration culture is a mean for learning [42]. Their study can provide explanation for our results on why learning culture does not significantly contributes to knowledge sharing as its need a strong collaboration culture.

Next, this study also discovered that the level of care culture and knowledge sharing was different between membership-oriented NGOs and service-oriented NGOs. Due to the dynamic nature of the operation, some NGOs utilize it internal resource to gain competitive position. Service-oriented NGOs were found to have a higher level of collaboration, trust, and learning culture as compared to membership-oriented NGOs. Moreover, they were also found to have a higher level of knowledge sharing. Since their main source of funding is from nonprofit-oriented activities such as grant, donation, and private contribution, they need to act more active as compared to membership-oriented NGOs. Moreover, they also need to have a strong culture in order to attract potential volunteers and retain the existing one. In contrast, the nature of membership-oriented NGOs which is more stable, help them to survive in a complex environment. Despite the complexities and differences of the nature among NGOs, all NGOs still need to have a strong culture as it will help them to sustain and ensure smooth operations of the activities and programs.

Thus, as managerial implications, a uniform culture is vital because it contributes to the organizational improvement. The leaders of NGOs need to bear in mind that altering organizational culture requires changing others organizational element such as strategy, operational practices, employee expectations, and physical facilities [49]. Moreover, no single culture is best fit, and a match between culture and situation need to continuously engaged. Management also may needs to help employees to inculcate a strong culture for the effective knowledge sharing [50]. For

example, provide training or implement the bonding activities.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the impact of care culture towards the level of knowledge sharing behavior among social worker. The findings from this study have a number of significant theoretical and managerial implications. To the best of our knowledge, this study makes an original contribution to the existing studies, since we stressed on the influence of care culture on knowledge sharing in the context of voluntary organizations. Based on the syntheses from previous studies, too much focus has been given on public and private organization. Thus, this research produced an empirically tested model from a new perspective. This research also provides an evidence that is specific to knowledge sharing rather than knowledge management, in general. Although our research findings provide valuable information on the roles of care culture in describing knowledge sharing, some limitations should be noted. The current study only conducted in a focused geographic area, Klang Valley. Perhaps further research could generalize the study throughout Malaysia. Using a self-administered survey and a cross-sectional study could have limited our knowledge on the causality effect. Further investigation using mixed method study, multimethod, multilevel or longitudinal research would address these issues. In addition, future research may focus on other critical areas such as knowledge management process, the antecedents of knowledge sharing, the application of the study into different settings, and the comparison study among Eastern and Western context.

APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS

Collaboration:

- 1) My NGO members are satisfied by the degree of collaboration
- 2) My NGO members are supportive
- 3) My NGO members are helpful
- 4) There is a willingness to collaborate across NGO units within my NGO
- 5) There is a willingness to accept responsibility for failure

Trust:

- 1) My NGO members are generally trustworthy
- 2) My NGO members have reciprocal faith in other members' intentions and behaviours
- 3) My NGO members have reciprocal faith in others' ability
- 4) My NGO members have reciprocal faith in others' behaviours to work towards organizational goals
- 5) My NGO members have reciprocal faith in others' decision towards organizational interests than individual interests
- 6) My NGO members have relationships based on reciprocal faith

Learning:

- 1) My NGO provides various formal training programs for performance of duties
- 2) My NGO provides opportunities for informal individual

development other than formal training such as work assignments and job rotation

- 3) My NGO encourages people to attend seminars, symposia, and so on
- 4) My NGO provides various programs such as clubs and community gatherings
- 5) My NGO members are satisfied by the contents of job training or self-development programs

Knowledge Sharing:

- 1) When I have learned something new, I find that colleagues in my department can learn it as well
- 2) I share the information I have with my colleagues within my department
- 3) I share my skills with my colleagues within my department
- 4) When I have learned something new, I find to it that colleagues outside my department can learn it as well
- 5) I share my information with colleagues outside my department
- 6) I share my skills with colleagues outside my department
- 7) Colleagues within my department tell me what they know when I ask them about it
- 8) Colleagues within my department tell me what they skills are when I ask them about it
- 9) Colleagues outside my department tell me what they know when I ask them about it
- 10) Colleagues outside my department tell me what they skills are when I ask them about it

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