

The Effect of Knowledge Sharing on Employee Performance: Evidence from Sri Lanka's Manufacturing Sector

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Abstract

In the recent past, knowledge management has become a critical topic in organizational psychology, as effectively sharing intellectual capital has become a major challenge for firms seeking a competitive edge. Even though it is frequently discussed in general terms, many studies in this area have not explored the specific interplay of organizational culture and technology within the manufacturing sector of developing economies. The current study goes beyond general management theory by investigating the potential impact of four key motivational factors trust, communication, information systems, and reward mechanisms on “employee job performance.” Data were collected from 377 manufacturing employees across Sri Lanka’s Western Province regarding their knowledge-sharing behaviors and their subsequent impact on productivity and decision-making. The Correlation and regression analysis confirmed that all four motivational factors significantly and positively influence individual job performance. Specifically, the findings suggest that trust among coworkers and robust information systems serve as the most critical antecedents to effective knowledge exchange. The results of this study also highlight that a structured reward scheme is essential for sustaining long-term knowledge-sharing behaviors in a high-demand manufacturing environment. Practical implications of these findings for human resource policies are discussed, providing actionable guidance for managers to enhance workforce effectiveness through targeted cultural and technological interventions.

Keywords: Knowledge sharing, Employee Performance, Manufacturing industry

1. Introduction

In the modern business environment, organization operates in very dynamic and knowledge-intensive environments. To maintain a competitive edge, they must adequately manage and use the available knowledge resources. In these contexts, knowledge management has become a matter of greatest strategic (Chen et al., 2007) competitive advantage not guaranteed by merely hiring people with superior knowledge and skills as highlighted by (Brown et al., 2009), but knowledge sharing and knowledge management among employees create sustainable competitive advantage (Mortensen et al., 2001). by creating culture and an atmosphere where people are inspired to exchange knowledge, they become better able to share the knowledge that they bear within the organization but can also open the organization to valuable knowledge to the organization.

Previous studies show that knowledge sharing is a central process of knowledge management (Brown et al., 1995; Nielsen, 2006) which is positively linked with the organization performance (Arthur et al., 2005). Knowledge sharing allows employees to increase their productivity, thus adding to the overall organizational outcomes. (Yeboah, 2023) note that employee effectiveness is directly determined by the transfer of knowledge between those individuals who have access to it and those who need it. However, a considerable number of employees are still reluctant to receive knowledge though co-employees most of the time because of the perceived aspects of difficulty or discomfort. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to knowledge sharing and create an organization that must develop an open culture and reward. Incentive scheme that would encourage the employees to contribute to sharing knowledge out of a willing and good attitude (Davenport, T.H et al.,1998).

1.1. Background of the study and problem statement

The role of employee performance has been subject to a lot of research papers and arguments have been made declaring that employee performance has come into play in the realization of the organization's success in the current dynamic business environment. As (Striteska et al., 2020) state, the top management of any organization has the major role to monitor the performance management procedures in the business. As indicated by (Raluca Vosloban, 2012) employee performance and the growth of the organization are positively related. That is why organizations should remain particularly concerned with the performance of employees to gain a larger market share in such competitive environment.

Sri Lanka's economy relies heavily on the manufacturing sector as a major source of growth and employment. It provides many job opportunities and has been experiencing rapid growth in Sri Lanka since the economy was open in 1977. Industries such as textiles, garments, food processing and rubber products serve as a major contributor to Sri Lanka's exports and employment. However, the manufacturing industry in Sri Lanka has challenges. On the other hand, there is an availability of young

and educated workforce, availability of key shipping routes and increasing numbers of factories. There are also issues such as the increase in costs, intense competition in the fields of other countries, and keeping up with modern technology. Retention of quality workers and ensuring there is no loss of important work-related knowledge among employees leaving their job is one of the greatest challenges. Due to this, knowledge management has become significant in the manufacturing industry.

Many studies have examined how knowledge sharing affects employee performance in service and IT industries, where work involves flexible, creative tasks and sharing personal (tacit) knowledge through teamwork (Wang et al., 2010). However, these results do not apply directly to Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector because of key differences, such as machine-based repetitive jobs instead of idea-focused service work (Nonaka et al., 1996) use of written-down (explicit) knowledge due to strict rules and Lean methods, unlike IT's informal sharing top-down communication on shop floors that limits open talk, compared to flat teams in services (Cummings, 2004) reliance on machines for efficiency rather than customer dealings (Davenport, T.H et al., 1998) and strong pressures from safety, quality checks, and production targets that restrict sharing (Linda Argote, 2013). These gaps mean existing theories miss manufacturing realities like rigid processes and hierarchies and there is little research on Sri Lanka's factories where trust issues slow knowledge flow so specific studies are needed.

According to recent studies that have been carried all over the world informal and formal knowledge sharing plays a significant role in greater task performance, innovation, and worker innovativeness in manufacturing firms (AlMulhim, 2023; Z. Wang & Wang, 2012). Organizational culture, aspects like trust among coworkers, communication between staff, information system in use, and reward systems play a huge role in encouraging knowledge sharing among employees (Meher et al., 2022). But these conclusions are quite context specific and might not be directly applicable to organizational culture resource, and technological capacities of the developing economies such as Sri Lanka. Common barriers to effective knowledge sharing continue to exist within organization still. Which include job insecurity, trust and poor mechanisms of knowledge capture and sharing. Without responding to them, manufacturing organizations are unlikely to capitalize on the potential of their workforce and because of that become less competitive and weak in terms of performance.

Therefore, a research gap exists in understanding how organizational culture, communication, reward systems, and technological support directly drive the knowledge-sharing process which encompasses both the intrinsic willingness of employees to contribute and the actual exchange of information and how this contributes to employee performance in Sri Lanka's manufacturing industry. This paper aims to fill this gap by examining these enablers as direct predictors of performance, recognizing that 'knowledge sharing' is not merely a technical transfer but a behavioral outcome rooted in an employee's readiness to participate. By analyzing these factors as direct drivers, the study provides a clear link between organizational inputs and productivity outputs. The results will be useful in understanding best

practices for knowledge management and in promoting top performance within the manufacturing sector of the country.

1.2. Research Question/s

The preceding discussion underscores that in the manufacturing sector; employee performance is not merely a product of individual skill but is significantly shaped by organizational and technological factors that facilitate the exchange of intellectual capital. These factors trust, communication, information systems, and rewards serve as the essential drivers of knowledge-sharing practices, as they directly influence the environment required for employees to engage in productive knowledge exchange. Guided by this background and the recognition that effective knowledge sharing is rooted in these motivational enablers, the study is designed to address the following questions:

Main research question

- Do knowledge-sharing motivational factors significantly enhance employees' willingness to share knowledge and consequently improve employee performance in the manufacturing industry of Sri Lanka?

Specific research questions

- Does trust among coworkers in knowledge sharing have a significant positive impact on employee performance in the manufacturing industry?
- Does communication/interaction between staff in knowledge sharing have a significant positive impact on employee performance in the manufacturing industry?
- Does the use of knowledge sharing information systems/technology have a significant positive impact on employee performance in the manufacturing industry?
- Does a reward system designed to promote knowledge sharing have a significant positive impact on employee performance in the manufacturing industry?

1.3. Research Objective/s

The primary objective of this study is by identifying the role of (trust, communication, information system, and rewards system) in knowledge sharing, and to provide practical insights into how organizations can strategically use knowledge-sharing practices to enhance productivity and performance outcomes.

Main research objectives

To examine whether knowledge-sharing motivational factors significantly enhance employees' willingness to share knowledge and thereby improve employee performance in the manufacturing industry of Sri Lanka.

Specific research objectives

- To examine whether trust among coworkers in knowledge sharing has a significant positive impact on employee performance in the manufacturing industry.
- To examine whether communication (interaction between staff) in knowledge sharing has a significant positive impact on employee performance in the manufacturing industry.
- To examine whether knowledge-sharing information systems/technology has a significant positive impact on employee performance in the manufacturing industry.
- To examine whether a reward system designed to promote knowledge sharing has a significant positive impact on employee performance in the manufacturing industry

1.4. Significance of the study

This study is important for several reasons. First, it adds new insight into how knowledge sharing affects employee performance, especially in the manufacturing sector, a less explored area in academic studies compared to other industries. By identifying the motivational factors that encourage knowledge sharing among employees. The results will assist firms in establishing policies that encourage innovation, teamwork and continuous learning by identifying the key factors that motivate employees to engage in knowledge sharing practices. This research provides practical guidance for managers and policymakers by demonstrating how key variables such as trust, communication, technology, and reward systems encourage employees to engage in knowledge-sharing practices and how these practices impact employees' job performance. As a result, it can enhance workforce efficiency and organizational productivity as well. The paper also emphasizes the role of human and technological factors in sustaining competitive advantage as an indicator of the evidence-based recommendations for performance improvement initiatives. In addition, this research also provides foundation for other researchers who wish to investigate knowledge sharing and employee performance in the manufacturing sector or similar industries. It can also be used by students and researchers who wish to conduct further research in related fields. Finally, the findings from this research can be used as a strategic tool for organizations and it helps employees by showing them how sharing knowledge can help them to grow personally, do their jobs better and give them greater career opportunities which will make the workforce more dynamic and future ready.

1.5. Scop of the study

This study has several limitations that need to be addressed and must be acknowledged as follows: This research was limited to the companies withing the manufacturing sector. It has been focused only on selected aspects of organizational culture such as trust among coworkers, communication/interaction between staff, information systems, and reward systems, while other significant factors like leadership style, organizational structure, social capital, and group-based norms, were not examined. In addition, the study employed only a quantitative approach and limited to the one point of data collection through a cross-sectional survey design. It will rely on self-reported data, which may cause people to give answers just to look good instead of true and fair. Those answers make it hard to know what really caused the result. The way this can be improved in future research is through longitudinal methods and qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviews or observations, to give a proper understanding of the factors involved.

Furthermore, the findings' generalizability was limited because the sample was selected from a particular organizational context (the manufacturing sector). This may not be always the case because organizations of diverse structures (like highly political governmental organizations) may use different patterns of knowledge sharing behavior and performance outcomes. Also, the study mainly examined knowledge sharing from the viewpoint of knowledge providers, ignoring the part played by knowledge receivers, whose actions and attitudes may also have a big impact on performance outcomes. These limitations present chances for future researchers to build a more comprehensive and better understanding of knowledge sharing within organizational contexts and how it could impact employee performance and organizational as a whole.

2. Literature Review

The literature review presents the theoretical framework and empirical foundations pertaining to knowledge sharing and its influence on employee performance within organizations. It aims to explore the components related to knowledge sharing practices, identify affecting factors, and analyze their impact on employee outcomes to offer insights into how knowledge management shapes performance.

2.1. Theoretical related literature review

Knowledge is many things to many people. Knowledge is not simply understood, managed or quantified. Knowledge is more than just information. Additionally, it contains experiences, skills and insights (Huysman et al., 2002) Knowledge management (KM) has become one of the key organizational capabilities of the modern business landscape, especially in knowledge-intensive sectors like

manufacturing. (Ponelis et al., 2014) give a detailed description of knowledge management as "the identification, optimization, and active management of intellectual assets, either in the form of explicit knowledge held in artifacts or as tacit knowledge possessed by individuals or communities." This definition emphasizes two sides of knowledge assets and highlights the importance of managing both explicit and tacit knowledge within organization. This distinction becomes particularly relevant in manufacturing industry where both technical specifications (explicit) and operational know-how (tacit) are pre-requisites to organizational performance.

The resource-based view of the firm provides a theoretical foundation for understanding knowledge as an organizational asset. According to (Bollinger et al., 2001) this view makes knowledge a valuable, rare and difficult to imitate resource and that can help to sustain the competitive advantage. Based on empirical studies (Wang et al., 2012) prove that knowledge is a strategic resource that affects organizational performance to a considerable extent because of its effects on the development of intellectual capital. Their analysis shows that organizations that manage knowledge as a strategic asset have superior performance, both in operational and financial aspects. Manufacturing organizations gained advantage from this view because their competitiveness can largely be based on such proprietary processes, technical experience and operational knowledge that cannot be easily replicated by their competitors.

Sharing knowledge is the essence of knowledge management, the process according to which individual knowledge is transformed into organizational knowledge. Empirical study by (Almashari et al., 2002) indicated that knowledge sharing has a great influence on the organizational performance through the creation, transfer, and utilization of knowledge across the organizational boundaries. Their results prove that organizations that possess positive knowledge sharing practices have higher innovation, decision-making processes, and operational efficiency. As a result, Knowledge sharing can have an effect organization's long-term performance and competitiveness (Armaghan & Renaud, 2017). The significance of knowledge sharing in the manufacturing industry could not be overestimated. To sustain quality, efficiency and innovation, manufacturing organizations are highly dependent on explicit technical knowledge as well as tacit operational experience.

2.2. Factors affecting knowledge sharing behavior

Knowledge sharing behavior is shaped by a range of factors operating at individual, team, and organizational levels. Researchers have identified organizational cultural factors such as trust, communication, Information system and reward system, as significant drivers that can either promote or hinder effective knowledge sharing within various contexts.

1.1.1 Trust among coworkers

There is no universally accepted definition for trust, but many researchers have emphasized the importance of trust. (Lewis et al., 1985) indicated that trust is a feeling of confidence and security in the caring responses, while explained that belief is an expectation held by an individual or group of words, promises, or verbal or written statements of another individual or group. Trust is a basic factor in knowledge sharing. (Raza et al., 2018) If individuals sharing their own knowledge fail to receive the benefits they expect, they probably won't share it. In many studies trust is considered as a key variable for knowledge sharing, and knowledge sharing can occur when people have trust in each other (Wasko et al., 2005). Basically, knowledge sharing will be initiated in an organization only with individuals who have trust between each other. Human factors such as trust are a major component to obtaining effective knowledge and are an attribute to the enhancement of performance.

1.1.2 Communication/Interaction between staff

Communication refers to face-to-face interactions in common languages and human interactions through oral conversations and the use of body language while communicating (Al-Alawi et al., 2007). Some previous studies suggest that communication plays an important role in knowledge sharing, as it helps build trust in different types of inter-organizational relationships ([Chen et al., 2007](#)). In their empirical study of the South Korean public employees (Kang et al., 2008) established that the openness in communication positively affects employees to share knowledge and this would enhance individual work performance. Communication infrastructure and patterns define the flow of knowledge in organizations. Explicit knowledge is shared through formal communication channels, including meetings, reports, and structured information systems. However, it is usually more effective that informal communication networks can share tacit knowledge and provide social relationships that facilitate continuous knowledge sharing. Manufacturing sector usually has formal and informal communication systems in place to exchange technical knowledge, operating processes, and improvement ideas.

1.1.3 Existence of knowledge sharing Information System

Information systems are very important for an organization because they can connect people, data, and processes together to support day-to-day work while solving problems and making informed decisions (Whitten et al., 2001). By using a knowledge-sharing information system, best practices can be standardized and ensuring everyone uses the most relevant and updated information also becomes easier when knowledge is shared through these systems. Collections of shared knowledge platforms like electronic databases allow employees to store and access valuable information, making it simpler for everyone to learn from shared experiences and build on each other's knowledge (Connelly et al., 2003). When it comes to manufacturing companies, these systems have become even more important for knowledge sharing, where the utilization of those systems can reduce errors and speed up training (Bollinger et al., 2001) as they provide digital platforms where every employee can access and share

their expertise and experience with each other. It plays a crucial role in supporting knowledge sharing and improving employee performance in the end, leading to better overall organizational results.

1.1.4 Reward System

An effective reward system is essential for organizations. In accordance with (Oliver et al., 2006) organizational reward systems play a huge role in motivating employees towards knowledge sharing and fostering a knowledge culture. They have suggested that indirect rewards like appreciation and recognition play a greater role than monetary rewards in knowledge sharing. (Al-Shammari & Al-Musharraf, n.d.) observed that reward systems and knowledge sharing had positive relationships, meaning that proper rewards could encourage employees to share their knowledge with fellow employees. Similarly, (Nguyen Kim et al., 2024) found that monetary rewards have an immediate effect on motivation to share knowledge. But in the long run, people should be encouraged to share their knowledge through non-monetary rewards. Manufacturing organizations experience challenges in creating efficient reward systems to share knowledge because of the technical nature of knowledge, safety concerns, and the need to create a balance between individual performance and collaboration within a team. Effective reward systems in the manufacturing environment usually combine incentives based on projects and teams with individual incentives based on knowledge repository and mentoring efforts.

2.3. Concept of performance management

Performance management is the process of determining if the work of employees' activities and outputs are in line with the organization's goals and objectives. It involves setting achievable objectives, targets and expectations, as well as providing feedback and supporting employee development (Kyriakidou, 2010)

1.1.5 Knowledge - sharing propensity, behavior and employee performance

Knowledge-sharing activities cannot be forced, they ought to be voluntary (Käser et al., 2002). The authors posit that an individual's propensity to share knowledge consists of three elements: a general positive attitude towards sharing knowledge; the perceived benefits of knowledge sharing and knowledge sharing-related self-efficacy. Taken together, these three factors represent an individual's likelihood for sharing knowledge in his/her work organization and impact the extent to which they engage in knowledge-sharing behaviors and improving work performance. In terms of knowledge sharing, this leads to the assertion that positive attitudes towards knowledge sharing are likely to increase the propensity of knowledge-sharing behaviors. A study by (Du et al., 2007) found that knowledge sharing is related to performance and different knowledge sharing dimensions influence

performance differently. When carrying out knowledge sharing and Individual Performance, people are assumed to accumulate, adopt and share knowledge in order to perform well on the job.

1.1.6 Relationship with Knowledge Management and Employee Performance

Trust facilitates knowledge sharing and enhances the individual and team performance by providing improved access to information, better decision making, and increased innovation. The manufacturing industry benefits significantly from the trust-based knowledge sharing due to complex processes and all the functions are interdependent. Trust allows the sharing of troubleshooting expertise, process enhancements, and safety observations that have a direct influence on the operational performance and the wellbeing of employees.

Effective communication and interaction between staff are essential for employee performance. Open and frequent communication allows employees to exchange ideas, clarify expectations and coordinate their efforts with greater efficiency (Smith and Mc Keen, 2003). This leads to improved teamwork, faster resolution of issues, and higher levels of innovation.

Information systems that support knowledge sharing can have a significant impact on employee performance. When employees have access to reliable and user-friendly knowledge management tools, they can find the information they need quickly and easily, reducing time wasted on searching for answers. This leads to increased efficiency, better decision-making, and higher quality work. Organizations that invest in effective information systems can gain a competitive advantage by enabling their employees to work more effectively.

Reward systems that recognize and incentivize knowledge sharing can motivate employees to perform at a higher level.(Omar Sharifuddin Syed-Ikhsan et al, 2004a).When employees know that their contributions are valued and rewarded, they are more likely to share their knowledge and collaborate with others. This leads to a more innovative and productive work environment, where employees are motivated to achieve both individual and organizational goals (Goh, 2002).

3. Research Methodology

The population of interest for this research consists of employees working in manufacturing sector organizations located in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. The manufacturing sector is a critical contributor to the country's economic growth, employing a diverse workforce across various hierarchical levels including operational staff, middle management, and executive management. For this study, organizations employing workers directly or indirectly in knowledge sharing activities were considered eligible. A Simple random sampling technique was employed in this study because it gives each employee an equal chance of being selected, which helps reduce bias and makes the results more

reliable for the whole group (Saunders et al., 2019) This method is common in studies like this for example, (Tadesse, 2020) used it on manufacturing workers in Ethiopia to check performance factors, while a Sri Lankan bank employee study on knowledge management also used simple random sampling to achieve unbiased results (Dilshani et al., 2021). Following these examples, this research also used simple random sampling based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) guidelines for known populations, the sample size was determined as 384 employees to achieve a representative sample. Out of these, 377 valid responses were obtained, representing a response rate of approximately 98%, indicating strong participant engagement.

For this study the cross-sectional survey design was used. The questionnaire instrument was developed to measure constructs related to motivational enablers of knowledge sharing namely trust among coworkers, communication/interaction between staff, information systems, and reward systems and their impact on employee performance. Measurement items were adapted from established scales validated in prior knowledge management research to ensure content and construct validity. Responses were captured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Data collection was conducted through a self-administered survey distributed in person to carefully selected employees. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to encourage honest and accurate responses. Missing data was handled by excluding incomplete responses from final analyses, while responses with valid data on particular variables were retained for those analyses to maximize data usage.

Statistical analysis included descriptive statistics to profile the sample and assess variable distributions. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Inferential analyses employed correlation and multiple regression techniques to test hypothesized relationships between knowledge sharing motivators and employee performance outcomes. IBM SPSS software was utilized for all analysis.

3.1. Conceptual Diagram

Figure 1 shows a conceptual model of how knowledge sharing improves employee performance. The framework is drawn from an extensive review of literature on organizational knowledge management and sharing relies on such main factors as trust among coworkers, communication/interaction between staff, information systems, and reward systems as main attendance of knowledge sharing. As per the model, Knowledge sharing is the independent variable of the study and employee performance is the dependent variable.

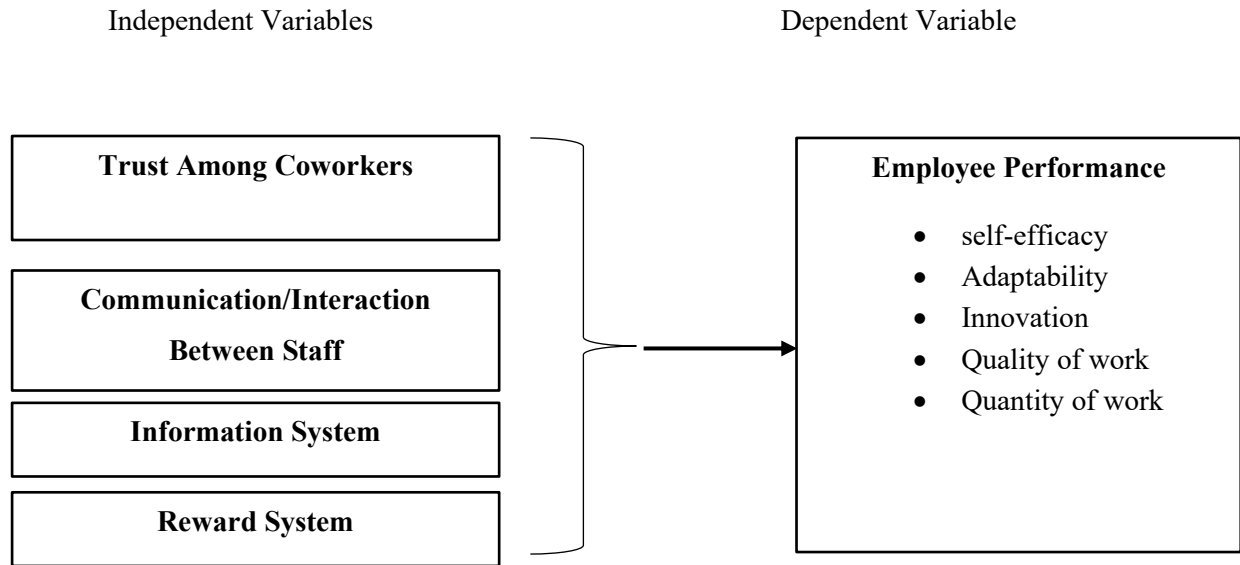


Figure 2. Conceptual model of Knowledge sharing and Employee Performance

3.2. Hypothesis

Based on the conceptual model (Figure 1), this study identifies trust, communication, information systems, and rewards as the primary drivers of knowledge-sharing practices. These factors directly shape the environment for knowledge exchange, which in turn influences individual performance outcomes. By referring to prior literature, the following hypotheses are developed:

H1: Trust among coworkers in knowledge sharing has a significant positive impact on employee performance.

H2: Communication (interaction between staff) in knowledge sharing has a significant positive impact on employee performance.

H3: Knowledge sharing information system/technology has a significant positive impact on employee performance.

H4: Reward systems designed to promote knowledge sharing have a significant positive impact on employee performance.

4. Data analysis and results

The sample size for this study was decided using a simple random sampling method. The decision considered the research scope constant and accessibility of the target population; the desired sample size was set at 384. A structured questionnaire was administered for data collection. Out of the 384

questionnaires distributed, 377 valid responses were selected, while 7 were excluded from analysis due to inconsistencies and the presence of outlier effects.

Table 1 Response Rate

No. of questionnaires distributed	No of questioner distributed	No of questioner rejected	Response rate
384	384	7	98.18%

This 98.18% response rate is considered satisfactory and demonstrates strong commitment from the target population. This facilitated access to respondents relevant to the research topic that ensuring both the adequacy and quality of data collected. The collected data has been organized, tabulated, and analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions and assess relationships between the identified variables.

4.1. Reliability of the variables

To assess the reliability of measures, this study used the inter-item Cronbach alpha coefficient, following the recommendation of (Ursachi et al., 2015) the Cronbach alpha values of 0.6-0.7 indicate an acceptable level of reliability, while values of 0.8 or higher are considered to represent a very good level.

Table 2 Value of the Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Independent Variable		
Trust among coworkers	5	0.675
Communication between staff	5	0.712
Information System	5	0.744
Reward System	5	0.808
Dependent Variable		
Employee Performance	5	0.688

The alpha values for the variables in this study were trust among coworkers (0.675), communication between staff (0.712), information system (0.744), reward system (0.808), and employee performance

(0.688). Based on these thresholds, all variables exhibit acceptable level of reliability, with the reward system variable achieving very good internal consistency and the remaining variables demonstrating acceptable reliability. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measures used in this study are reliable and internally consistent.

4.2. Normality of variables

Normal tests are conducted based on skewness and kurtosis measures. The cutoff value for skewness between -1 to +1 and kurtosis is -3 to +3 (Hair et al., 2019). When the critical value is within the range then the data is normally distributed and acceptable.

Table 3 Test of Normality

Variable	Symbol	Skewness	Kurtosis
Trust among coworkers	TC	-0.382	0.433
Communication between staff	CO	-0.656	1.635
Information System	IS	-0.673	1.698
Reward System	RS	-0.791	0.943
Employee Performance	EP	-0.412	0.820

According to the results of this study, both dependent variable and independent variables have the acceptable values for skewness and kurtosis within them. Therefore, according to the results of the SPSS this data set is acceptable for normality.

4.3. Descriptive data analysis

Table 4 shows demographic characteristics of the research sample of 377 total usable respondents. The respondent profile was analyzed from five aspects, namely the gender, age, education level, job position and years of work experience.

Table 4 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency	(%)
Gender		
Male	108	28.6
Female	269	71.4
Age		
Less than 25	64	17
25-35	242	64.2
36-45	56	14.9
46-50	14	3.7
Above 50	1	0.3
Education Level		
High School	14	3.7
Diploma	31	8.2
Bachelors	270	71.6
Masters	59	15.6
PhD	3	.8
Jon Position		
Operational Staff	227	60.2
Middle-level managers	82	21.8
Executive managers	25	6.6
Other	43	11.4
Years of work experience		
Less than one year	43	11.4
1-5 years	262	69.5
6-10 years	44	11.7
11-20 years	19	5
More than 20 years	9	2.4

Beyond these general demographic statistics, several important relationships emerge among the variables. The large number of young employees in both age and years of work experience suggests either recent hiring expansion or higher turnover rates among entry-level roles, further supported by the concentration of operational staff within these categories a significant proportion of respondents possesses a bachelor's degree reflecting the largest job category (operational staff) within in sector but middle and executive management positions are filled by respondents holding master's or higher

degrees. Similarly, managerial and executive roles trend towards both higher educational qualifications and longer professional tenure emphasizing age, education level, job position, and years of work experience are closely connected and together they influence career growth, promotion opportunities, and the overall structure of the organization.

The description of the survey is also shown in following Table 5. The study used a 1-5 Likert scale to assess the independent and dependent variables, where respondents rated their level of agreement from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

Table 5 Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean Range	SD Range
Trust	3.92 - 4.13	0.596 - 0.681
Communication	3.90 - 4.19	0.627 - 0.721
Information System	3.96 - 4.14	0.616 - 0.736
Reward System	3.77 - 4.00	0.672 - 0.853
Employee Performance	3.96 - 4.12	0.597 - 0.717

The descriptive analysis of the Trust variable shows that mean scores for the five items range from ($M = 3.92 - 4.13$) and ($SD = 0.596 - 0.681$) suggesting that most participants agreed or nearly agreed with the statements and have a positive view of trust amount coworkers. This suggests that trust is well-established in the workplace, creating a safe space where employees feel comfortable sharing knowledge without fear of negative consequences.

The analysis of the Communication variable shows consistently positive responses, with mean scores of ($M = 3.90-4.19$) with the standard deviations ($SD = 0.627- 0.721$). This suggests that employees generally have a positive view of communication within their workplace.

The descriptive analysis of the Information System variable indicates a strong positive perception among respondents. Mean scores for the five items range from ($M= 3.96 - 4.14$) with standard deviations between ($SD = 0.616 - 0.736$) reflecting a high level of agreement and low response variability. These results suggest that employees are generally satisfied with the technological tools provided by the organization and feel comfortable using them.

The descriptive analysis of the Reward System variable shows moderately high mean scores, ranging from about ($M= 3.77 - 4.00$) , with standard deviations between ($SD = 0.672 - 0.853$) . This indicates

that most employees view the reward system positively, although there is some variation in opinions, particularly regarding the fairness and motivational impact of the incentives.

The descriptive analysis of the dependent variable, Employee Performance, shows generally positive responses, with mean scores ranging from ($M = 3.96 - 4.12$) and standard deviations between ($SD = 0.597 - 0.717$), indicating low variability in responses. Overall, employees perceive that their performance considering adaptability, innovation, work quality, and collaboration is positively influenced by knowledge sharing activities. These findings support the idea that knowledge sharing can significantly enhance both individual and organizational performance. The results suggest that factors such as trust among coworkers, effective communication, information systems, and motivating reward structures work together to improve employee outcomes. This reinforces the important relationship between knowledge management practices and performance within organizations.

4.4. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is an important statistical technique used to examine the strength and direction of between pairs of variables. It indicates whether variables tend to move in the same direction (positive correlation) or in opposite directions (negative correlation).

Table 6 Results of Pearson's correlation test

		Trust	Communication	Information System	Reward System	Employee Performance
Trust	Pearson	1	.599**	.587**	.529**	.600**
	Correlation					
Communication	Pearson	.599**	1	.537**	.480**	.518**
	Correlation					
Information System	Pearson	.587**	.537**	1	.612**	.634**
	Correlation					
Reward System	Pearson	.529**	.480**	.612**	1	.583**
	Correlation					
Employee Performance	Pearson	.600**	.518**	.634**	.583**	1
	Correlation					

***.* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows the bi-variate correlation coefficients of factors related to knowledge sharing and their relationship with employee performance. The correlation coefficients in total were generally above 0.5 and all were highly significant. Notably, all the four examined variables trust, communication,

information system, and reward system exhibited significant and positive relationships with employee performance. The strength of these correlations aligns with the guideline suggested by (Evans, 1996) for the absolute value of $(-1 \leq r \leq +1)$ indicating moderate relationships between the factors and employee performance.

4.5. Multiple regression analysis

To test the hypotheses formulated, multiple regression analysis was conducted. The assumptions of the analysis were first ascertained before the final interpretation was done. The results are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7 Results of multiple regression analyses

Variables	β	Std. Error	Std β	t	Sig.
Trust	.254	.051	.246	4.939	.000
Communication	.102	.046	.104	2.209	.028
Information System	.284	.048	.300	5.948	.000
Reward System	.167	.036	.219	4.597	.000

$R^2 = 0.519$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.514$; $F = 100.548$; Sig.000

Hypothesis 1 in this study predicted that there would be a significance positive relationship between trust among coworkers and employee performance. consistent with previous studies that view trust as a fundamental quality for effective knowledge sharing (Raza et al., 2018; Smith and Mc Keen, 2003). According to the results of the correlation analysis, there is a significant positive relationship between trust and employee performance ($r = 0.600, p < 0.01$). Trust also appeared as a significant predictor of employee performance in the regression analysis. According to Table 2, trust significantly predicted employee performance ($\beta = 0.246, p < .000$). Hence, there is adequate evidence to support hypothesis 1; that trust among coworkers is positively related to the performance of an employee. supporting the integrative model of organizational trust proposed by (Schoorman et al., 2007).

A significance positive relationship between communication and employee performance was predicted in the Hypothesis 2, aligning with findings that openness in communication enhances individual work performance. According to the data shown in Table 1, it is evident that there is a significant positive correlation between communication and employee performance ($r = 0.518, p < 0.01$). Although communication appeared as a significant predictor in the regression analysis ($\beta = 0.104, p = 0.028$).

Thus, hypothesis 2 was supported by the data, confirming (Smith et al., 2002) assertion that clear communication builds trust and strengthens team relationships.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that there would be a significant positive relationship between knowledge sharing information systems and employee performance. The results of both correlation ($r = 0.634, p < 0.01$) and regression analysis suggest that information systems have a significant positive relationship with employee performance. Specifically, the information system emerged as the strongest unique predictor of employee performance in the regression analysis ($\beta = 0.300, p < 0.000$). Thus, there is strong evidence to support hypothesis 3, consistent with (Smith et al., 2003), who noted that advanced information infrastructure directly correlates with organizational performance.

In hypothesis 4, it was expected that there would be a significant positive impact from reward systems on employee performance, as incentives are crucial for motivating knowledge transfer. According to Table 2, the reward system was found to be a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.219, p < 0.000$). This is further supported by the correlation analysis, which showed a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.583, p < 0.01$). Thus, hypothesis 4 is supported, corroborating the view that valued rewards lead to a more productive work environment (Omar Sharifuddin Syed-Ikhsan et al., 2004)

According to the Model Summary, it is clear that these motivational variables contribute to the variance accounted for in employee performance. The four independent variables accounted for significant variance in the outcome, explaining approximately 51.9% ($R^2 = .519, Adjusted R^2 = .514$) of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the independent variables; Trust among coworkers, Communication, Information System, and Reward System. This suggests that just over half of the variation in the outcome was accounted for by the predictors included in the model, with the remaining 48.1% explained by the other predictors, which are in out of this study. In social science research, an adjusted R-squared value below 0.7 (0.4-0.6 range) is also acceptable due to the complexity of human behaviour and performance in organizations. (Al-Alawi et al., 2007; Henttonen et al., 2016). Hence the overall model is statistically significant ($F = 100.548, p < 0.000$).

5. Conclusion

The findings of the current study pave the way for an unexplored area in knowledge management research within the Sri Lankan context. The present study goes beyond the current empirical base by identifying specific motivational enablers in the manufacturing sector. Similar to previous studies on organizational trust (Schoorman et al., 2007), the current study also found that trust facilitates knowledge sharing and enhances individual performance. This effect highlights that when employees trust their colleagues' reliability and goodwill, they are more likely to share troubleshooting expertise and safety observations without fear of negative consequences. Thus, the current findings are in line

with past literature. The current study found evidence to support the positive relationship between communication and employee performance, thereby validating previous research evidence (Smith et al., 2002). According to the result of this study, it is clear that clear and open communication helps reduce confusion and strengthens team relationships. Nevertheless, the results suggest that communication has a smaller relative effect compared to other factors. This may be because communication acts as a facilitator that requires other structural mechanisms to fully translate into performance gains. Consistent with prior findings (Alavi et al., 2001; Smith et al, 2003), the information system appeared as the strongest predictor of employee performance. This result suggests that robust technological infrastructure is essential in manufacturing environments to reduce errors and speed up training. The favourable evaluation of these systems indicates that easy access to knowledge directly enhances employee efficiency.

Further, the findings regarding the reward system support theoretical arguments by (Omar Sharifuddin Syed-Ikhsan et al., 2004), confirming that external rewards effectively motivate employees to engage in knowledge transfer. When employees perceive the reward system as fair and transparent, they are more likely to collaborate, leading to a more innovative and productive work environment. Nevertheless, findings of the current study suggest that knowledge sharing is an important factor which relates to employee performance. The identified factors accounted for 51.9% variance in performance levels. Hence, managers and HR practitioners must consider these motivational profiles when devising organizational interventions. Organizations should foster trustful relationships and invest in user-friendly information systems. Further, organizations can implement transparent reward schemes that align with collaborative goals.

There are several limitations in the current study which are worthy to be noted. One of them is that the study's results may be influenced by common method bias as the data was collected through self-report from a single source. Such a self-report bias could have been further compounded as this study relied on employees' perceptions of their own performance. Hence, the researchers are distant from the objective performance metrics. Even though self-report is a suited methodological choice for this type of study, taking insights from supervisors or objective HR records could potentially enhance the picture. A solution to tackle this issue in the future is employing mixed methods research rather than depending on quantitative methods.

Secondly, this study is a cross-sectional study, which may prevent a firm holding of causal inferences made in this study. However, it must be noted that the current study is built on a sound theoretical basis supported by previous evidence. Future research in this area could overcome cross-sectional bias through adopting longitudinal designs to assess changes over time. Further, the sample of the current study only consists of participants from the Western Province of Sri Lanka's manufacturing sector; thus, the generalizing of these current findings to other regions or industries may be problematic. There are many other sectors which are socially and economically different. In future, it is encouraged to perform

these types of studies on a broader scale, gathering information from other provinces and industries such as the service or agricultural sectors.

In conclusion, this study provides a unique contribution to the area of knowledge management research through exploring how trust, communication, information systems, and rewards impact performance in the manufacturing sector. Based on findings of the present study, it is clear that knowledge sharing is an important factor which contributes to the employee performance. Information systems were the most related factor to performance, followed by trust among coworkers. Communication and reward systems also showed substantial relationships with performance. These findings indicate that integrating both the human and technological dimensions of knowledge sharing is critical for achieving sustainable performance improvement.

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