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A Conceptual Framework on Factors Affecting Knowledge Sharing In Malaysian Online Retail Platform

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ABSTRACT: *E-commerce has used a proper knowledge management technics to create a unique platform that changed the retail landscape; the traditional retail model has been transformed into online retail, while retailers who cannot boost their online presence are getting out of the business. This paper presents a conceptual framework for customer's attitude towards knowledge sharing in Malaysian online retail platform. The framework is based on the review of relevant literatures which includes useful theories like theory of reason action, theory of planned behavior and perceived behavioral control.*
KEYWORDS: Knowledge Sharing; Customer Attitude; E-commerce; planned behavior.

I   INTRODUCTION

On the Malaysian context, the online retail has addressed the immediate need of both customers and organizations through short lead time, quality product delivery, and cost reduction. The industry has made good use of Malaysian friendly business environment together with the financial infrastructure as they endeavors to bridge the 3 to 5 years gap compare to their USA counterpart.(Kamaruzaman et al2010)

This new business model has radically influenced the marketing and distribution paradigm and also created a virtue platform to enhance business to business (B2B), business to customers (B2C) and customer to customers (C2C) business transaction. Daniel,Wilson(2002) through its finding admitted that responding to competitive pressure was the main reason leading companies to adopt E-commerce.

This constitutes the independent variable (customer's attitude towards knowledge sharing) that will be compared with other independents like Self-efficacy, perceived-reward, trust and agreeableness.

II   LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-efficacy has gotten a lot of attention, as the judgment of ones will-power, persons believe of one's ability to reach a certain goal. It can also be defined as self-evaluation that influences behavior to undertake the amount of effort and persistence to put forth when faced with obstacles (Hsu et al,2007).Madux and Kleiman, in their book Self-efficacy: A foundation concept for positive clinical psychology noted that self-efficacy is not concerned with the beliefs about ability to perform specific and trivial motor act, but rather with the beliefs that one can coordinate and orchestrate skills and ability in changing and challenging situation.(Wood and Johnson 2016).

With this, one can say that Self-efficacy on customer information sharing is the drive behind the belief that customers shared information will help the organization to improve its services .One can also say that self-efficacy in knowledge sharing means that the customer is giving out the information with the fact and believe that the receiver will be able to utilize it for better productivity.

Knowledge sharing self-efficacy is ones confidence and ability to provide knowledge that is valuable to others.(Chen and Hung2010). Lin(2007) noted that knowledge self-efficacy and enjoyment in helping other plays a better role in knowledge sharing attitude. Cabrera et al (2007) found out that individual with high level of self-efficacy will be more likely to engage in knowledge sharing.

Although Self-efficacy has been used interchangeably with self-esteem, Self-efficacy emphasizes on ones will-power and performance capabilities rather than physical or psychological powers. Rajares and Urdan in their book, Self-efficacy beliefs and adolescents 2005: explains that self-efficacy is a judgment of ability while self-esteem is a judgment of self-worth. One can say self-efficacy is one's ability to boost his or her

believes to achieve a given task irrespective of physical ability, age or gender. Human functioning is also affected by the beliefs people hold about how abilities changes over time. Those who regard ability as biologically shrinking capacity with increasing age are quick to read faulty performance as indicant of declining capability; they do little to exploit their capability, while those who view ability as a skill to be developed and practiced achieve higher attainment (Bandura 2012) .

Reasonable number of papers has stated that customers are prone to share more information when they believe that the shared information will bring some benefits. Perceived benefit is a factor that influence knowledge sharing. This is simply the view that people share knowledge with the view that they will get a reward from such action. Yao et al (2007) encouraged appraisal as a means of improving knowledge sharing. Individuals are willing to contribute, when he/she believes the contribution behavior brings more benefits than cost.(liu, li 2017)

The fact that many researchers agree with the view that perceived benefit of many kinds have positive effect on customers attitude towards knowledge sharing, there are still some arguments by few that have tried to investigate in details the type of knowledge sharing that are motivated by this variable, some have disagreed that is not all kinds of knowledge that are motivated by perceived benefit or rewards.

Hau et al(2013) examined the type of knowledge shared to be either tacit or explicit, they further investigated the determinant of these knowledge types. Their findings stated that organizational rewards have negative effect on employee's tacit knowledge sharing intention but a positive influence on their explicit knowledge sharing intention. On a similar note, the findings of a research conducted by Tohidinia&Musakhani(2010) noted that expected extrinsic reward did not show any significant relationship with knowledge sharing.

Lin, Chung(2010) used social cognitive theory to explain the effect of perceived benefit on knowledge sharing on collaborative learning and E-commerce, it stated that persons knowledge sharing behavior is partially controlled by the influence of the social network and cognition (expectation and belief). Kankanhalli et al (2005) used social exchange theory to explain perceived benefit. It hinted that knowledge sharing is affected by cost and benefit. This means that people share their knowledge when they have seen that the reward they will get is greater than the cost of shared knowledge.

Trust has been mentioned by many researchers as an important element in knowledge economy, it has gotten different definitions, different finding and different effects in different disciplines (Robertson et al 2012; Adler 2001; Hung et al 2005; Seba et al 2012) but despite these differences, all the disciplines have confirmed the important of trust, Ratnasingham(1998) 'Trust is the likelihood for future corporation and is a defining future of virtual corporation. Trust is the cornerstone in terms of constructing a long term business relationship or partnership (Wu et al, 2010) it further explained that shared value is an antecedent for trust in online virtual platform. As trust declines, people are increasingly unwilling to take risk and demand greater protection against the probability of betrayal'. Corritore et al(2003) Trust is the social capital that can create corporation and coordination in offline environment, it probably can do the same in online environment. . Zhang, Fang, Wei, Chen (2010) noted the importance of maintaining a trusted environment because people tend to believe that their behavior will be positive in such environment because other parties involved will collaborate and willing to assist.

Information sharing and online retail has its understanding on Trust as the confidence that the trustee will behave in a manner in accordance with the corporate norms to foster inter-organizational relationship. Researchers have shared their views on the importance of this variable in E-commerce (Wu et al2011; Wu et al 2010;Lu,Zhao, Wang 2010).

Knowledge sharing on e-commerce platform needs further emphasis on trust than the traditional retail because of the physical distant between the parties. Trust in E-comerce encourages the willingness to expand knowledge sharing capabilities. Mukherjee, and Nath (2007) explains how technology and website quality can help to improve customers perception of trust in online retail platform, they further synthesized trust with the help of commitment-trust theory. They identified five antecedent of trust on online retail as,(1) shared value (2) communication (3) opportunistic behavior (4) privacy and (5) security. They noted that trust and commitment is the Centre of knowledge sharing on e-commerce. Mckinght and Chervany (2002) noted that for E-commerce to boost trust on their customers information sharing , there is a need to emphasize on issues like, privacy policies and third-party policy, interactions with customers, rebuilding reputation, links to other sites and Guarantees or other seals.

The history of personality can be traced back to generation before Christ (BC),Till date we have seen many psychologist that have made impact in the personality academic landscape, the Hippocrates four separate temperament of (Blood, Mucus,Black Bile and Yellow Bile).

By 1879 Wilhelm wundt came up with another four humor theory of (Sanguine,Phlegm,Cholera and Melancholy). Soon after, Sigmund Freud presented the structural model of the mind (id, ego and superego).

We were faced with numerous personality traits and scales, this have made it hard to capitalize on one. This has also created confusion and disagreement on deciding the perfect personality scale. .Although diversity and scientific pluralism are useful; the systematic accumulation of findings and the communication among researchers becomes difficult amidst the babel of concepts and scales (john &Sarivastava 1999).

The study of individual differences in cross-situational behavior and response tendencies, that is the study of personality traits.(matzler et al, 2011). It may be said that personality means the definitely fixed and controlling tendencies of adjustments of the individual to his environment. They generally have a long and important history in the life of the individual.(Allport and Allport 1921)

Today we have two famous personality treats. The Big-Five personality traits (i) Surgency or Extraversion,(ii) Agreeableness (iii) Conscientiousness or dependability (iv) emotional stability vs neuroticism and (v) Culture. Alternatively factor v has been interpreted as intellect (Goldberg 1990)

Another famous personality trait is the Myer-Briggs type Indicator (MBTI) which is based on Jung's(1923) theory of type. This theory looked at the variation in human behavior, which examine people on our perception and interpretation of things. This theory is based on (1. our attention (introvert or extrovert) 2. the way we take information (Sensing or Intuition)
3. Our decision making (Thinking and Feeling) 4. How we deal with the world (judging or perceiving).(Myer, Briggs 1962).

Personality as a variable has been discussed as an important factor on knowledge sharing. Researcher have investigated these factors (The et al, 2011; Ghadirian et al,2014;Cabrera et al, 2006;Mooradian et al,2006;Cabrera et al,2008;Matzler et al, 2011).

Literature has reviled Agreeableness as one of the factors that has been repeatedly proven by researchers as a factor that affects knowledge sharing. Interestingly, Matzler et al (2007) concurred that team members or team leaders who scored high on agreeableness, openness and conscientiousness are more likely to engage in sharing knowledge. However there are still few studies that have augured this fact. Agreeable employees are likely to engage on limited knowledge sharing. That is, agreeable employees will share knowledge only as a direct response to others questions or request rather than voluntarily initiating their own knowledge sharing (Wang et al, 2011).

On a positive note, Gupta (2008) conducted a research to examine the impact of the Big-Five personality characteristics on knowledge sharing and knowledge acquisition on 156 management students. The result from the research states that individuals on high agreeableness and conscientiousness are more involved in knowledge sharing activities than the individuals with low agreeableness and conscientiousness. Matzler et al (2011) Reported a study linking two elements of personality traits, Agreeableness and conscientiousness to knowledge sharing via effective commitment and documentation of knowledge, the finding revealed that agreeableness influences individual commitment to the organization and both effective commitment and conscientiousness predict the documentation of knowledge.

On a similar development, (Wang andYang 2007. Varies et al, 2006; Mooradian et al 2006) Conducted their research in different industries and teams and confirmed the effect of personality trait (Agreeableness) in knowledge sharing, with these facts this study agrees that agreeable individuals are more likely to share information in online retail platform than the less agreeable individuals.

Theory of reasoned action is a well- known theory although it has been modified but it still gains a lot of interest in the research landscape. It try to explain theoretical concept that determines individual motivational factor to any given behavior, the theory presented intention as a common predictor which comprises attitude and social norms. The theory suggest that intention is the best single predictor of behavior but it is also important to take skill and ability as well as environmental factor (i.e behavioral control) in account (fishbein and Ajzen 2011) the paper further suggest that people will perform a behavior because they intend to do so. Once the individual have the ability and without any environmental constrains. The paper explains that there are three predictor of intention that leads to any behavior (i.e, attitudinal, normative and control consideration).

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1985) is an extension of theory of reasoned action whereby it considered the acquisition of the resources and opportunity for such behavior. On the theory of reasoned action, one might have a favorable attitude, subjective norms and intention to behave but don't have the resources and the opportunity to do so, with this lack of resources the person might not accomplish the behavior .Theory of planned behavior, perceived behavioral control is included as an exogenous variable that have both direct effect on behavior and indirect effect on the behavior through intension.(Madden et al, 1992).

Perceived behavioral control is a modified version of theory of planned behavior, this version try to address issue where individual don't have the full volition control of the behavior. This theory argued that having intention, attitude, subjective norms, resources and the opportunity is not enough, that it still depends on the actions of one or more individuals .Ajzen (2002) The construct of perceived behavioral control was added to deal with situation in which people may lack validation control over behavior of interest.

III   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of this research was drawn from perceived behavioral control (PBC) which is a modified version of theory of reasoned action which comes after the theory of planned behavior. The theory of reasoned action (TRA).(Ajzen,&Fishdein 1980)and the theory of planned behavior(TPB). (Ajzen 1985). The proposed theories will be used to investigate factors affecting Malaysian customer's attitude towards knowledge sharing in E-commerce platform, Therefore the independent variables of this research are Self-efficacy, perceived benefit, Trust and personality trait of agreeableness, while the dependent variable is customer attitude towards knowledge sharing as shown in figure 2.1.
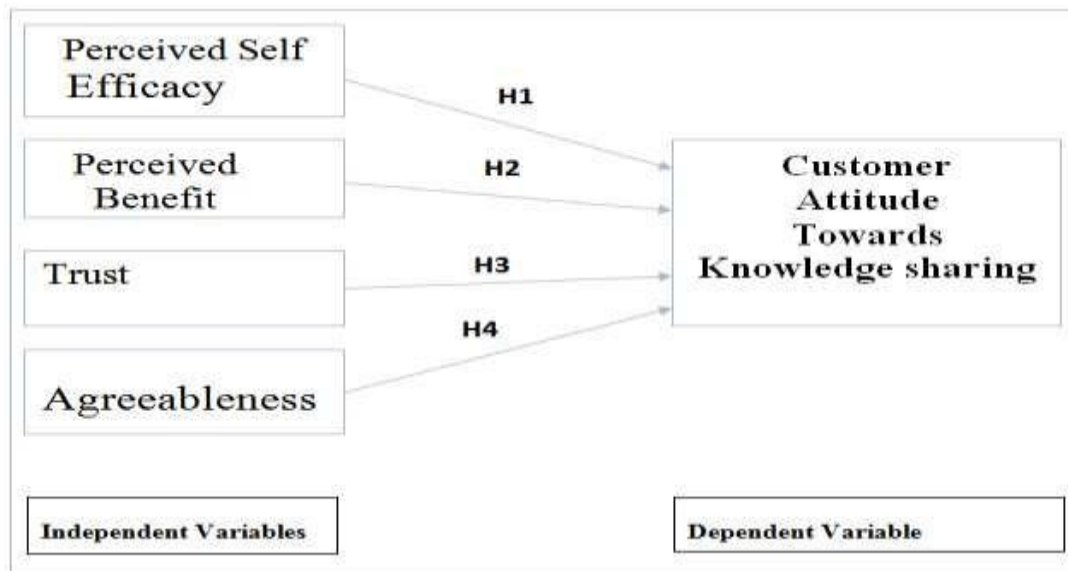

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework.

Based on the conceptual framework in figure 2.1, the following hypothesis will be investigated in this research.

H1: Perceived Self-Efficacy has a positive effect on customer's attitude towards knowledge sharing.
Self-Efficacy is the individual perception or judgment of its ability to execute a given behavior; it went beyond the physical ability to confidence and individual motivation. It has been commonly cited on many studies on knowledge sharing, it has also been used as a motivational factor both in employees and customer perspective of knowledge sharing. (Tamjidyamcholo et al, 2013; Endres et al, 2007; Cabrera et al, 2007.)
On a similar view, cheung and Lee (2012) insufficient knowledge self-efficacy also hinders individuals to share on web-based discussion board. The study further suggest that people form the belief about what they can do , predict likely outcome of prospective action and set goals for themselves in order to achieve the desired outcome.

H2: Perceived Reward has positive effect on customer's attitude towards knowledge sharing
It has been proven that people are more willing to take part on a given activity when they perceived that there are rewards attached to it. Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010) through their findings realized that perceived self - efficacy and anticipated reciprocal relationship have a positive impact on attitude towards knowledge sharing. When team members feels that they are not fairly rewarded they are more likely to withhold knowledge, therefore management should be cautious when deciding member reward (lin and Hung 2010).

H3: Trust has positive effect on customer's attitude towards knowledge sharing.
Trust is a vital element in E-commerce industry than any other industry because of the distance between the parties, but nevertheless it has also played a better role to strengthen relationship between all the parties. Trust reflects the scope and depth of customer relationship with partners and vendors. It also lead to relationship commitment and repeat website visit (Wu et al 2010). Trust is very important because it helps consumers overcome perception of uncertainty and risk. Companies that engage in trust related behaviors with web-based vendor, such as sharing information or making purchase. (Mcknight et al,2002)

H4: Agreeableness has positive effect on customer's attitude towards knowledge sharing
Personality is very important in knowledge sharing as it determines person's willingness to share information, Big-Five personality traits (i) Surgency or Extravation,(ii) Agreeableness (iii) Conscientiousness or dependability (iv) emotional stability vs neuroticism and (v) Culture. Alternatively factor has been interpreted as intellect (Goldberg 1990). Matzler, Renzl, Muller, Herting and Mooradian (2008). The result of the study clearly report that stable characteristics of individual ie. Agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness influences knowledge sharing.

IV   SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Synthesizing the previous studies on factors affecting knowledge sharing, this study realized that most of the studies have hinted these variables (Self-efficacy, Perceived Reward, Trust, and Personality trait of agreeableness) as contributing factors. A reasonable number of researches have been done to investigate this subject matter from employee context (Bavik et al, 2017; Cunningham and Seaman, 2017; Dasi et al, 2017), while numerous studies have focused on factors affecting virtual professional members knowledge sharing.(.Li, et al, 2012; Hsu et al, 2007; .Ghaznavi et al, 2011; Lin et al, 2009). Base on figure 1, a survey will be carried out to establish a justification for the framework which will be published in the next paper.

Hence, it could be concluded that the framework in Figure 1 applies for Factors Affecting Knowledge Sharing in Malaysian Online Retail Platform.

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