

**The Effects of Motivational Factors on Knowledge  
Sharing through Blogs**

Jihoon Choi

**최지훈**

서울대학교 경영대학 경영학과 석사 과정

Email: samfisher@nate.com

Tel: 02-880-6921

EunJin Kim

**김은진**

서울대학교 경영대학 경영학과 박사 과정

Email: kimej@snu.ac.kr

Tel: 02-880-6921

JoongHo Ahn

**안중호**

서울대학교 경영대학 경영학과 교수

Email: jahn@snu.ac.kr

TEL: 02-880-6953

## **I. Introduction**

### **1.1 Research Background**

Recently, knowledge sharing behavior is the critical phenomenon, especially for the individual behavior (Nonaka & Konno, 1998). Knowledge sharing has been focused as the important factor in the view of organization, too (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2001). As knowledge sharing is critical to the corporations, it needed to manage knowledge systematically. In other words, knowledge management is required to knowledge seriously.

Knowledge management is the activity which creates the value through the utilization of invisible asset such as data, information and knowledge. Nonaka and Knono(1998). While knowledge management is revitalized, corporation tries to use web 2.0 technologies to manage and encourage it. While web 2.0 days has been widely spread, people started to use web 2.0 media such as blog or wiki. These media allows users to play around without any limitation, i.e., they can upload photos, diaries, knowledge and other kinds of articles.

However, the century of individual's life becomes more serious and critical portion of today's culture. As 'individual media' such as blog or mini homepage is getting bigger part of the internet culture, the contents, uploaded by people, have been argued in many past literatures. In other words, contents which can be treated as 'knowledge' have been major theme for many scholars. In here, a question has been arisen with regard to the reason why people share their own knowledge or know-how will be wondered. What causes people to sacrifice themselves to share their invisible assets with others means the 'big thing' to the corporation or organization. When corporation knows why users share knowledge for free, they can approach to the end user more closely and develop more profitable business model.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

*How will the influence of motivational factors be different in accordance the type of knowledge?*

## II. Literature Review

### 2.1 Knowledge Types

Knowledge was defined as a state of mind, an object, a process, a condition of having access to information, or a capability(Alavi and Leidner,2001). While knowledge is the multi-dimensional concept, we need to define more specific concept and establishment is needed to us rather than concentrating on the definition of dictionary. Alavi and Leidner(2001) clarified it clearly. Followings are with regard to the concept of Alavi and Leidner(2001).

1. Knowing and understanding is established through an individual's experience or learning from the perspective on knowledge as a state of mind.
2. Knowledge is viewed as an object, thus is appropriate for acquisition, strong, manipulation, and transferring.
3. View focuses on knowledge applying that considers knowledge as a process of creation, sharing and dissemination.
4. knowledge must be organized in order to improve the efficiency of further access.
5. Knowledge emphasizes the capabilities with which an individual can accurately and efficiently mobilize information, i.e., it potentially leads to enhancement of future action.

Nonaka(1995) also defines the knowledge which can be objective belief and treated it as something made by promise and behavior. Knowledge can be static artifact which can be documentized on the basis of objective view and emphasized formalized its pattern or common formality which will help whenever or wherever people can utilize it appropriately.

The knowledge can be separated into 2 types of knowledge within organization: explicit and tacit (Nonaka 1994). Explicit knowledge can be defined as knowledge that can be formally and systematically stored, articulated, and disseminated in certain codified forms such as manual or computer files (Becerra-Fernandez & Sabherwal, 2001). Saunders and Miranda (1998) suggested that information technology is normally utilized to manipulate explicit knowledge. However, tacit knowledge is fundamentally based on the individual's action, experience, mind and involvement in a particular context. This is the reason why it is hard to transform into explicit form of knowledge which can be easily transferred and shared (Berman et al, 2002).

Transferability is the most important fragment which allows us to distinguish between tacit and explicit knowledge (Alavi, 2000). This implies that tacit knowledge is stick to the individual's characteristic more than explicit one. Also, according to the Berman et al(2002), tacit knowledge is absolutely critical part for individual, i.e., an individual will not share his or

her knowledge when the knowledge is regarded as valuable or important.

## **2.2 Motivational Factors**

Knowledge sharing behavior in web 2.0 world can be thought of as volunteered and significant sacrifice of a person. Bloggers or other netizens uploads what they know, what they think, what they feel and even their professional knowledge. Why do they share their own know-how with others? Why do they make sacrifice to the people they do not even know? This situation can be treated as volunteered work. Clary et al(1998) explained volunteered works through 6 motivation factors: values, understanding, social, career, protective, enhancement. They observed volunteer people and attempted to find out what causes people to sacrifice themselves and understand the motivation factors.

Clary et al's motivational functional factors were influenced by Katz (1960) and Smith et al(1956). The value is with regard to the quality of expressiveness functions, concern for others and expressive functions. Understanding is to permit people to obtain new learning experiences and the opportunities to learn and exercise their own knowledge, skills and abilities that might otherwise go unpracticed in the blog. This part was exemplified in the study of Gidron's(1978) with regard to the volunteers in health and mental health institutions. Social concerns to the relationship with others, met through blog. Career is related to the part of something which can be obtained from participation in knowledge sharing. Protective is based on the functional theorizing's traditional concerns with motivations involving processes associated with the functioning of the ego, also related to the defensive work of Katz(1960) and externalization(Smith et al., 1956). According to these previous studies, people have basic instincts with regard to the protection of the ego from negative features of the self and, in the case of uploading knowledge or other stuff. In other words, they have desire to pay back and reduce guilt over being more fortunate than others and to address one's own personal problems.

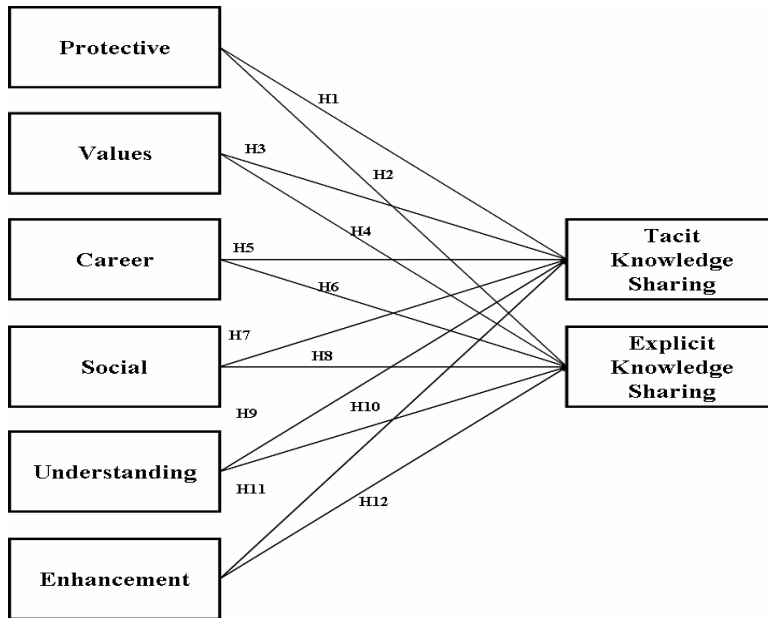
## **III.Model Development**

### **3.1 Research Model**

This study developed model for relationship between 2 types of knowledge sharing and Clary et al's 6 motivation factors on the basis of literature review. The purpose of research model is to clarify the effects of 6 motivational factors to the 2 types of knowledge sharing,

distinguished by Nonaka(1994).

This study has been set up 12 hypotheses, assumed that those will affect to the 2 types of knowledge positively. Following figure shows the relationship among 6 factors with 2 types of knowledge.



<Figure 3.1- Research Model>

## IV. Conclusion

### 4.1 Results

Primary hypothesis of this study was that Clary et al's 6 motivational factors will influence to the knowledge sharing behavior. To assess this predictive procedure, I conducted statistical analysis through PLS. Among 12 hypothesis, 4 of them, protective to tacit knowledge (TK), protective to explicit knowledge(EK), understanding to EK and enhancement to TK, were rejected. Following table shows accepted hypothesis values.

&lt;table 4-1 : Structural Model&gt;

Path	Coefficient	S.E.	t-value	verification
VPR->TK	-0.13	0.12	-1.15	
VPR->EK	-0.05	0.10	-0.54	
VVA->TK	0.40*	0.08	4.89	Accept
VVA->EK	0.29*	0.10	2.87	Accept
VCA->TK	0.3*	0.12	2.47	Accept
VCA->EK	0.35*	0.13	2.69	Accept
VSO->TK	0.13**	0.08	1.96	Accept
VSO->EK	0.15***	0.11	1.36	Accept
VUN->TK	0.17***	0.12	1.48	Accept
VUN->EK	0.05	0.10	0.49	
VEN->TK	0.09	0.10	0.84	
VEN->EK	0.11***	0.11	1.92	Accept

\* significant at 0.01 level, \*\* significant at 0.05 level, \*\*\* significant at 0.1 level

## 4.2 Summary

It is certain that knowledge sharing is critical phenomenon to be concerned in web 2.0 days. Today, people can learn anything they want to know such as recipes or even with regard to the knowledge in the specific field through internet. In this trend, blog has settled down to the major part of Web 2.0 culture. There are various kinds of activities through blog vigorously. Still, people can not recognize how important information they upload is, i.e., they should take the responsibilities for information so that it can be more clear, exact and trust-building.

## 4.3 Contributions

This study verifies the relationship between knowledge sharing behavior and motivation factors through blog in corporation, i.e., contributes to what aspects corporations or organizations should focus on. Corporations can utilize knowledge sharing behavior among employees for achieving better knowledge management or encouraging more flexible interaction inside of company. It is important to figure out what makes employees to take part in the blog activities vigorously. This is the contribution for finding out real motivation factors to knowledge sharing behavior.

#### 4.4 Limitations and Suggestion

This study only concentrated on the IT solution corporations even if it has been running blogs for knowledge sharing among employees. It can be only one industry oriented and only applied one functional model to approach to the phenomenon. It will be better to use and combine with other specific model such as LOV from Kahle(1983) to take a close look at the effects of knowledge sharing behavior in the view of psychologically. LOV measurement was constructed by Kahle(1983) on the basis of preexisting literatures with regard to the value and it is also based on the social-adaptation theory. According to this theory, value can be defined in the abstract form which plays a role to relieve the adaptation ability of human to the environment (Kahle 1983). That is, as the symbolic and abstract form and the effect of social recognition, value contains overall characteristics related to the circumstances suitability of individual and derives the action and attitude of human. Human can judge future condition through the recognition action, ‘value’ and make a decision to act in the condition of above judgment.

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