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Rewards, knowledge sharing and individual work performance: an empirical study

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ABSTRACT

The banking industry is currently striving to adapt to the rapid development of technology, creating competitive advantages through knowledge management activities. This study investigates the impact of rewards on knowledge sharing behavior and its subsequent influence on individual work performance within the banking sector. The research involves analyzing 263 survey responses from employees working in both private and public sector banks. We employ a linear structural model to evaluate the proposed research hypotheses using SPSS and AMOS 20 software. This study shows that rewards solely affect the explicit knowledge sharing. Moreover, both tacit and explicit knowledge sharing significantly and positively contribute to individual work performance. Additionally, the study uncovers the mediating role of explicit knowledge sharing in the relationship between rewards, tacit knowledge sharing, and individual work performance. This study holds significant implications for managers in the banking sector when designing reward systems to foster knowledge sharing (both tacit and explicit) and individual work performance within the organization, particularly in Vietnam.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Knowledge management is becoming increasingly important in knowledge-intensive industries such as banking. This study provides evidence of the relationship between rewards and knowledge sharing behavior in the banking sector in Vietnam. Furthermore, knowledge sharing among employees within an organization contributes to the enhancement of individual work performance. With these findings, the article offers deeper insights into the construction of a reward system in the banking sector to stimulate knowledge-sharing activities and improve individual work performance.

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, there has been a growing interest among researchers in the field of knowledge management. According to Manfredi Latilla et al. (2018) knowledge plays a crucial role in the modern economy and creative industries. As a result, knowledge management has emerged as a potent tool, serving as a crucial organizational resource to enhance overall efficiency (Yeboah, 2023). One essential element of the knowledge management system is knowledge sharing (Asrar-UI-Haq & Anwar, 2016; Yeboah, 2023), which has gained increasing attention from organizations aiming to create, share, and utilize knowledge more effectively (Berraies & Chouiref, 2023; Henttonen et al., 2016; Santhosé & Lawrence, 2023).

The act of sharing knowledge brings several benefits to both organizations and individuals. By transforming personal knowledge into organizational knowledge, knowledge sharing contributes to the organizational growth (Wang & Wang, 2012), while allowing individuals to acquire organizational knowledge and enrich their own knowledge base (Wang & Wang, 2012). Ahmad and Karim (2019) further emphasize that knowledge sharing activities yield advantages not only for the organization but also for the

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individuals engaged in knowledge sharing. Thus, the process of sharing and maintaining knowledge within an organization assumes vital significance, as it facilitates the creation and sustenance of a competitive advantage (Abbas et al., 2020; Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019; Almulhim, 2020; AlMulhim, 2021; Enwereuzor et al., 2023; Sikombe & Phiri, 2019). Al-Faouri (2023) suggests that knowledge-based management is essential for organizational success. Knowledge management can lead to innovation (Abbas et al., 2020) and the integration of innovation with knowledge-sharing activities creates the potential for maximizing profits (Zhang et al., 2022).

According to Wang and Wang (2012) knowledge sharing not only directly helps improve organizational performance but can also be enhanced through intermediaries created by knowledge-sharing activities.

Individuals are the holders and owners of knowledge, therefore, knowledge-sharing activities and the relationships among individuals within an organization contribute to the success of knowledge management (Henttonen et al., 2016). Previous studies, such as Bock and Kim (2002), Chow and Chan (2008), Chang and Chuang (2011), and Henttonen et al. (2016) have emphasized the role of knowledge sharing at the individual level. When individuals share knowledge within an organization, it contributes to the accumulation of knowledge for the organization. Therefore, individuals within the organization who possess, share, and utilize knowledge play a crucial role in the knowledge-sharing activities of the organization.

Some previous studies have explored knowledge sharing behavior at the individual level (Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019; Chang & Chuang, 2011; Zhang et al., 2017). However, the research focus has mainly been on intention or behavior of knowledge sharing (Henttonen et al., 2016), with limited studies examining the consequences of knowledge sharing behavior. Some studies have examined the impact of knowledge sharing behavior on performance at the organizational level (AlMulhim, 2023a, 2023b; Byukusenge & Munene, 2017; Du et al., 2007; Law & Ngai, 2008; Wang & Wang, 2012). Henttonen et al. (2016) and Manaf et al. (2018) argue that there is still a lack of research examining the relationship between knowledge sharing behavior and work performance at the individual level. Therefore, more studies are needed to investigate the relationship between knowledge sharing behavior and performance at the individual level.

The 4th industrial revolution has propelled the rapid development of financial technology, leading to the resurgence of the banking sector and an increased demand for high-quality human resources in this field. It can be stated that the banking industry in Vietnam is a knowledge-intensive sector. According to data from the General Statistics Office, in 2021, the proportion of trained workers aged 15 and above engaged in the 'finance – banking – insurance' sector within the economy was the highest, and this proportion has been steadily increasing over the years, from 82.9% in 2015 to 86.8% in 2021.

In addition, the banking sector is particularly unique, as it requires employees not only to possess excellent knowledge and professional expertise but also to have a deep understanding of various complex legal documents, such as banking laws, civil laws, business laws, land laws, and foreign investment laws. The research findings of Henttonen et al. (2016) demonstrate that the knowledge-sharing activities of highly educated employees contribute to enhancing their work performance. Therefore, selecting employees for research endeavors within the banking sector is appropriate.

Knowledge sharing behavior (KSB) is influenced by various factors: organizational commitment and support (Zaremohzzabieh & Mohd Rasdi, 2023), diversity climate and workplace belongingness (Enwereuzor, 2021), respectful engagement (Enwereuzor et al., 2023), demographical (Nezafati et al., 2023). Building upon the foundation of Blau's Blau (1964) social exchange theory, several studies have examined the influence of reward factors on knowledge-sharing behaviors. Rewards are considered an important factor in promoting knowledge sharing behavior (Kaushal & Nyoni, 2022). However, several studies have shown inconsistent results regarding effects of expected rewards on knowledge sharing behavior (Nguyen & Malik, 2020). In light of previous studies, Muqadas et al. (2017) argue that that increasing rewards for knowledge sharing does not necessarily stimulate knowledge sharing activities. Kaushal and Nyoni (2022) raise the question as to why, to date, there has not been a comprehensive understanding of the reasons why rewards fail to promote knowledge sharing behavior among employees in some cases.

The findings of the analysis by Kaushal and Nyoni (2022) on the relationship between rewards and knowledge sharing behavior, drawing from numerous prior studies, have demonstrated inconsistent

results. This relationship can be positive (Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019; Javaid et al., 2020; Nguyen & Malik, 2020; Rezaei et al., 2023), negative (Hau et al., 2013), or neutral (Hung et al., 2011; Lin, 2007; Zaremohzzabieh & Mohd Rasdi, 2023). Therefore, Ahmad and Karim (2019) suggest that future research should further explore the diverse impacts of different forms of knowledge sharing, such as tacit and explicit knowledge, as they may lead to varying outcomes.

Although the relationship between rewards and knowledge sharing has been examined by several studies, the majority of research has focused on the sharing of explicit knowledge, with few studies investigating the relationship between rewards and the sharing of tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is difficult to share and is more resource-intensive and time-consuming compared to explicit knowledge (Hau et al., 2013). The research findings by Zaremohzzabieh and Mohd Rasdi (2023) demonstrate significant differences in knowledge sharing between groups of knowledge workers and non-knowledge workers. Therefore, exploring the relationship between rewards and the sharing of tacit and explicit knowledge within a model to enhance individual work performance will offer a more comprehensive explanation for the previously identified inconsistency in relationships found in earlier literature. Additionally, the connection between reward systems and Knowledge-Sharing Behavior with Individual Work Performance (IWP) has also remained relatively unexplored in previous studies (Henttonen et al., 2016).

In line with that research direction, we consider knowledge sharing to be divided into two types: explicit knowledge sharing (EKS) and tacit knowledge sharing (TKS) (Wang & Wang, 2012). Abbas, Hussain, et al. (2019) also argue that 'implicit' and 'explicit' knowledge are typical fundamental types of knowledge. The distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge will provide a deeper understanding of the reward system within organizations to stimulate knowledge sharing activities among individuals in a meaningful way. Whether the reward system can incentivize employees' knowledge sharing behavior and subsequently improve individual work performance (IWP) in the banking sector of emerging markets like Vietnam is the driving force behind our study. Furthermore, the relationship between the reward system, KSB, and IWP has been underexplored in previous studies (Henttonen et al., 2016).

In Vietnam, to our knowledge, apart from the study by Nguyen and Malik (2020), there has been no in-depth research specifically examining the relationship between expected rewards, KSB, and IWP in the banking sector. Nguyen and Malik (2020) approach KSB in a general sense without distinguishing between explicit and tacit knowledge sharing.

This study makes significant contributions based on existing literature regarding the relationship between reward systems and KSB with IWP. The article provides a more comprehensive understanding of reward systems for promoting knowledge sharing activities within the knowledge-intensive industry, especially in emerging markets like Vietnam. This research also extends the theoretical understanding of the connection between rewards and both tacit and explicit knowledge sharing, deepening insights into the relationship between rewards and knowledge sharing presented in prior literature.

Furthermore, this work offers insights into mechanisms for enhancing individual work performance through personal knowledge sharing components within the organization. As noted by Henttonen et al. (2016), there remains a lack of research demonstrating the relationship between knowledge sharing and individual work performance. The findings of this study unveil the mediating role of explicit knowledge sharing in the association between implicit knowledge sharing and individual work performance. Lastly, this research provides practical support for the design of appropriate reward systems to foster knowledge-sharing activities and improve individual work performance for employees in the banking sector.

To address this research gap, our study aims to answer the following questions:

Question 1: Do expected rewards stimulate knowledge sharing behavior among individuals in the banking sector of Vietnam?

Question 2: Does knowledge sharing behavior improve individual work performance in the banking sector of Vietnam?

To answer these questions, the study is structured into sections, including literature review; research methodology, model, and hypotheses; research findings and discussions. Finally, the study concludes and discusses implications of the research.

2. Literature review

KSB is influenced by various factors, including individual and organizational factors (Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019; Javaid et al., 2020). In the context of organizational factors, expected rewards are considered an important component in encouraging KSB. Social exchange theory (SET) and social cognitive theory (SCT) are two relevant theories to explain knowledge sharing behavior in organizations (Zaremohzzabieh & Mohd Rasdi, 2023). According to social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), individuals typically compare the benefits and costs associated with engaging in knowledge sharing behavior. Internal and external motivations are also utilized to explain individuals' knowledge sharing behavior within organizations through the reward system. Building upon the motivation theory, Nguyen and Malik (2020) argue that the motivation to share knowledge can also stem from the rewards provided by the organization.

In general, the theoretical framework of Social Exchange Theory (SET) is considered suitable for explaining the relationship between rewards and the knowledge-sharing behavior of individuals within an organization. Social exchange is understood as a two-way transaction, where giving something entails receiving something in return (Islam et al., 2022). According to SET, employees within an organization interact with each other based on their assessment of the benefits and costs to themselves when engaging in that relationship. They will strive to maximize benefits and minimize costs when sharing knowledge with others (Zaremohzzabieh & Mohd Rasdi, 2023). Therefore, rewards incentivize employees to share knowledge with one another within the organization.

Based on the theory of social capital, sharing knowledge among individuals can lead to mutual synergies based on the principle of reciprocity. Henttonen et al. (2016) argue that, within an organization, individuals sharing knowledge often relates to their own expertise, and they also have the capacity to receive relevant knowledge in return. Furthermore, when individuals share knowledge, it generates a significant pool of knowledge and shapes the formal knowledge network within the organization. As a result, employees participating in knowledge sharing can contribute additional skills and knowledge, thereby enhancing their individual work performance.

Knowledge sharing is the process of transferring knowledge to other members of an organization in a manner consistent with decision-making (Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019). Rutten et al. (2016) argue that knowledge sharing reflects the willingness to share with others the knowledge an individual possesses within an organization. Knowledge sharing encompasses both explicit knowledge sharing and tacit knowledge sharing. Tacit knowledge is knowledge that cannot be easily expressed or articulated; it resides within an individual's mind. In contrast to explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge is difficult to codify and transfer through conventional mechanisms such as documents, designs, and procedures. Tacit knowledge stems from personal experience, which is subjective and challenging to systematize. Hau et al. (2013) suggest that explicit knowledge is considered easier to transfer to others. On the other hand, tacit knowledge holds higher value as it relates to direct observation and the behavior of employees and involves more complex ways of acquiring knowledge from others. Therefore, inherently, tacit knowledge is more difficult to share than explicit knowledge.

2.1. Expected rewards and knowledge sharing

The reward refers to the benefits that employees receive when they share knowledge within the organization (Nguyen & Malik, 2020). In this study, the reward structure encompasses both monetary benefits (bonuses, incentives, etc.) and non-monetary benefits (recognition, appraisal, etc.) when employees engage in knowledge sharing within the organization (Javaid et al., 2020).

Expected rewards are considered an important factor influencing KSB. Expected rewards can come from external sources, such as salary increases or monetary bonuses provided to employees based on knowledge sharing, and from internal sources, including recognition and acknowledgment of employees' contributions to the organization. Both expected rewards from external and internal sources play a crucial role in motivating employees to share knowledge (Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019). Kaushal and Nyoni (2022) find that the reward system needs to be used to recognize higher achievements because in such cases, workers feel acknowledged and honored for the contributions they have made. An effective reward system will encourage employees to enhance their efforts in knowledge sharing, leading to improved performance (Nguyen & Malik, 2020).

The positive relationship between expected rewards (RW) and knowledge sharing behavior has been found in previous studies such as Kim and Lee (2006), Seonghee and Boryung (2008) and Cheng et al. (2009). Recent studies including Abdelwhab Ali et al. (2019), Javaid et al. (2020) and Nguyen and Malik (2020) also support the notion that expected rewards have a positive impact on knowledge sharing behavior. However, whether the rewards are sufficient to stimulate employees to share explicit and tacit knowledge is a matter that this research aims to explore, as employees may lose a competitive advantage if they share knowledge with others (Hosen, Chong, et al., 2021; Hosen, Ogbeibu, et al., 2021). Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H1: RW positively influence TKS.

Hypothesis H2: RW positively influence EKS.

2.2. Tacit knowledge sharing and explicit knowledge sharing

Some prior studies have categorized knowledge into two types: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is personal and context-specific, as it relies on subjective perception, intuition, senses, ideas, experience, values, and emotions attached to an individual. Conversely, explicit knowledge refers to knowledge that can be communicated through formal language, is systematic in nature (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Reychav & Weisberg, 2009a).

The conversion from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge has been discussed in the SECI model (Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization) by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995). The transition from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge is based on the process of externalization, which involves expressing hidden knowledge into clear concepts. This process enables individuals to articulate implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge by writing, recording, drawing, or making it concrete and tangible (Reychav & Weisberg, 2009b). Building upon the externalization process (Reychav & Weisberg, 2009b) also argue that employees holding tacit knowledge will have a competitive advantage over others within the organization. Through an exchange relationship, employees share tacit knowledge through externalization to convert it into explicit knowledge for the benefit of the organization. In return, they should receive corresponding rewards as compensation. Therefore, employees who are willing to share tacit knowledge are also likely to be willing to share explicit knowledge.

Based on the theory of rational action, Hau et al. (2013) argue that knowledge sharing among employees is based on a rational consideration of the benefits and costs derived from their knowledge sharing. Tacit knowledge is more difficult to share compared to explicit knowledge, and thus sharing tacit knowledge incurs higher costs than sharing explicit knowledge. Therefore, when employees are willing to share tacit knowledge, which is considered a 'more valuable' type of knowledge, there is no reason for them not to be willing to share explicit knowledge, a type of knowledge that is seen as 'less costly'. This means that employees who are willing to share tacit knowledge are also willing to share explicit knowledge.

Building on the SECI model, Reychav and Weisberg (2009b) examine the relationship between TKS and EKS. They find that employees who are willing to share their tacit knowledge are likely to be willing to share their explicit knowledge in order to receive recognition from the organization in the form of monetary and non-monetary benefits. Their findings are further supported by Hau et al. (2013), which demonstrates a positive relationship between TKS and EKS. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis H3: TKS positively influences EKS.

2.3. Knowledge sharing and individual work performance

Henttonen et al. (2016) offer three possible reasons to explain the relationship between KSB and IWP. First, knowledge sharing is related to an individual's expertise, meaning that knowledge sharing can increase the understanding, complementarity, and expansion of an individual's professional knowledge within the organization. Second, knowledge sharing fosters a sense of cohesion among members within

the organization. Third, based on the principle of reciprocity, individuals who share knowledge are also likely to receive relevant knowledge related to their own work, leading to improved individual job performance. Reyshav and Weisberg (2009a) show that employees can enhance their individual job performance through learning when they share knowledge and leverage resources.

Ahmad and Karim (2019) provide evidence that knowledge sharing enhances effectiveness in task completion, problem-solving, and decision-making, leading to improved employee work performance. Almulhim (2020) suggests that knowledge sharing effectively increases job satisfaction among workers, fosters innovation in their work, and enhances overall worker efficiency. Thus, employees' knowledge sharing not only benefits the organization but also directly benefits themselves. Mutual knowledge-sharing activities among employees will assist them in enhancing their professional expertise and job-related skills, thereby contributing to the improvement of individual work performance.

This relationship is also supported by several previous studies such as Reyshav and Weisberg (2009a), Tseng and Huang (2011), Masa'deh et al. (2016), and Henttonen et al. (2016). Based on this foundation, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis H4: TKS positively influences IWP.

Hypothesis H5: EKS positively influences IWP.

Based on the arguments and hypotheses presented above, the study proposes an expected model as shown in Figure 1.

3. Research methods

3.1. Sample

This study selects the banking industry to investigate because it is facing increasing competitive pressure. Knowledge management activities are emphasized in the context of rapid technological developments. The selected banks for the survey encompass both public and private sectors. The research sample was collected using a convenience sampling method. The study distributed 420 survey questionnaires, and after screening, the final sample size used for this study was 263 responses from employees in the banking industry in Vietnam. The response rate met the requirement, corresponding to a rate of 62.6% of the 263 responses, males accounted for 39.2% and females accounted for 60.8%. The majority of respondents had a university degree, accounting for 72.2% and postgraduate degree accounts for 27.8%. The age distribution was as follows: 21-30 years old accounted for 46%, 31-40 years old accounted for 26.2%, 41-50 years old accounted for 20.5%, and over 50 years old accounted for 7.3%.

Since the survey items were inherited from previous studies originating in English, they were translated into Vietnamese and adapted to suit the research context. The questionnaire items for each structure were reviewed by research experts in the same field to ensure accuracy. To test the clarity of the questionnaire items and ensure the reliability of the measurement scales, a preliminary survey was conducted with 20 Master's students in the finance and banking field who were currently working at commercial banks in Vietnam. After ensuring the clarity of the questionnaire items, the study proceeded with the formal survey.

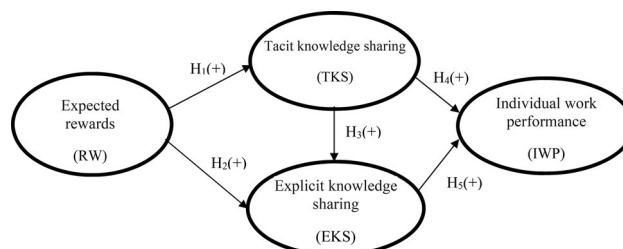


Figure 1. Research model.

3.2. Measurement

The variables in this study are measured using a 5-point Likert scale, where (1) represents 'Strongly Disagree' and (5) represents 'Strongly Agree'. The reliability of the measurement scales is assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

RW: This construct includes 4 observed variables, which is adapted from Abdelwhab Ali et al. (2019) and Javaid et al. (2020). A sample item includes, 'I will receive rewards such as salary increase in return for my knowledge sharing'. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this construct is 0.872.

EKS and TKS: EKS consists of 6 observed variables adopted from Wang and Wang (2012). A sample item includes, 'People in my organization frequently share existing reports and official documents with members of my organization'. When analyzing the Cronbach's alpha for this scale, variable EKS6 (People in my organization are frequently offered a variety of training and development programs) is excluded due to its lower than 0.3 inter-item correlation coefficient. Therefore, the remaining 5 observed variables in this scale have a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.881.

Similarly, the TKS scale consists of 7 observed variables adapted from Wang and Wang (2012). A sample item includes, 'People in my organization frequently share knowledge based on their experience'. One observed variable, TKS7 (People in my organization will share lessons from past failures when they feel necessary), is excluded due to its lower than 0.3 inter-item correlation coefficient. Thus, this scale consists of 6 observed variables with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.906.

IWP: This scale consists of 5 observed variables obtained from Henttonen et al. (2016) and Walumbwa et al. (2008). IWP was measured by asking the respondents to compare their performance, on a scale from 1-5, with that of their colleagues who were doing similar work. A sample item includes, 'How good you are in your work compared to your colleagues'. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this construct is 0.884.

The Linear Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was utilized for analyzing and testing the research hypotheses through the use of SPSS and AMOS software.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Measurement model

To evaluate the measurement model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is conducted. The CFA results are reported as follows: CMIN/df = 2.080; CFI = 0.942; TLI = 0.932; RMSEA = 0.064.

For the RW scale: Cronbach's alpha = 0.872; Composite reliability (CR) = 0.873; Average variance extracted (AVE) = 0.633. For the TKS scale: Cronbach's alpha = 0.906; CR = 0.907; AVE = 0.593. For the EKS scale: Cronbach's alpha = 0.881; CR = 0.882; AVE = 0.600. For the IWP scale: Cronbach's alpha = 0.884; CR = 0.887; AVE = 0.631.

An AVE of 0.5 or greater indicates adequate convergence and a CR value greater than 0.7 indicates the presence of internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014). Based on these results, the constructs demonstrate unidimensionality, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The CFA results indicate that the measurement models fit the data adequately (see Table 1).

To ensure that the Common Method Bias (CMB) does not pose a threat to the validity of the research data, the survey questionnaire was designed in a way that guarantees the anonymity of respondents, ensuring a thorough and accurate response process. Additionally, the study employed Harman's single-factor test to examine issues stemming from CMB through principal component analysis. The results revealed that the first unrotated factor accounted for 32.76% of the variance, which is less than the threshold of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003), and no single factor emerged. These findings suggest that CMB does not appear to be a significant concern affecting the data.

4.2. Structural model

This study employs the structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the model. The analysis results indicate that the indices CMIN/df = 2.069, CFI = 0.942, TLI = 0.933, and RMSEA = 0.064, all met the requirements proposed by Hair et al. (2014). Therefore, the structural model is deemed appropriate.

Table 1. Results of CFA and reliability testing.

Concept	Items	Factor loading (λ)	Cronbach's alpha (α)	CR	AVE
Rewards (RW)			0.872	0.873	0.633
	RW1	0.811			
	RW2	0.783			
	RW3	0.845			
	RW4	0.742			
Explicit knowledge sharing (EKS)			0.881	0.882	0.600
	EKS1	0.889			
	EKS2	0.767			
	EKS3	0.734			
	EKS4	0.712			
	EKS5	0.732			
Tacit knowledge sharing (TKS)			0.906	0.907	0.593
	TKS1	0.807			
	TKS2	0.792			
	TKS3	0.824			
	TKS4	0.771			
	TKS5	0.777			
	TKS6	0.751			
Individual work Performance (IWP)			0.884	0.887	0.631
	IWP1	0.787			
	IWP2	0.866			
	IWP3	0.808			
	IWP4	0.726			
	IWP5	0.702			

Table 2. Structural paths.

Paths	Standardized path coefficients	P -value	Remarks
TKS \leftarrow RW	0.063	0.359	(H ₁) Not Supported
EKS \leftarrow RW	0.430	0.000	(H ₂) Supported
IWP \leftarrow TKS	0.154	0.034	(H ₃) Supported
IWP \leftarrow EKS	0.351	0.000	(H ₄) Supported
EKS \leftarrow TKS	0.421	0.000	(H ₅) Supported

This study consists of five hypotheses, H1 to H5. The hypotheses are tested using SEM and are presented in [Table 2](#).

The results of hypothesis testing indicate that hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5 were all accepted at a significance level of 5%. However, hypothesis H1 does not reach statistical significance. Regarding the mediating effect of EKS on IWP, the analysis reveals that the variables TKS ($\beta_{\text{indirect}}=0.123$; $p<0.05$) indirectly influence IWP through the mediating role of EKS ([Figure 2](#)).

4.3. Discussion

This study finds that RW has a positive influence on EKS, which is supported by previous research such as Tan and Ramayah (2018), Kim and Lee (2006), Javaid et al. (2020), Cheng et al. (2009), and Seonghee and Boryung (2008). However, Hau et al. (2013) show that there are conflicting results regarding the impact of RW on KSB. Specifically, RW can have positive, negative, or not effects on KSB. In this study, we demonstrate that RW positively influences EKS without affecting TKS. This finding is consistent with Hau et al. (2013), which shows a positive impact of RW on EKS. On the other hand, Lin (2007) and Hung et al. (2011) find insignificant effect of RW on KSB. Thus, the inconsistent results between RW and KSB in previous studies could be due to KSB not being divided into TKS and EKS (Hau et al., 2013).

In the context of the fiercely competitive banking industry in Vietnam, rewards can stimulate employees to share knowledge as a temporary compliance due to its recognizability within the organization. Wang and Wang (2012) argue that knowledge sharing can be specifically regulated within an organization if it is widespread, clear, easily understandable, systematized, and easily transmitted. Overall, these findings shed light on the relationship between RW and KSB in the specific context of the study, providing insights into the factors that influence knowledge sharing behaviors in the Vietnamese banking sector.

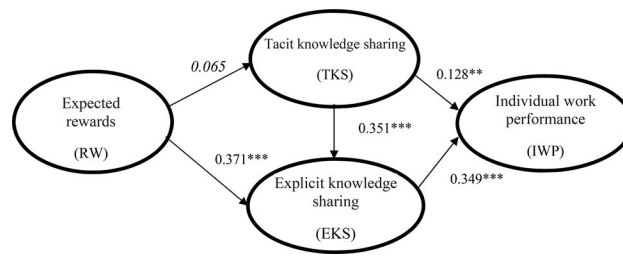


Figure 2. Results of the structural equation model.

Notes: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$.

Meanwhile, TKS is more challenging as it requires direct interaction, and individuals need to be willing to share as well as lacking the contextual cues to apply. Kaushal and Nyoni (2022) report that the awareness of the benefits associated with knowledge sharing is a driving factor for employees' sharing of tacit knowledge. However, Kaushal and Nyoni (2022) also emphasize that not all rewards can incentivize knowledge sharing behavior; it depends on employees' attitudes towards the rewards offered. In line with this viewpoint, Muqadas et al. (2017) argue that even though organizations reward employees for knowledge sharing behavior, knowledge hiding still prevails. The explanation for this contradictory phenomenon lies in the fact that the reward system implemented in the organization fails to meet employees' expectations (Kaushal & Nyoni, 2022). This relates to the emotions or attitudes of employees towards the rewards.

The TKS requires long-term and sustainable commitment from employees. Therefore, the lack of influence of rewards on TKS can be explained by employees' attitudes towards the rewards (Kaushal & Nyoni, 2022). If employees have a positive attitude towards rewards, the reward system in the organization will encourage them to actively share knowledge. However, if they have a negative attitude towards rewards, using rewards to incentivize knowledge sharing will be ineffective (Kaushal & Nyoni, 2022). Nguyen and Malik (2020) argue that when employees share knowledge, they assess what they gain and lose from engaging in that behavior. Therefore, implementing a reward system in the organization that fails to meet employees' expectations will render the rewards ineffective in promoting the TKS. Accordingly, we suggest that using a common reward system to incentivize both EKS and TKS simultaneously is not advisable. Rewards should be tailored to correspond to employees' expectations regarding the sharing of tacit or explicit knowledge.

This study finds that rewards do not effectively stimulate employees to share tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is considered 'valuable' knowledge that is difficult to share (Hau et al., 2013). Therefore, to receive both monetary and non-monetary rewards, employees tend to prioritize sharing explicit knowledge, which is considered 'inexpensive' and easier to communicate (Hau et al., 2013). Employees who possess a significant amount of tacit knowledge are seen as having a competitive advantage (Reychav & Weisberg, 2009b). Hence, if they were to share their tacit knowledge, it could lead to a loss of competitive ability, reduction in advantages, diminished influence, and negatively impact their potential for success in their careers. Hosen et al. (2023) suggest that knowledge is considered a weapon to gain an advantage over others rather than something to be shared. Therefore, tacit knowledge is considered a valuable 'weapon' for enhancing an individual's competitive advantage, and individuals are not inclined to readily share it, even when offered incentives. From a cost-benefit perspective, sharing explicit knowledge becomes more advantageous for employees as it is less costly, more tangible, and easier for supervisors to recognize when evaluating their participation in knowledge-sharing activities. Therefore, employees tend to share explicit knowledge in exchange for rewards (Hau et al., 2013), which is more straightforward and convenient than sharing tacit knowledge.

Sharing tacit knowledge plays a significant role in promoting the sharing of explicit knowledge. Research findings have shown that TKS positively influences EKS. This result aligns with the findings of Reychav and Weisberg (2009a), as well as Hau et al. (2013). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) suggest that tacit knowledge is transformed into explicit knowledge through the process of externalization. That mean if employees are willing to share their tacit knowledge, they are also likely to share more explicit knowledge. Therefore, organizations should pay more attention to how to stimulate the TKS. Reychav and Weisberg (2009b) highlight the importance of externalization in converting tacit knowledge, as it can generate new concepts from tacit knowledge.

The findings of this study further consolidate evidence from a few previous research efforts regarding the relationship between TKS and EKS, as highlighted by Reychav and Weisberg (2009b) and Hau et al. (2013). When employees are willing to share tacit knowledge, there is no reason for them not to share explicit knowledge. Therefore, for knowledge-intensive organizations such as banks, promoting the sharing of tacit knowledge among employees becomes a significant aspect of knowledge management within the organization. Monetary and non-monetary rewards are likely not the focal points that knowledge managers aim for in order to stimulate the sharing of tacit knowledge.

The research findings also demonstrate the positive influence of TKS and EKS on IWP. These results are consistent with the research findings of Reychav and Weisberg (2009a), Henttonen et al. (2016). Reychav and Weisberg (2009a) suggest that employees can learn from sharing knowledge and leverage tacit knowledge to acquire resources, thereby significantly increasing IWP. The positive impact of knowledge sharing on IWP is also acknowledged by many researchers in the field of knowledge management. TKS not only directly influences IWP but also indirectly through the mediator of explicit knowledge. These results highlight the important role of tacit knowledge in enhancing IWP.

TKS may not enhance IWP as effectively as EKS does. However, if employees' sharing of tacit knowledge can be facilitated, it will not only contribute to improving their job performance directly but also play a role in enhancing IWP through the mediating role of EKS. Explicit knowledge is more clear and understandable, thus aiding employees in grasping concepts more swiftly and consequently ameliorating their work performance.

In summary, this research provides a profound understanding of the relationship between rewards, tacit knowledge sharing, explicit knowledge sharing, and employee performance in the field of knowledge-intensive work.

Firstly, the study finds that rewards do not influence employees' behavior in sharing tacit knowledge. This result contributes to filling the gap in previous research regarding the inconsistent relationship between rewards and tacit knowledge sharing behavior. Whether rewards influence knowledge-sharing behavior depends on the type of knowledge that employees hold (either tacit or explicit knowledge). Employees are willing to share explicit knowledge when rewarded, as a responsive behavior based on social exchange theory, because explicit knowledge is standardized and easily shareable (Hau et al., 2013). However, this result has not been explored in the banking sector, making this study a valuable contribution to expanding the understanding of the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and explicit knowledge sharing in the banking domain.

Secondly, this research also indicates that sharing tacit knowledge positively influences the sharing of explicit knowledge. This relationship has been identified in prior studies by Reychav and Weisberg (2009b) and Hau et al. (2013). However, this result has not been explored in the banking sector, making this study a valuable contribution to expanding the understanding of the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and explicit knowledge sharing in the banking domain.

Thirdly, knowledge-sharing behavior can enhance organizational outcomes, as extensively discussed in existing literature. However, the impact of sharing both tacit and explicit knowledge on individual job performance has not been extensively studied (Henttonen et al., 2016; Manaf et al., 2018), particularly in the banking sector. This research demonstrates that both sharing tacit and explicit knowledge have a positive impact on Individual Work Performance. Moreover, the influence of Explicit Knowledge Sharing on IWP is stronger than Tacit Knowledge Sharing, with EKS serving as an intermediate variable in this relationship.

5. Conclusion and implications

5.1. Conclusion

How to enhance the performance of an organization is a topic of considerable research interest (Abbas, Raza, et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2021; Mubeen et al., 2021). Knowledge management is regarded as a critical factor in improving work outcomes and organizational performance (AlMulhim, 2023). Some studies rely on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explain the intention and behavior of knowledge sharing (Hosen et al., 2023), while others draw upon the Social Exchange Theory (Zaremohzzabieh & Mohd Rasdi,

2023). This research is grounded in the framework of the Social Exchange Theory and Social Cognitive Theory to construct the study model.

This study examines the influence of RW on KSB and IWP in the banking sector in Vietnam. The SEM model is used to test the hypotheses with a sample size of 263 banking industry employees. The model conjectures 5 hypotheses, with 4 hypotheses supported and 1 hypothesis unsupported. The study investigates knowledge sharing in two forms, including TKS and EKS. The results show that while RW positively affects EKS, it does not affect TKS. This result complements the evidence of the inconsistency in the relationship between RW and knowledge sharing in previous research. Both TKS and EKS have a positive effect on IWP. Furthermore, EKS acts as an intermediary in the relationship between KST and IWP. The influence of EKS on IWP is stronger than TKS. However, TKS not only directly affects IWP but also exerts an indirect influence through the mediation of EKS. Therefore, promoting tacit knowledge sharing is an important knowledge management activity to enhance IWP. Numerous prior studies have also affirmed that knowledge management activities can promote IWP, innovation behavior, and improve organizational effectiveness (Almulhim, 2020; Manaf et al., 2018; Reyhav & Weisberg, 2009b; Sikombe & Phiri, 2019).

The results indicate that in knowledge-intensive domains such as the banking sector, a reward system will stimulate explicit knowledge sharing activities (Hypothesis 2) but not incentivize tacit knowledge sharing activities (Hypothesis 1). Tacit knowledge sharing positively influences explicit knowledge sharing (Hypothesis 3). Interpersonal knowledge sharing within the organization can lead to individual work performance enhancement (Hypotheses 4 and 5). Among these, explicit knowledge sharing improves individual job performance to a greater extent than tacit knowledge sharing. However, tacit knowledge sharing enhances individual work performance through the mediating role of explicit knowledge sharing.

5.2. Implications

5.2.1. Theoretical implications

The use of rewards by organizations to promote knowledge sharing still yields conflicting results. Some studies suggest that rewards have a positive impact (Abdelwhab Ali et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2009; Javaid et al., 2020; Kim & Lee, 2006; Nguyen & Malik, 2020; Seonghee & Boryung, 2008), while others argue for a negative effect (Bock et al., 2005; Bock & Kim, 2002; Hau et al., 2013; Hau & Kim, 2011; Nguyen & Malik, 2020), or insignificant impact (Nguyen & Malik, 2020; Olatokun & Nwafor, 2012) on KSB. This study contributes to debate on the relationship between RW and KSB, and thereby provides a deeper understanding into the issue.

Within the banking sector in Vietnam, a study by Nguyen and Malik (2020) suggests that the influence of RW on KSB depends on the type of reward (intrinsic and extrinsic) and the organizational type (public and private). Our findings further contribute to the understanding of the relationship between RW and KSB by considering the different types of knowledge sharing (e.g. tacit and explicit). In a knowledge-intensive organization such as a bank, RW does not promote TKS but can only augment EKS. This finding provides a more comprehensive supplementation regarding the relationship between RW and KSB within the context of knowledge-intensive domains, shedding further light on the previously inconsistent outcomes. Furthermore, the relationship between TKS and EKS has not been fully explored in knowledge-intensive sectors like banking. Hence, these results further strengthen the evidence of the relationship between TKS and EKS.

In addition, our research findings confirm the relationship between KSB and IWP. Specifically, EKS plays an important role in mediating the influence of TKS on IWP. In other words, IWP can be enhanced by promoting knowledge sharing activities within the organization, including both EKS and TKS. Furthermore, these results also reaffirm the importance of TKS in transforming into EKS and thereby improving IWP, as shown in Reyhav and Weisberg (2009b).

5.2.2. Practical implications

This research study provides evidence that the construction of a reward system within an organization to promote knowledge sharing needs to be carefully considered. Not all rewards can effectively incentivize knowledge sharing behavior among employees in an organization to the same extent. The reward can incentivize the behavior of sharing employees' explicit knowledge. However, when it comes to the sharing of tacit knowledge, rewards may not have an impact. This indicates that the rewards employees

receive must align with their expectations. In other words, it is important for organizational managers to have a clear understanding of employees' expectations and preferences regarding rewards for the purpose of providing appropriate incentives (Kaushal & Nyoni, 2022) that foster their knowledge sharing activities. In the field of banking, the design of a reward system should only aim to incentivize the sharing of explicit knowledge, rather than using rewards to stimulate the sharing of tacit knowledge. Establishing a system to encourage the sharing of tacit knowledge among employees in the banking sector is essential, as when employees are willing to share tacit knowledge, they are also willing to share explicit knowledge. Sharing knowledge among employees can enhance their individual performance. Furthermore, the design of a reward system geared towards facilitating explicit knowledge sharing plays a crucial role in improving individual work performance. Although sharing tacit knowledge contributes directly less to improving job outcomes compared to sharing explicit knowledge, it has an indirect role in driving job results through the intermediary function of sharing explicit knowledge.

Furthermore, by using an appropriate reward system within the organization, managers can effectively promote knowledge sharing activities, thereby improving IWP and potentially enhancing organizational performance, as concluded by Kaushal and Nyoni (2022). Compared to explicit knowledge, employees may be less willing to share their tacit knowledge. Therefore, establishing mechanisms to externalize and convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge also requires attention.

5.3. Limitations

This study has several limitations that need to be addressed. Firstly, it only focuses on examining rewards as a precursor to knowledge sharing. In addition, rewards are approached in a unidirectional structured form. Therefore, future studies could incorporate multiple precursors of KSB and diversify the types of rewards, such as intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Secondly, this study only examines the consequences of knowledge sharing from an individual perspective and focuses on IWP. Therefore, future research could expand to explore the organizational effectiveness and consider other aspects such as individual creativity and innovative work behavior. Thirdly, this study is also confined to the banking sector in Vietnam. Future research endeavors could explore different fields and various countries to provide the strongest empirical support for the research hypotheses. Fourthly, as this study only focuses on the banking sector, future research could extend to other industries to gain extended insights. Finally, one suggestion for future research is to develop intermediate or moderating variables to examine the relationship between rewards and tacit knowledge sharing. The findings of this study do not support the relationship between rewards and tacit knowledge sharing, suggesting the presence of an intermediate variable in this relationship, such as attitudes toward rewards (Hau et al., 2016) respectful engagement and workplace friendship (Enwereuzor et al., 2023).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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