

BRIDGING THE GAP: ORGANISATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AS A CATALYST FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT FULFILMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Sharmila Jayasingam*

Faculty of Business and Economics, Universiti Malaya

Ravikumar Balu

Faculty of Business and Economics, Universiti Malaya

Muhammad Zia-Ur-Rehman

Department of Leadership and Management Studies, National Defence University, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

This study sets out to investigate the influence of psychological contract fulfilment and organisational identification on knowledge sharing behaviour among knowledge workers. A survey-based study on 233 knowledge workers was conducted to investigate the direct and indirect effect of psychological contract fulfilment. Results show that organisational identification mediates the effect of psychological contract fulfilment on knowledge sharing behaviour. This study highlights the pertinence of fulfilling the underlying expectations of knowledge workers to encourage them to share their valuable knowledge. While numerous studies which employed the social exchange theory (SET) had attempted to identify specific factors that could encourage employee to initiate knowledge sharing, this study focused on the underlying process that could explain why these factors worked in encouraging knowledge sharing. Fundamentally, this study posited that when psychological contracts were not violated, employees tend to identify with their organisations better. Consequently, they share their valuable knowledge with others within the organisation.

Keywords: psychological contract fulfilment; transactional contract; relational contract; perceived supervisory support; organisational identification; knowledge sharing behavior.

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* Corresponding author: Sharmila Jayasingam, Faculty of Business & Economics, Universiti Malaya, 50603, Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 0379673815 E-mail: sharmila@um.edu.my

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, organisations relied on tangible assets like machinery and raw materials for success. However, globalization has shifted economies toward a knowledge-driven paradigm, where intellectual capital and expertise outweigh physical resources (Cahyadi & Magda, 2021). Knowledge, defined as the skills, experiences, and insights of workers, is essential for organisational survival and growth (Hitka et al., 2019; Prusak, 2009; Rowley, 2000). Whether in production or services, effective knowledge utilization is a key determinant of competitiveness (Manab & Aziz, 2019; Chaman et al., 2021). Knowledge sharing creates an environment where people become the driving force of the organisation; it elevates the overall value of the organisation in the market as well as the value of its staff. Therefore, facilitating knowledge sharing within organisations is critical for thriving in a competitive business environment (Al Kashari et al., 2019). Successful knowledge sharing fosters learning, innovation, and performance, ultimately driving value beyond the organisation (Bano et al., 2018; Wang & Wang, 2012).

Despite its importance, knowledge sharing remains a challenge, as employees often hoard knowledge, limiting innovation and efficiency (Bilginoğlu, 2019; Kmieciak, 2021; Muhammed & Zaim, 2020; Silva et al., 2022). Barriers persist, with employees often hoarding knowledge due to unclear motivations (Bilginoğlu, 2019). If unaddressed, knowledge hoarding can undermine organisational success (Hon et al., 2022; Rezaei et al., 2023; Silva et al., 2022; Tran et al., 2021). Past studies had investigated the various factors that could influence knowledge sharing (McGowan et al., 2018; Pedersen & Nowinska, 2019; Chaman et al., 2021). A dominant theme in past research is the role of exchange dynamics in knowledge sharing. Psychological contracts—implicit agreements between employees and employers—shape these exchanges, influencing trust and collaboration (Cullinane, 2006). Psychological contracts significantly influence knowledge sharing across various organisational levels and settings. De Andrade and Benfica (2023) highlight that these contracts impact individuals (micro), internal organisational interactions (meso), and external collaborations (macro). When employees perceive their psychological contracts as fulfilled, they demonstrate increased willingness to share knowledge and collaborate (Pan, 2023). Similarly, Munawir and Suseno (2024) demonstrate that well-established psychological contracts enhance not only knowledge sharing but also employee engagement and organisational performance. Collectively, these studies underline the multifaceted role of psychological contracts in nurturing trust, engagement, and knowledge-sharing practices within organisations.

Psychological contract fulfilment fosters organisational identification, wherein employees align their personal goals with organisational objectives, increasing their willingness to share knowledge (Jiang et al., 2022; Edwards, 2005). In this framework of psychological contract, organisational identification, or the extent to which employees see themselves as part of the organisation, plays a mediating role in this process. The success of an organisation hinges on whether knowledge workers perceive an alignment between their psychological contract and the

practices of the organisation. Relational psychological contract fulfilment, in particular, fosters a sense of ownership and community identification, driving employees to share tacit knowledge and collaborate creatively (Jiang et al., 2022). While psychological contract fulfilment has been widely linked to employee engagement, its role in facilitating knowledge sharing through organisational identification remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap, examining how fulfilling implicit expectations fosters belongingness, ultimately driving collaborative knowledge-sharing practices in knowledge-driven organisations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws on social exchange theory (SET) and self-determination theory (SDT) to explain how psychological contract fulfilment and organisational identification drive knowledge sharing. SET posits that workplace relationships are based on reciprocal exchanges of trust, resources, and obligations (Blau, 1964). When employees feel their implicit expectations—such as fair treatment, career growth, and support—are met, they are more likely to reciprocate through behaviours that benefit the organisation, including knowledge sharing. This process is discretionary and influenced by trust and perceived fairness, motivating employees to contribute their expertise for collective success. Conversely, when psychological contracts are breached, employees may withhold knowledge or disengage from organisational objectives (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Thus, SET highlights the importance of maintaining reciprocal relationships between employees and employers to foster a culture of trust and collaboration, which is essential for effective knowledge sharing.

Building on SET, this study incorporates SDT to explain how psychological contract fulfilment fosters intrinsic motivation for knowledge sharing. SDT posits that employees are more likely to engage in knowledge sharing when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Psychological contract fulfilment supports these needs by signalling organisational support and recognition. Employees who feel empowered and valued (autonomy) share knowledge freely, while those with a strong sense of mastery (competence) confidently contribute their expertise. Additionally, supportive relationships (relatedness) foster a sense of belonging, further encouraging collaboration and knowledge exchange.

In a nutshell, this study proposes that organisational identification fosters unity, particularly among knowledge workers. When their psychological contract is fulfilled, employees see themselves as integral to the organisation, encouraging open knowledge sharing in a supportive environment. This study examines the concept of psychological contract which encompasses its essential elements that serve as significant antecedents of knowledge sharing. The concept of organisational identification is used as a mediating variable. Existing research lacks insight into this mediating role, highlighting a clear gap. To address this, the study focuses on the transactional, relational, and supervisory support aspects of psychological contracts. The findings aim to uncover key but underexplored factors influencing knowledge sharing. Figure 1 illustrates this framework.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework



2.1. Psychological Contract

Chris Argyris introduced the concept of psychological contract in 1960, and Rousseau highlighted it in a 1989 seminal article. Since then, its importance has grown significantly. In business, it refers to the mutual perception shared by employees and employers, encompassing beliefs, expectations, aspirations, and obligations (Rousseau, 1998).

Psychological contracts can be various types, with relational and transactional being primary (Coyle-Shapiro & Parzefall, 2008). Rooted in expectations, the quality of relationships improves when individuals meet each other's demands (Paul et al., 2000). This principle applies to both formal written and psychological contracts. The four subcategories are transactional, balanced, transitional, and relational, all of which need effective establishment and fulfilment within organisations (Hui et al., 2004).

The first type, transactional contracts, involve short-term engagements with specific economic contributions (Aggarwal et al., 2010). They are characterized by limited job opportunities, short durations, and narrow responsibilities. Employees may seek other opportunities if they feel the terms are unmet (McDonald et al., 2000). Next, relational contracts are long-term and characterized by non-specific performance and reward contingencies. They rely on mutual expectations or open-ended arrangements, covering economic, social, and emotional aspects (De Meuse et al., 2001). Finally, balanced psychological contracts combine elements of relational and transactional contracts. They involve rewards for specific performance contingencies, open-

ended time frames, and relational aspects based on mutual understanding. This type of contract allows for renegotiations (Ntalianis & Dyer, 2021).

This study adopts the conceptualization of psychological contract fulfilment by Harrington and Lee (2015). Besides adopting transactional and relational contract, they included perceived supervisory support as a component of psychological contract fulfilment based on evidence from other scholars who considered perceived organisational support as a component of psychological contract fulfilment (Harrington & Lee, 2015).

2.2. Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge sharing involves exchanging information, experiences, and skills, allowing employees to contribute their expertise to others, improving productivity and problem-solving (Ipe, 2003). Explicit knowledge is easier to share, while tacit knowledge—rooted in personal experiences—requires greater effort and suitable mediums (Chilton, 2008). Sharing tacit knowledge can be challenging, as it demands individuals to articulate personal insights, influenced by motivation, attitudes, and behaviours (Koskinen et al., 2003). It can also feel intimidating, as it relies on shared experiences and deeply held expertise (Saari & Koivunen, 2022).

On the contrary, when employees, especially knowledge workers, feel a strong sense of association and unity with their organisations, knowledge sharing becomes easier. The relationship between employees and the organisation is like that of individuals and their family, built on interdependence and psychological expectations (Pattnaik et al., 2018). Creating an environment of trust, positive perceptions, and high expectations is essential (Holste et al., 2010; Räisänen et al., 2021). In such a setting, individuals share knowledge based on a cost-benefit assessment of their relationship with the organisation, aiming to maximize rewards (Liang et al., 2008).

Given its strategic importance, this study focuses on tacit knowledge sharing, recognizing its challenges in codification and extraction (Chen & Mohamed, 2010; Azeem et al., 2021). Research shows employees often hesitate to share knowledge, with some tending to hoard it (Bilginoğlu, 2019; Oliveira et al., 2021). This study explores factors influencing tacit knowledge sharing, emphasizing psychological contract fulfilment and organisational identification in overcoming these barriers.

3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Psychological Contract Fulfilment and Knowledge Sharing

While knowledge sharing is beneficial, its effectiveness relies on the individuals' willingness to disclose and share information (Bollinger & Smith, 2001). Employees who trust their organisations tend to share more knowledge because they feel that their expectations are met.

Individuals, particularly knowledge workers who seek motivation and fulfilment (Lam & Lambermont-Ford., 2010), are more inclined to engage in knowledge sharing. This inclination is influenced by their psychological contract. Research suggests that knowledge workers can be motivated to share knowledge not only through tangible rewards but also through intangible psychological incentives which can enhance their motivation to improve outcomes. Knowledge sharing is a key aspect for knowledge workers (Wang & Noe, 2010; Hammouri et al., 2022) whose psychological contract had been fulfilled. In this regard, even the slightest perception of psychological contract breach can quickly be translated into a hoarding of knowledge. This implies that organisations need to make it their goal to fulfil the psychological contracts of their employees. Organisations can achieve this goal by establishing an environment of trust where employees fulfil their obligations based on the support their organisations provide in accomplishing their outcomes (Kotter, 1973; Hammouri et al., 2022). The current study thus relies on the SET and SDT as the theoretical framework in proposing that psychological contract fulfilment can lead to effective knowledge sharing in organisations. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H1. Psychological contract fulfilment has a positive and significant impact on knowledge sharing.

3.2. Psychological Contract Fulfilment and Organisational Identification

Psychological contracts and organisational identification are deeply interconnected, particularly when examining the effects of psychological contract breaches. Psychological contracts refer to the unwritten expectations and obligations between employees and their organisation, while organisational identification reflects the sense of unity, affiliation, and belonging that employees feel toward their organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). When employees identify strongly with their organisation, they perceive themselves as integral members, aligning their personal values, goals, and missions with those of the organisation (Mazumder et al., 2021).

Knowledge workers, who bring specialized expertise and skills, vary in their level of organisational identification based on individual differences, such as beliefs, values, perspectives, and personalities (Kucharska et al., 2016; Kucharska, 2017). For organisations, fostering strong organisational identification is crucial. This is achieved by encouraging employees to adopt the organisation's goals and values, instilling a sense of shared purpose and cohesiveness. When organisational identification is strong, employees collaborate effectively, working together toward common objectives. In such cases, the organisation functions as a unified entity, akin to a single cohesive team (Brown, 2017).

However, organisational identification is highly sensitive to trust and mutual expectations, which are foundational to the psychological contract (Horwitz et al., 2000). When psychological contracts are breached—meaning employees perceive that the organisation has failed to fulfil its implicit promises—trust is eroded, and the sense of belonging weakens. Employees who strongly

identify with the organisation are particularly affected by such breaches, often leading to disengagement and withdrawal from their roles (Liu et al., 2020).

For employees who already experience a weaker sense of organisational identification, a breach in the psychological contract makes it even more challenging to strengthen their connection to the organisation. Conversely, when psychological contracts are fulfilled, employees are more likely to trust the organisation, align with its goals, and feel a stronger sense of belonging. Research consistently shows that fulfilling psychological contracts strengthens organisational identification and reduces organisational disidentification, where employees actively distance themselves from their organisation (Tufan et al., 2020; Rogozińska et al., 2022).

This relationship highlights the importance of psychological contract fulfilment as a driver of organisational identification. When organisations meet employees' expectations, they not only build trust but also foster a deeper emotional connection, leading to stronger identification and collaboration. Based on this understanding, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2. Psychological contract fulfilment has a positive impact on organisational identification.

3.3. Organisational Identification and Knowledge Sharing

Organisational identification matters particularly in the real world, where organisations face a competitive environment (Ashfort et al., 2008), particularly in the context of knowledge sharing. When employees strongly identify with their organisation, they perceive themselves as integral members, fostering a sense of belonging and unity (Zhu, 2016). This feeling of "oneness" encourages employees to engage in collaborative behaviours, making knowledge sharing more natural and effortless. In environments where employees feel connected to their organisation's values, mission, and goals, they are more likely to view knowledge sharing as a collective responsibility rather than an individual task. Low organisational identification may lead to various repercussions, including low serving behavior, low motivation, detachment, less attention to details, more need to monitor and control their job and disengagement (Wegge, 2006), thereby causing an end to knowledge sharing. On the other hand, high organisational identification is associated with a whole range of positive outcomes including self-serving behavior, self-motivation, and more autonomy, trust and caring attitude (Bacaksiz, 2017; Bednar et al., 2020). Research shows that people in organisations with high organisational identification are more likely to be committed and helpful to the organisations, and to other employees as well (Wilkins, 2018). This sense of mutual support and commitment creates a culture where knowledge sharing becomes an organic process rather than a forced obligation. Based on this argument, the following hypothesis was suggested.

H3. Organisational identification has a positive and significant impact on knowledge sharing.

3.4. *Meditating role of Organisational Identification*

Knowledge sharing is a voluntary effort that is significantly influenced by trust and the perception of fairness within the organisation. These factors are deeply connected to the fulfilment of psychological contracts, which reflect the implicit agreements between employees and their organisations. Drawing upon the framework of SET, knowledge sharing can be understood as a form of reciprocal behavior, where employees engage in collaborative efforts when they perceive a favourable cost-benefit balance within their organisational relationships. Fulfilled psychological contracts strengthen this dynamic by building trust and signalling that the organisation values and respects its employees, thereby motivating them to share their expertise and skills. This notion also aligns closely with SDT, which posits that fulfilling the psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness motivates individuals to engage in positive behaviours like knowledge sharing. Trust and fairness contribute to these needs by fostering a sense of belonging (relatedness), enabling employees to feel capable in their roles (competence), and providing the freedom to share knowledge without fear of judgment or coercion (autonomy). Together, these factors create an environment where knowledge sharing becomes an intrinsically motivated behavior rather than an obligation.

While workers who perceive their psychological contract as fulfilled contribute to fostering a knowledge-sharing environment, the practice of knowledge sharing remains a complex and challenging task. Past studies have identified the social dilemma inherent in this process within organisational contexts, where employees may weigh the benefits of sharing knowledge against potential risks, such as loss of personal advantage (Halisah et al., 2021). These studies emphasize the need to explore additional variables that influence knowledge sharing alongside psychological contract fulfilment (Halisah et al., 2021).

One such variable is organisational identification, which has emerged as a critical factor in addressing these challenges. When employees—particularly knowledge workers—develop a strong sense of alignment and unity with their organisation, organisational identification is established. This identification fosters a sense of belonging and shared purpose, encouraging employees to move beyond individualistic tendencies like knowledge hoarding and instead actively share their expertise, skills, and experiences. In doing so, knowledge flows more freely within the organisation, enabling the creation of high-quality products and value-driven services.

The role of organisational identification aligns closely with SDT, which highlights that fulfilling employees' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness strengthens their intrinsic motivation to engage in collaborative behaviours such as knowledge sharing. Trust and fairness derived from psychological contract fulfilment further enhance these psychological needs, reinforcing employees' sense of organisational identification. This alignment transforms knowledge sharing into an intrinsically motivated behavior, reducing the social dilemma and fostering collaboration.

Building on previous research (e.g., Zulfiqar et al., 2021), this study proposes that organisational identification mediates the relationship between the fulfilment of the psychological contract and knowledge sharing. By understanding how organisational identification bridges the gap between psychological contract fulfilment and knowledge sharing, organisations can better address the barriers to knowledge sharing and create environments where collaboration thrives. Thus, the following hypothesis was projected:

H4. Organisational identification mediates the effect of psychological contract fulfilment and knowledge sharing

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Research Site, Participants, and Procedure

The population of this study focused on knowledge workers who are defined as a group of people with high degrees of capability, education, or experience (Davenport, 2005). The knowledge worker's job includes the creation, sharing, or application of knowledge. Therefore, they are expected to be intensely involved in knowledge work that encompasses knowledge sharing and possess the insights relevant to this research. Thus, the population of this study focused on knowledge workers from both service and manufacturing sector in Malaysian private industries so that the findings derived can be generalized. As there is no available list of knowledge workers in Malaysia available for random sampling, this study employed convenience sampling and snowballing method to recruit the required number of participants. Initial respondents were identified through professional networks as well as personal contacts. Potential respondents were first asked if their jobs involved any form of knowledge creation, sharing or application. Only those workers whose jobs involved a certain level of knowledge work were invited to participate. These respondents were then requested to recommend their contacts or share the survey link with their professional.

G*Power was used to calculate the minimum sample size required for this study. With an effect size of 0.15 and power of 0.95, a sample size of 129 was recommended. 400 surveys were distributed taking into consideration possible low response rate. A total of 233 usable surveys were finally received for final data analyses. Respondents were mostly within the age group of 25 to 35 years old (44.6%) followed by those between 26 to 45 years old (37.8%). There was a slightly higher proportion of female participants (53.6%). In term of job designations, 115 participants were at the executive level (49.4%) followed by others who were at the senior level and above. Most respondents (74.7%) were degree holders (bachelor's degree and above), and this reflected their education level. Participants had six (6) or more years of experience (61.1%), with others having from one (1) to five (5) years of experience (38.9%).

4.2. Instrument

A four-part survey was used to gather data from the knowledge workers. In addition to demographic information, the survey included psychological contract fulfilment, organisational identification and knowledge sharing scales. While data was collected from a single source of data, deliberate attempts were made based on recommendations provided by Podsakoff et al., (2003) to minimize any common method bias. The scale for each construct was presented in separate sections and participants were assured that there was no right or wrong answer.

4.2.1. Psychological contract fulfilment

Psychological contract fulfilment scale was adapted from the work of Harrington and Lee (2015). The scale consists of a total 18 items which encompasses relational contracts (RC) – 6 items, transactional contracts (TC) – 6 items, and perceived supervisory support (PSS) – 6 items. The 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree against each statement. Sample items include, “I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organisation” (relational contract); “In my work unit, differences in performance are recognised in a meaningful way” (transactional contract); and “My supervisor/team leader provides me with constructive suggestions to improve my job performance” (supervisory support).

4.2.2. Organisational identification

Organisational identification (OI) consists of 4 items which were measured using the 5-point Likert scale ranging between 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. These items were adapted from the work of Lee (2004). This scale has been validated in past studies with a reported reliability value of 0.82 (Lee, 2004). Sample item includes, “The company goals are my own goals”.

4.2.3. Knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing was defined as individual behaviours that involved sharing task-related ideas and information with others within the organisation including co-workers and supervisors, a practice that facilitates the accomplishment of organisational effectiveness (Hitka et al., 2019). This practice was measured using the scale developed by Yi (2009). It contains 4 dimensions of knowledge sharing - written contributions (WC) – 5 items, organisational communications (OC) – 8 items, personal interactions (PI) – 8 items, and communities of practice (CP) – 7 items. The construct was measured through a total of 28 items which have good reliability (0.91). Sample items include, “I publish papers in company journals, magazines, or newsletter” (written contribution); “I express ideas and thoughts in organisational meetings” (organisational communication); “I support less-experienced colleagues with time from personal schedule” (personal interaction); and “I meet with community members to create innovative solutions for problems that occur in work” (communities of practice). To ensure that participants were able to understand the conceptualisation of communities of practice, a working definition was thus

provided to participants. In a nutshell, ‘communities of practice’ was defined as an informal network of people within or across organisations who voluntarily share common practices, expertise, and interests on specific topics. It is neither an organisational unit nor a team.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Data Analysis

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS v.4 (Ringle et al., 2022) was applied to create the causative predictions (Shmueli et al., 2019). This equation has been used previously to analyse complex models (Cheah et al., 2021). To rule out the possible risk of common method bias, the random dependent variable approach was utilised. The VIFs in the inner model were all less than 3.3 as proposed by Kock (2015). Therefore, the model was deemed to be free of common method bias.

5.2. Measurement model

The measures employed in this study were initially subjected to confirmatory factor analysis so as to examine the psychometric properties of the measures. As recommended by Hair et al. (2022), convergent validity was established by referring to the values of factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). This study conceptualized psychological contract fulfilment and knowledge sharing behavior as second-order constructs. The AVEs were all greater than 0.5, and the CRs were above 0.7 (refer to Table 1), thus, establishing that the measurements were valid and reliable (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 1: Measurement Model

First-order constructs	Second-order constructs	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Relational contract (RC)		RC1	0.796	0.918	0.653
		RC2	0.819		
		RC3	0.859		
		RC4	0.820		
		RC5	0.774		
		RC6	0.776		
Transactional contract (TC)		TC1	0.814	0.927	0.680
		TC2	0.846		
		TC3	0.813		
		TC4	0.809		
		TC5	0.830		
		TC6	0.833		
Perceived Supervisory support (PSS)	Psychological contract fulfilment (PC)	PSS1	0.812	0.941	0.727
		PSS2	0.862		
		PSS3	0.867		
		PSS4	0.876		
		PSS5	0.875		
		PSS6	0.822		
Organisational Identification (OI)		RC	0.847	0.948	0.504
		TC	0.869		
		PSS	0.855		
		OI1	0.848		
		OI2	0.902		
		OI3	0.921		
Written contribution (WC)		OI4	0.868	0.935	0.784
		WC1	0.647		
		WC2	0.852		
		WC3	0.870		
		WC4	0.884		
		WC5	0.875		
Organisational Communications (OC)		OC1	0.844	0.944	0.680
		OC2	0.843		
		OC3	0.849		
		OC4	0.830		
		OC5	0.834		
		OC6	0.808		
		OC7	0.839		
		OC8	0.744		

Personal Interactions (PI)	Knowledge sharing behavior (KSB)	PI1	0.713	0.918	0.585
		PI2	0.757		
		PI3	0.827		
		PI4	0.811		
		PI5	0.770		
		PI6	0.764		
		PI7	0.713		
		PI8	0.756		
Communities of Practices (CoP)		CP1	0.843	0.951	0.736
		CP2	0.866		
		CP3	0.870		
		CP4	0.896		
		CP5	0.857		
		CP6	0.850		
		CP7	0.824		
		WC	0.840	0.866	0.620
		OC	0.807		
		PI	0.831		
		CoP	0.658		

As part of the validation process, the distinctiveness of the model was tested, and the discriminant validity was also verified by referring to the HTMT criterion (Franke & Sarstedt, 2019). The HTMT ratios should be lower than 0.90. The HTMT values presented in Table 2 indicate that the variables were distinct, and there were no issues with discriminant validity.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity – Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	PC	OI	KSB
Psychological contract (PC)			
Organisational Identification (OI)	0.710		
Knowledge Sharing Behavior (KSB)	0.563	0.627	

5.3. Structural model

Data were not multivariate normally distributed. Hence, a bootstrap resamples of 10000 was conducted to test the structural model and hypotheses of the study (Becker et al., 2023). The R^2 for Organisation Identification (OI) was 0.437, implying that Psychological Contract Fulfilment (PC) explained 43.7% of the variance in OI. The R^2 for knowledge sharing behavior (KSB) was 0.326 which showed that 32.6% of the variance was explained together by PC and OI.

PC was positively related to KSB ($\beta = 0.247$, $p < 0.01$) and OI ($\beta = 0.661$, $p < 0.000$). OI was also positively related to KSB ($\beta = 0.376$, $p < 0.000$). Hence, H1, H2, and H3 were supported. Next,

the mediating effect of OI on the PC and KSB relationship was tested. The results showed that the confidence intervals did not straddle a 0, and OI was a significant mediator ($\beta = 0.249$, $p < 0.000$) with medium effect size (v^2) for the above-mentioned relationship. Table 3 illustrates.

Table 3: Hypotheses Testing

To test for predictive power, the guidelines of Shmueli et al. (2019) were followed by running a PLS-Predict analysis with a 10-fold and 10-repetition analysis (see Table 4). The Q^2 value was found to be positive, indicating that the prediction error of the PLS-SEM results was lesser than the prediction error of using mean values. Based on the guidelines, most of the errors of the PLS

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Dev.	t-value	p-value	BCI LL	BCI UL	f^2/v^2
H1	PC \rightarrow KSB	0.247	0.080	3.080	0.002	0.097	0.412	0.051
H2	PC \rightarrow OI	0.661	0.043	15.292	0.000	0.571	0.739	0.777
H3	OI \rightarrow KSB	0.376	0.078	4.834	0.000	0.219	0.527	0.118
H4	PC \rightarrow OI \rightarrow KSB	0.249	0.054	4.642	0.000	0.145	0.356	0.062

model (RMSE and MAE) were all found to be lower than the errors given by the Linear Model (LM). Hence, it was concluded that the model used in this study has a relatively strong predictive power.

Table 4: PLS-Predict

		PLS		LM		PLS - LM	
	Q^2 Predict	RMSE	MAE	RMSE	MAE	RMSE	MAE
CP	0.071	0.968	0.779	1.019	0.812	-0.051	-0.033
OC	0.158	0.922	0.684	0.952	0.71	-0.03	-0.026
PI	0.137	0.933	0.74	1	0.756	-0.067	-0.016
WC	0.212	0.891	0.704	0.886	0.681	0.005	0.023

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1. Implications for Theory and Practice

This study investigated the influence of psychological contract fulfilment on knowledge workers' knowledge-sharing behavior, incorporating both SET and SDT. While previous research focused on factors like trust, fairness, and organisational rewards, this study delved into the underlying mechanisms motivating knowledge sharing. SDT was included to explore motivational dynamics, emphasizing that fulfilling employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness enhances intrinsic motivation, driving discretionary behaviours like knowledge

sharing. Integrating SDT provided a complementary lens to SET, explaining how intrinsic motivations interact with psychological contract fulfilment to shape knowledge-sharing behavior.

Fundamentally, this study posited that when psychological contracts are fulfilled, employees develop a stronger sense of trust and loyalty toward their organisations, reducing feelings of betrayal or disengagement. This trust fosters a deeper connection between employees and their organisations, leading to stronger organisational identification—a sense of unity and belonging that aligns employees' personal goals with organisational objectives. Employees who identify strongly with their organisations are more likely to feel responsible for its success and are thus motivated to share their valuable knowledge and expertise with others in the organisation.

As hypothesized, organisational identification promotes greater extent of knowledge sharing among employees on its own; it also mediates the effect of psychological contract fulfilment on knowledge sharing behaviour. SET underscores the reciprocal nature of organisational relationships—where fulfilled expectations lead to employees reciprocating with positive behaviours. Individuals engaged in social interactions with others with the expectation of receiving benefits and avoiding costs. In the context of the employment relationship, employees exchanged their time, efforts, and skills in exchange for various benefits, such as a salary, job security, and career development opportunities. Thus, the fulfilment of their psychological contract is a key determinant of the quality of the exchange relationship between employees and employers. When an employer fulfils the psychological contract of the employee, the employee perceives that the employer is trustworthy, hence he/she reciprocates their contributions.

Similarly, SDT highlights the role of intrinsic psychological needs in creating a sustained motivation to share knowledge. Employees are more likely to share knowledge when they feel they have the autonomy to make decisions and contribute freely, without coercion or excessive supervision. The fulfilment of the psychological contract plays a critical role in nurturing this autonomy, as it signals trust and respect from the organisation. When these contracts are honoured, employees not only feel validated and competent but also develop a stronger sense of identification with the organisation. This alignment with the organisation's values and goals enhances their emotional attachment, making them more inclined to engage in behaviours that benefit the organisation, such as knowledge sharing. As employees experience trust, respect, and autonomy, they internalize the organisation's success as their own. Their sense of competence and relatedness within the organisation deepens their identification with it, fostering a stronger commitment to the collective success. This identification then acts as a bridge, motivating them to share their knowledge because they see it as contributing to the organisation's larger mission.

In essence, employees would return the benefits received from the employers by engaging in behaviours that benefit the organisation such as knowledge sharing. Research has shown that when employees perceive that their psychological contract was being fulfilled, they were more likely to engage in knowledge sharing behaviours (Liu et al., 2010; Zheng et al., 2010). This relationship can be explained by organisational identification. When employees identify strongly with their organisations, they were more likely to engage in behaviours that benefit the

organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Organisational identification also influenced the extent to which employees sense the obligation to reciprocate when their psychological contract was fulfilled (Chen et al., 2013).

The practical implications of the study's findings highlight several key takeaways that can be directly applied to real-world scenarios. The insights gained from the research offer actionable strategies that practitioners can use to promote psychological contract fulfilment and improve knowledge sharing. For instance, organisations can foster a culture of open communication where employees feel valued and trusted. In addition, organisations should aim to create opportunities for employees to be involved in decision-making processes, which aligns their expectations with organisational goals, and contributing to psychological contract fulfilment. Furthermore, organisations should ensure rewards and recognition align with the fulfilment of the psychological contract, offering employees tangible benefits such as career development opportunities, promotions, and financial rewards. While the study is unable to outline specific strategies to be adopted by organisations, the fundamental notion of prioritizing psychological contract fulfilment by understanding the needs of the knowledge workers and fostering organisational identification is of practical relevance in the present era.

In a nutshell, organisational identification is key to the relationship between psychological contract fulfilment and knowledge sharing. Employers can enhance knowledge sharing by fostering organisational identification and fulfilling employees' psychological contracts. Understanding this is crucial for the social exchange relationship, leading to positive outcomes for both parties. This environment helps retain valuable knowledge through knowledge sharing.

6.2. Potential Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

This study has limitations. Being cross-sectional and relying on a single data source, it risks common method bias, potentially inflating correlations and compromising validity. However, precautions were taken to minimize this risk. Future research should consider longitudinal or experimental designs to enhance generalizability.

Secondly, this study did not differentiate knowledge workers by their level of knowledge work, limiting a nuanced understanding of their roles and contributions. Distinguishing knowledge levels enables organisations to tailor psychological contract fulfilment strategies. For example, senior knowledge workers may benefit from mentoring and leadership opportunities, optimizing knowledge sharing (Holste & Fields, 2010).

Finally, this study is based on the Malaysian context. Cultural factors, such as collectivism, power distance, and communication styles which can influence knowledge sharing behaviours may vary among cultures. Thus, comparative studies could be conducted across different countries so as to have a broader understanding of knowledge sharing practices.

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