

Factors Influencing Knowledge Sharing in Information Technology Projects¹

Tony Jewels, Queensland University of Technology

Marilyn Ford, Griffith University

ABSTRACT

Even though today's corporations recognize they need to understand modern project management techniques, many researchers continue to provide evidence of poor success in information technology (IT) projects. Given that project performance is known to be positively associated with project knowledge, a better understanding of how to effectively manage knowledge in IT projects should have considerable practical significance for increasing the chances of project success. Using a combined qualitative/quantitative method of data collection in multiple case studies spanning four continents and comprising a variety of organizational types, the focus of this current research centered on the question of why individuals working within IT project teams might be motivated towards, or inhibited from, sharing their knowledge and experience in their activities, procedures, and processes. The research concluded with the development of a new theoretical model of knowledge sharing behavior, the Alignment Model of Motivational Focus. This model suggests that an individual's propensity to share knowledge and experience is a function of perceived personal benefits and costs associated with the activity, balanced against the individual's alignment to a group of institutional factors. These factors are identified as alignments to the project team, to the organization, and, dependent on the circumstances, to either the professional discipline or community of practice to which the individual belongs.

Keywords: Knowledge sharing, IT project management, Theory of planned behavior, Motivators and inhibitors.

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