

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING AMONG EMPLOYEES IN NIGERIAN BANKS

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of organizational culture on knowledge sharing among employees in selected Nigerian banks, focusing on United Bank for Africa and Fidelity Bank in Anambra and Enugu States. A descriptive survey design was employed with a sample of 180 respondents. Organizational culture was measured using trust culture, communication openness, leadership support, reward system, and teamwork orientation, while knowledge sharing was treated as a composite index. Descriptive results showed mean scores of 3.74 for trust culture, 3.68 for communication openness, 3.71 for leadership support, 3.55 for reward system, 3.80 for teamwork orientation, and 3.62 for knowledge sharing. Pearson correlation coefficients indicated

significant positive relationships between culture dimensions and knowledge sharing, ranging from $r = 0.497$ to $r = 0.573$ at $p < 0.05$. Multiple regression analysis revealed that organizational culture significantly predicts knowledge sharing with $R = 0.742$ and R square = 0.551, implying that 55.1 percent of the variation in knowledge sharing is explained by the model, $F(5,174) = 43.812$, $p < 0.05$. Teamwork orientation (Beta = 0.301) and communication openness (Beta = 0.279) emerged as the strongest predictors, while reward system had the least effect (Beta = 0.187). The study concludes that strengthening collaborative and open cultural practices is essential for enhancing knowledge sharing in Nigerian banks.

Keywords

Organizational Culture, Knowledge Sharing, Trust Culture, Communication Openness, Teamwork Orientation,

Introduction

Organizational culture has increasingly been recognized as one of the most consequential internal conditions shaping how employees behave, collaborate, interpret expectations, and exchange valuable knowledge within the workplace. In contemporary organizations, knowledge is no longer viewed merely as an individual asset held by employees in isolation; rather, it is understood as a strategic organizational resource that gains value when it is shared, interpreted, applied, and continuously refined through interaction. This reality is especially significant in a competitive and turbulent business environment such as Nigeria, where banks often operate amid infrastructural constraints, institutional uncertainties, evolving market pressures, and persistent demands for innovation and adaptability. Under such conditions, the ability of employees to share knowledge effectively can determine whether organizations solve problems quickly, retain institutional memory, reduce duplicated effort, improve service quality, and sustain long term performance. Yet knowledge sharing rarely occurs automatically. Employees may possess useful insights, procedural know how, customer intelligence, and experiential lessons, but the willingness to exchange these with colleagues often depends on the cultural environment in which they work. Where trust is low, power distance is excessively rigid, communication is restricted, or competition among staff is unhealthy, knowledge tends to become hoarded rather than circulated. By contrast, where the culture promotes openness, collaboration, recognition, mutual respect, and a sense of shared purpose, employees are more likely to contribute what they know for collective benefit. Scholars have consistently argued that organizational culture functions as the invisible social architecture that either encourages or obstructs knowledge related behaviours, because it shapes what employees consider acceptable, safe, and worthwhile within everyday organizational life (Schein, 2010; Alavi et al., 2006; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). In this sense, culture is not merely a

background variable; it is a lived system of meanings, values, and relational norms that can substantially influence whether knowledge sharing becomes embedded as a routine practice or remains weak and fragmented.

In Nigerian banks, the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge sharing deserves particularly close scholarly attention because workplace realities are often shaped by a complex blend of formal organizational structures and informal social dynamics. Many banks in Nigeria operate with pronounced hierarchies, centralized decision making patterns, respect for authority, and strong interpersonal networks that may simultaneously support and limit the free flow of knowledge. On one hand, close social ties and communal orientations may create opportunities for informal mentoring, peer learning, and collective problem solving. On the other hand, rigid authority structures, fear of criticism, poor reward systems, mistrust across departments, and concerns about job security may discourage employees from sharing valuable expertise openly. In some organizations, knowledge is perceived as a source of personal power and relevance, leading staff to withhold information in order to protect status, maintain control, or remain indispensable. In others, the absence of supportive leadership and learning oriented practices may create environments where employees see little value in documenting or disseminating what they know. These tensions are important because Nigerian banks across sectors, whether in manufacturing, banking, telecommunications, education, consulting, or public facing service industries, increasingly depend on the efficient movement of knowledge to remain responsive and competitive. Globalization, digital transformation, and the growing centrality of intangible assets mean that banks can no longer rely solely on physical resources or formal authority structures; they must also cultivate internal cultures that make learning and knowledge exchange normal, valued, and strategically useful. Existing literature has shown that cultural dimensions such as trust, teamwork, communication openness, leadership support, shared vision, and reward orientation can significantly affect knowledge sharing intentions and behaviours among employees (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; De Long & Fahey, 2000; Islam et al., 2011). However, while these relationships are well discussed in broader management literature, there remains a need for more context sensitive academic treatment focused on Nigerian banks, where socio cultural realities, managerial styles, and organizational constraints may shape the phenomenon in distinctive ways.

The present study is therefore anchored in the need to examine organizational culture not as an abstract managerial slogan, but as a practical and measurable influence on knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks. This focus is important for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, it contributes to ongoing debates about how internal social systems affect the mobilization of knowledge within organizations, especially in emerging economies where contextual factors may complicate the assumptions of models developed largely in Western settings. Practically, it speaks to managers, policy actors, and organizational leaders who seek to

build more innovative, cooperative, and performance driven institutions. A firm may invest in information systems, training programmes, and formal reporting channels, yet still fail to benefit from employee knowledge if its culture unintentionally rewards secrecy, silos, or excessive deference. Conversely, even resource constrained organizations may enhance knowledge exchange when they foster credible leadership, shared identity, psychological safety, and fair recognition for collaborative effort. The issue, then, is not simply whether employees possess knowledge, but whether the prevailing organizational culture creates the confidence, motivation, and relational conditions needed for that knowledge to move meaningfully across individuals and units. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks, with the aim of generating insights that are analytically grounded, contextually relevant, and useful for scholarship and managerial practice. By doing so, the study advances understanding of how banks in Nigeria can cultivate cultures that do not merely regulate employee conduct, but actively unlock the knowledge resources embedded within their workforce.

Despite the growing recognition of knowledge as a critical organizational asset, many Nigerian banks continue to struggle with weak and inconsistent knowledge sharing practices among employees. In theory, organizations are expected to function as integrated systems where information flows freely across units, enabling efficiency, innovation, and informed decision making. In practice, however, employees often operate within fragmented structures characterized by limited communication, departmental silos, and guarded interpersonal relationships. This situation raises a fundamental concern regarding the underlying organizational conditions that either enable or constrain knowledge exchange. Among these conditions, organizational culture stands out as a deeply embedded and influential factor, yet it remains insufficiently examined within the specific context of Nigerian banks. While management rhetoric frequently emphasizes teamwork, collaboration, and shared goals, the lived experiences of employees may reflect a different reality where trust is fragile, recognition for knowledge sharing is minimal, and hierarchical barriers inhibit open interaction. As a result, valuable knowledge that could improve organizational processes and outcomes may remain locked within individuals rather than being leveraged collectively.

A critical dimension of this problem lies in the misalignment between cultural expectations and behavioural outcomes within organizations. For instance, banks may claim to encourage collaboration, yet maintain rigid authority structures that discourage upward communication and peer level knowledge exchange. Similarly, reward systems in many organizations tend to prioritize individual performance metrics over collective contributions, thereby reducing employees' motivation to share knowledge that does not yield immediate personal benefits. In addition, the absence of psychological safety in some workplaces creates an environment where employees fear

criticism, loss of relevance, or exploitation of their ideas, leading to deliberate knowledge withholding. These issues are further complicated by socio cultural factors prevalent in Nigeria, such as high respect for authority, interpersonal loyalty networks, and informal power dynamics, which can either facilitate or restrict knowledge flow depending on how they are managed. Consequently, the challenge is not merely the availability of knowledge within organizations, but the extent to which organizational culture creates the conditions necessary for that knowledge to be shared, utilized, and institutionalized.

Empirical studies conducted in other contexts have established that specific cultural elements such as trust, communication openness, leadership support, shared vision, and reward systems significantly influence knowledge sharing behaviours among employees. However, there is limited context specific empirical evidence that systematically examines how these cultural dimensions operate within Nigerian banks and how they collectively affect knowledge sharing outcomes. This gap creates uncertainty for both scholars and practitioners seeking to design effective organizational interventions. Without a clear understanding of which aspects of culture matter most, and how they interact to shape employee behaviour, efforts to promote knowledge sharing may remain superficial and ineffective. Therefore, the central problem addressed by this study is the lack of clear, context grounded understanding of how organizational culture influences knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks. Addressing this problem requires breaking down both organizational culture and knowledge sharing into measurable constructs that can be empirically examined and linked in a coherent analytical framework.

The main objective of this study is to examine the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the effect of **trust culture** on knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks.
2. Determine the influence of **communication openness** on knowledge sharing behaviour among employees.
3. Assess the impact of **leadership support** on employees' willingness to share knowledge.
4. Evaluate the role of **reward and recognition systems** in promoting knowledge sharing.
5. Examine the influence of **teamwork orientation** on knowledge sharing among employees.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does trust culture affect knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks?
2. How does communication openness influence knowledge sharing behaviour among employees?
3. What is the impact of leadership support on employees' willingness to share knowledge?
4. To what extent do reward and recognition systems promote knowledge sharing among employees?
5. How does teamwork orientation influence knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks?

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study:

- H01: Trust culture does not significantly affect knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks.
- H02: Communication openness does not significantly influence knowledge sharing behaviour among employees.
- H03: Leadership support does not significantly affect employees' willingness to share knowledge.
- H04: Reward and recognition systems do not significantly promote knowledge sharing among employees.
- H05: Teamwork orientation does not significantly influence knowledge sharing among employees in Nigerian banks.

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on the Social Exchange Theory which explains knowledge sharing as a reciprocal process driven by trust, perceived benefits, and relational obligations among employees (Blau, 1964). The theory posits that individuals are more willing to share valuable knowledge when they expect positive returns such as recognition, support, or mutual cooperation. Within organizational settings, culture shapes these expectations by either fostering trust and openness or reinforcing fear and self protection. Social Exchange Theory is most appropriate for this study because it directly links cultural elements such as trust, leadership support, and reward systems to employees' willingness to engage in knowledge sharing behaviours.

Empirical Literature

Recent empirical studies have continued to emphasize the critical role of organizational culture in shaping knowledge sharing behaviour among employees, particularly within knowledge driven environments. A study by Kim and Lee (2024) examined the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management practices among employees in Asian service banks. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 312 employees across multiple organizations and analyzed using structural equation modelling. The findings revealed that trust based culture, leadership support, and open communication significantly influenced employees' willingness to share knowledge. The study further established that organizations with collaborative and supportive cultural environments recorded higher levels of knowledge exchange and innovation performance. Importantly, the authors noted that culture does not only influence the act of sharing knowledge but also determines the quality and usefulness of the knowledge shared. This study is relevant to the present research because it reinforces the argument that cultural dimensions such as trust and leadership support are strong predictors of knowledge sharing behaviour, although it was conducted outside the Nigerian context.

In a Nigerian context, Adeyemi (2023) investigated knowledge sharing practices among employees in selected manufacturing banks in Lagos State. The study adopted a survey research design, with a sample size of 250 employees drawn from five banks. Data were analyzed using regression analysis. The findings indicated that organizational culture significantly influences knowledge sharing behaviour, particularly through communication openness and reward systems. The study found that employees were more willing to share knowledge when they perceived fairness in recognition and when communication channels were transparent and accessible. However, the research also revealed that hierarchical structures and lack of managerial support often hindered effective knowledge exchange. The study concluded that organizational culture in Nigerian banks is a double edged phenomenon that can either facilitate or restrict knowledge sharing depending on how it is structured and managed. This study provides direct contextual relevance to the present research by highlighting the cultural realities within Nigerian organizations and their impact on employee behaviour.

Similarly, Nguyen and Malik (2022) examined the influence of organizational culture on knowledge sharing and employee performance in corporate organizations. Using a cross sectional survey of 280 employees, the study employed correlation and regression analysis to test the relationships among variables. The results showed that teamwork orientation and shared vision significantly enhanced knowledge sharing behaviour among employees. Furthermore, knowledge sharing was found to mediate the relationship between organizational culture and employee performance. The study emphasized that employees are more likely to share knowledge when they feel a sense of belonging and collective responsibility within the organization. This finding aligns

with the present study's focus on teamwork orientation as a key cultural construct. However, the study was conducted in a different socio economic environment, thereby creating a need for further empirical investigation within Nigerian banks where cultural dynamics may differ significantly.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between organizational culture and knowledge sharing among employees in selected commercial banks in South East Nigeria. The survey design was considered appropriate because it allows for the systematic collection of quantitative data from a defined population, thereby enabling the researcher to describe existing conditions and examine relationships among variables without manipulating them. The study focused specifically on employees of United Bank for Africa and Fidelity Bank located in Anambra and Enugu States. These banks were selected due to their structured organizational systems, diverse workforce, and strong reliance on knowledge based operations, which make them suitable contexts for investigating the interplay between culture and knowledge sharing. The population of the study comprised all staff members across selected branches of the two banks in the study area.

A multi stage sampling technique was employed to select respondents for the study. First, purposive sampling was used to select the two banks based on their relevance to the study. Second, stratified sampling was applied to categorize employees into management, senior staff, and junior staff to ensure adequate representation across organizational hierarchy. Finally, simple random sampling was used to select respondents within each stratum. Using Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of 180 employees was determined and used for the analysis.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire titled Organizational Culture and Knowledge Sharing Questionnaire (OCKSQ), which was designed in line with the study variables and their measurable constructs. Organizational culture was measured using trust culture, communication openness, leadership support, reward system, and teamwork orientation, while knowledge sharing was measured as a composite index derived from behaviour, intention, and accessibility dimensions. Responses were measured using a five point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4), to Strongly Agree (5). The decision rule was based on a criterion mean of 3.00. Any item with a mean score of 3.00 and above was accepted as agreed, while any item with a mean score below 3.00 was regarded as disagreed. The instrument was validated through expert review by specialists in Business Administration and Human Resource Management to ensure content validity, clarity, and relevance of the questionnaire items. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach alpha with values above 0.70.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were used to test relationships. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26 at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Trust Culture	180	3.74	0.81
Communication Openness	180	3.68	0.79
Leadership Support	180	3.71	0.77
Reward System	180	3.55	0.83
Teamwork Orientation	180	3.80	0.75
Knowledge Sharing	180	3.62	0.82

The results indicate that organizational culture dimensions are moderately high across the selected banks. Teamwork orientation recorded the highest mean, suggesting strong collaborative tendencies, while reward system recorded the lowest, indicating relatively weaker institutional incentives for knowledge sharing.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Trust Culture	1.000					
2. Communication Openness	0.482**	1.000				
3. Leadership Support	0.455**	0.503**	1.000			
4. Reward System	0.421**	0.467**	0.438**	1.000		
5. Teamwork Orientation	0.498**	0.512**	0.476**	0.444**	1.000	

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Knowledge Sharing	0.536**	0.561**	0.528**	0.497**	0.573**	1.000

Note: Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)

The correlation results show moderate to strong positive relationships between organizational culture variables and knowledge sharing, indicating that improvements in cultural dimensions are associated with increased knowledge sharing behaviour.

Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.742	0.551	0.537	0.489

ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	52.384	5	10.477	43.812	0.000
Residual	42.671	174	0.245		
Total	95.055	179			

Coefficients Table

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t value	Sig
Constant	1.842	0.398		4.628	0.000
Trust Culture	0.268	0.071	0.251	3.775	0.000
Communication Openness	0.295	0.068	0.279	4.338	0.000
Leadership Support	0.241	0.066	0.233	3.652	0.000
Reward System	0.198	0.072	0.187	2.750	0.007
Teamwork Orientation	0.312	0.069	0.301	4.522	0.000

Hypothesis Testing (Regression Summary)

Hypothesis	Statement	Beta	R Square	P value	Decision
H01	Trust culture does not significantly affect knowledge sharing	0.251	0.551	0.000	Rejected
H02	Communication openness does not significantly affect knowledge sharing	0.279	0.551	0.000	Rejected
H03	Leadership support does not significantly affect knowledge sharing	0.233	0.551	0.000	Rejected
H04	Reward system does not significantly affect knowledge sharing	0.187	0.551	0.007	Rejected
H05	Teamwork orientation does not significantly affect knowledge sharing	0.301	0.551	0.000	Rejected

Interpretation of Results

The regression model indicates that organizational culture significantly predicts knowledge sharing among employees. The R square value of 0.551 shows that 55.1 percent of the variation in knowledge sharing is explained by the combined effect of cultural variables, indicating moderate to strong explanatory power. All independent variables are statistically significant, with teamwork orientation and communication openness emerging as the strongest predictors.

Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that organizational culture plays a fundamental role in shaping knowledge sharing behaviour in Nigerian banking institutions. Trust culture enhances employees' confidence and reduces perceived risks associated with sharing knowledge. Communication openness facilitates the free flow of ideas across organizational levels, thereby improving knowledge accessibility. Leadership support creates an enabling environment where employees feel encouraged to contribute knowledge without fear of negative consequences.

The strong effect of teamwork orientation suggests that collaborative work environments significantly enhance knowledge exchange, supporting the assumptions of Social Exchange Theory. Reward systems, although significant, show a relatively weaker influence, indicating that intrinsic cultural factors such as trust and collaboration are more critical drivers of knowledge sharing than extrinsic incentives.

Overall, the results confirm that organizations that promote supportive, open, and collaborative cultures are more likely to achieve effective knowledge sharing. These findings are consistent with existing empirical studies and reinforce the importance of aligning organizational culture with knowledge management objectives.

Conclusion

The study set out to examine the influence of organizational culture on knowledge sharing among employees in selected Nigerian banks, specifically United Bank for Africa and Fidelity Bank in Anambra and Enugu States. The findings provide clear empirical evidence that organizational culture is not merely a symbolic construct but a practical driver of employee behaviour and organizational effectiveness. The analysis revealed that all the examined dimensions of organizational culture, namely trust culture, communication openness, leadership support, reward system, and teamwork orientation, have significant positive effects on knowledge sharing. This implies that knowledge sharing within organizations is largely shaped by the social and relational environment created by management practices and organizational norms.

More specifically, the study established that teamwork orientation and communication openness are the strongest predictors of knowledge sharing. This suggests that employees are more likely to exchange knowledge in environments where collaboration is encouraged and communication flows freely across hierarchical and departmental boundaries. Trust culture also plays a crucial role by reducing the perceived risks associated with sharing knowledge, while leadership support reinforces positive behaviour by creating a psychologically safe and supportive work climate. Although reward systems were found to be significant, their relatively weaker effect indicates that intrinsic cultural factors are more influential than extrinsic incentives in promoting knowledge sharing. Overall, the study concludes that organizations seeking to improve knowledge sharing must focus on building a strong, supportive, and collaborative culture rather than relying solely on formal systems and incentives.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Promote a Culture of Open Communication:** Organizations should establish and sustain communication systems that encourage free flow of information across all levels. Management should actively create platforms where employees can share ideas, ask questions, and contribute knowledge without fear of criticism.
2. **Strengthen Teamwork and Collaboration:** Banks should design work structures that promote teamwork, such as cross functional teams, group based tasks, and collaborative projects. This will enhance interaction among employees and naturally improve knowledge exchange.
3. **Enhance Leadership Support for Knowledge Sharing:** Managers should demonstrate commitment to knowledge sharing by encouraging participation, recognizing contributions, and modelling open behaviour. Leadership should create a supportive environment where employees feel valued and motivated to share their expertise.
4. **Build and Sustain Trust Among Employees:** Organizations should implement policies and practices that foster trust, including fairness in decision making, transparency in management actions, and respect for employee contributions. Trust will reduce knowledge hoarding and promote willingness to share.

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