

## Examining the Influence Personality Factors on Knowledge Sharing Intention among Employees of Two Selected Banks

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**ABSTRACT** This study examined the influence of personality factors (that is, need for achievement, need for affiliation, and need for power) on knowledge sharing intention. A cross-sectional survey design was adopted while a total of 207 employees selected from two commercial banks in Nigeria using accidental sampling technique participated in the study. The participants were made of 113 (54.6%) males and 94 (45.4%) females. Their ages ranged between 26 and 47 years with a mean of 33.35 and standard deviation of 3.87. A structured questionnaire with three sections was used for data collection. Three hypotheses were tested using t-test of independent mean. The results showed that need for achievement [ $t(205) = 2.07, p < 0.05$ ] and need for power [ $t(205) = 16.79, p < .001$ ] significantly influenced knowledge sharing intention, while need for affiliation did not [ $t(205) = 1.05, p > 0.05$ ]. These findings suggested the need for human resource personnel of various banks in Nigeria to design recruitment and selection strategies that can help them identify employees with high need for achievement and need for power; since they are more motivated to share their knowledge.

### INTRODUCTION

Knowledge which is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences has been documented as the most important building block in determining the success of organisation ever since the shift from information age to knowledge era ((Davenport and Prusak 1998; Nya et al. 2010). As a matter of fact, knowledge has been noted as a source of competitive advantage and asset for organisations (Steward 1997; Shin-Peng et al. 2006; Barachini 2009; Yang and Shi 2008). According to Davenport (1998) knowledge sharing is the start of knowledge creation because new ideas and knowledge can be created by interacting and interchanging ideas. Additionally, knowledge sharing can contribute to dissemination of created knowledge among individuals so that it can lead to more innovative ideas and actions (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). In a

study, Hagen and Choe (1998) and Nonaka (1994) reported that firm who encourages their employees to absorb knowledge were the winners in the world and that the competitive edge came from widespread knowledge sharing among employees.

As a critical asset, knowledge has therefore predominantly become an essential core driver and a significant reliable resource pursued by multiple industries including the banking industry of today (Ali and Ahmad 2006). Banks in Nigeria are recognizing the relevance and importance of knowledge and are beginning to appreciate knowledge as the most significant and valued asset that can provide competitive advantages and good organisational performance. Unfortunately, most banks do not know how they can best motivate, retain and enhance the performance of their knowledge driven workers. This may be due to ignorance of the fact that knowledge workers constitute a special category of human resources that must be uniquely managed.

The study of knowledge and knowledge sharing have been the focused of research over the past two decades. Previous studies on knowledge focused on the creation, acquisition, diffusion and transfer of knowledge (Nya et al. 2010; Shin-Peng et al. 2006). Most recent studies how-

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ever pay attention to factors motivating knowledge sharing (Huang 2008; Liang and Wu 2008; Chow and Chan 2008; Ma and Agarwal 2007; Wasko and Faraj 2005). Meanwhile, less research attention has been paid to employees' knowledge sharing intention as an important factor in the success of organisation. According to the theory of planned behaviour, individuals' intentions are the best predictors of their behaviours (Ajzen 1991). Thus, for an individual to share his knowledge, he must have the intention to do so (Wann-Yih and Badri 2010). Moreover, Zhihong and Tao (2010) noted that knowledge sharing intention is a major precursor of knowledge sharing behaviour. This study therefore examines the correlates of knowledge sharing intention among bank employees in Nigeria and not knowledge sharing because knowledge sharing intention is a major precursor of knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing intention refers to the extent to which an employee is willing to share useful skills and expertise with his/her coworkers and supervisor in an organisation. According to Ajzen (1985), knowledge sharing intention is the degree of one's belief that one will engage in knowledge sharing behaviour. It is the desire or willingness to share one's tacit knowledge (Zhihong et al. 2010). Davenport and Prusak (1998) asserted that people do not want to or desire to share their knowledge with others unless it is profitable. Similarly, members who contribute knowledge to others hope that they can get material compensation in the organisation, such as others' recognition and respect, self-realisation, and so on. Therefore, an employee intrinsic motivation to satisfy his needs as far as possible would definitely promote their intention to share knowledge (Zhihong et al. 2010). Hence, this study explored the influence of personality factors (need for achievement, need for affiliation and need for power) on knowledge sharing intention among bank employees in Nigeria. This is an aspect that has not received formal attention in the banking industry as critical sector of the Nigeria economy.

Need for achievement is conceptualised as the desire to accomplish something, to reach a standard of excellence, and expend effort to excel (Afolabi et al. 2010). Researchers have found that individuals whose stories reflect high

achievement motivation have strong interest in being personally competent (Brown and Duguid 2000). They enjoy completing challenging tasks and feel competent when such tasks are accomplished (Butler 2001; Deci and Ryan 1980). Achievement-oriented person often desire to share their ideas in order to fulfill their achievement needs (Butler 2001; Fuller et al. 2007). To attain their competence, an achievement-oriented person may be willing to contribute to the progress of organisation by offering knowledge and trying to find solutions for both individuals and the group as a whole (Wann-Yih et al. 2010). In a study conducted on online brand communities, Wasko and Faraj (2005) reported that need for achievement has a significant influence on behavioural intentions. That is employees who are high in need for achievement display high behavioural intentions and willingness to recommend than employees with low need for achievement. Moreover, individuals with high achievement motive often desire to participate in knowledge sharing (Wann-Yih et al. 2010; Fuller et al. 2007).

On the other hand, need for affiliation is described as one's desire to maintaining a close and friendly relationship with others or being emotionally concerned when separated from others (McClelland 1987). The desire to make relationship with others is a basic human need (Ainsworth et al. 1998) and kinship and friendship are expressions of this (Trinke and Bartholomew 1997). This motive serves as a basic reason for members to identify and behave favourable towards one another (Wann-Yih et al. 2010). Similarly, based on social identity theory (Cova and Pace 2006), individuals who identify themselves cognitively, affectively and evaluatively with others, arouse favourable behavioural intentions related to the group (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2002; Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006). Wann-Yih et al. (2010) found that affiliation motive negatively influenced members' knowledge sharing and behavioural intentions. They explained further that individual with high need for affiliation score low in knowledge sharing and behavioural intentions. This might be because the individual did not trust others. The individual may also report low behavioural intention because of his/her perceptions that others can steal the valuable knowledge which may make them insignificant in the organisation.

Apart from the need for affiliation, employee may be preoccupied with the desire to have authority and control over others. Need for power is described as individuals' desire to control and influence others by occupying high social status (Winter 1973). Individuals who are aroused by need for power tend to show leadership capability. They usually behave with the purpose of drawing attention to themselves (Winter and Stewart 1978). A high power motive oriented person has a tendency to control or influence others and is concerned more about social status. Social status is one of the determinants of an individual intention to share knowledge (Fuller et al. 1981). People may interact in organisation with the hope of attaining status or gaining reputation (Stewart 2005). Wann-Yih et al. (2010) found a moderate impact of need for power on knowledge sharing intention. Studies have also shown that those individuals who are high in need for social status spend considerable time in the organisation and are willing to participate or share knowledge in order to expand their influence (Fuller et al. 1981). To the contrary, Sheng-Peng et al. (2006) reported that some supervisors did not always have the desire to share their knowledge with subordinates because of the fear that it might lead to erosion of their power.

### Hypotheses

1. Employees with high need for achievement will significantly report higher knowledge sharing intention than employees with low need for achievement.
2. Employees with high need for affiliation will significantly report higher knowledge sharing intention than employees with low need for need for affiliation.
3. Employees with high need for power will significantly report higher knowledge sharing intention than employees with low need for need for power.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Design

This research is a cross-sectional survey used to investigate the influence of personality factors on knowledge sharing intention in the banking industry.

### Participants

Two hundred and seven (207) employees of 2 commercial banks participated in the survey. They were drawn from different departments of the banks using the accidental sampling technique. Males were 113 (54.6%), while females were 94 (45.4%). With regard to rank, 88 (48.9%) were junior cadre, 78 (43.3%) senior and, 14 (7.8%) in the management cadre, 136 (65.7%) were single, 70 (33.8%) married, and Others 1 (0.5%). In terms of educational attainment: HND/first degree 169 (81.7%), MA/M.Sc./M.Ed. 37 (17.9%), while SSCE/GCE have 1 (0.5%). The ages of the participants ranged between 26 to 47 years with a mean of 33.35 and standard deviation of 3.87.

### Measure

A structured questionnaire with three sections was used for data collection. Section A tapped the demographic information of the respondents. Section B is the McClelland et al. (1958) personality questionnaire with three sub-scales (need for achievement, need for affiliation and need for power). The need for achievement sub-scale has 10-items with reliability coefficient Alpha of .72 as reported by the authors while a revalidation yielded .66. High score implies that the employee has high need for achievement, while low score means that the employee has low need for achievement. The need for affiliation sub scale is also a 10-item Likert format scale with coefficient Alpha of .68 while the revalidation yielded Alpha of .83. A score above the mean indicates that employee has high need for affiliation, while score below the mean implies that the employee has low need for affiliation. The Need for Power sub-scale as well has 10 items and authors reported coefficient Alpha of .64 while revalidation yielded Alpha of .66. A score above the mean implies that the employee has high need for power, while a score below the mean indicates that the employee has low need for power. Section C is a twelve-four (24) items instrument measuring knowledge sharing intention and developed by (Cavana et al. 2000). It is a 5 point response option Likert format scales ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree. An individual whose score is above the mean has high intention to share his/her knowledge while an individual whose

**Table 1: Summary of independent sample t-test showing the difference in mean of need for achievement on employees' knowledge sharing intention among bank workers**

<i>Need for achievement</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
High	88	92.09	7.18	205	4.05	<.001
Low	119	87.71	8.37			

score is below the mean has low knowledge sharing intention. The scale has Cronbach's Alpha of .87 while the Alpha reliability value is .81.

### Procedure

Permission was sought from the managers by the researcher before the administration of the questionnaires. Consent of prospective participants was sought after detailed explanation of the purpose of the research. Those who consented were given the questionnaire with assurance of anonymity and confidentiality of responses. Participants were also informed that they were not under any obligation to participate and that they reserve the right to withdraw at any point they felt inclined to discontinue with the exercise. It was impressed on the participants that there were no right or wrong answers but they were encouraged to be honest in their responses. Questionnaire administration took place in the offices of the respondents.

### Statistical Analysis

The t-test for independent sample was used to analyze the obtained data.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows that bank employees with high need for achievement significantly reported higher knowledge sharing intention [ $t(205) =$

4.05,  $p < .05$ ]. The noticeable mean difference implies that bank employees with high need for achievement, had higher knowledge sharing intention than those with low need for achievement.

Table 2 shows that bank employees need for affiliation did not significantly influence knowledge sharing intention [ $t(205) = -1.05$ ,  $p > .05$ ]. From the table, bank employees with high need for affiliation have a mean of 89.28 on knowledge sharing intention, while those with low need for affiliation have 90.39 with mean difference of 1.11. This implies that need for affiliation did not significantly influence knowledge sharing intention among bank employees in Nigeria.

Table 3 shows that bank employees with high need for power significantly reported higher knowledge sharing intention [ $t(205) = 16.79$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. From the table above, bank employees with high need for power have a mean of 99.00 on knowledge sharing intention, while those with low need for power have mean of 89.43 with mean difference of 9.57. This implies that bank employees with high need for power, had higher knowledge sharing intention than those with low need for power.

## DISCUSSION

This study explored the influence of personality factors (need for achievement, need for affiliation, and need for power) on knowledge

**Table 2: Summary of independent sample t-test showing the difference in mean of need for affiliation on employees' knowledge sharing intention among bank workers**

<i>Need for affiliation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>
High	153	89.28	8.87	205	-1.05	>.05
Low	54	90.39	5.72			

**Table 3: Summary of independent sample t-test showing the difference in mean of need for power on employees' knowledge sharing intention among bank workers**

<i>Need for power</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
High	75	99.00	2.00	205	16.79	<.001
Low	132	89.43	8.14			

sharing intention among bank employees. Three hypotheses were stated and tested. The first hypothesis which states that employees with high need for achievement will significantly report higher knowledge sharing intention than employees with low need for achievement was confirmed. The result indicated that bank employees with high need for achievement, had higher knowledge sharing intention than those with low need for achievement. This result is in consonance with Butler (2001) and Fuller et al. (2007) who reported that achievement-oriented person often desire to share their ideas in order to fulfill their achievement needs. This study was also in line with the findings of Wann-Yih et al. (2010) who found that an individual high in need for achievement score higher in knowledge sharing and behavioural intention. This result is not surprising because in Nigeria most people want to achieve at all cost. Thus, most people in Nigeria are often motivated to do things they felt would make them achieve in life. The same thing applies to employees in the banking sector in Nigeria. An employee in the banking industry may want to share his/her knowledge especially if he/she believes is going to fetch him/her promotion or reward (which are component of achievement). Corroborating this view, Wann-Yih et al. (2010) explained that to attain their competence goals, an achievement-oriented person is always willing to offer his/her knowledge to others or the organisations where he/she works and often try to find solutions for both individuals and the group as a whole. The result of this study also corroborates the findings of Wasko and Faraj (2005) who reported that employees who are high in need for achievement display higher behavioural intentions and willingness to recommend than employees with low need for achievement.

The results in Table 2 did not confirm hypothesis 2, which states that employees with high need for affiliation will significantly report higher knowledge sharing intention than employees with low need for affiliation. The result shows that bank employees need for affiliation did not significantly influence knowledge sharing intention. Again this result supports the findings of Wann-Yih et al. (2010) who found that affiliation motive negatively influenced members' behavioural intentions and knowledge sharing. A possible explanation for this result could be that individuals high in need

for affiliation may not be willing to share their valuable knowledge because of the fear that others may steal their knowledge which may make them less important in the organisation. Also, employees high in need for affiliation may not be willing or desire to share their knowledge because they want to maintain their unique status.

The results of this study did not support the assertion of social identity theory (Cova and Pace 2006), which states that individuals who identify themselves cognitively, affectively and evaluative with others, arouses favourable behavioural intentions than their counterparts (Bagozzi and Dholakia 2002; Bagozzi and Dholakia 2006).

In line with earlier research, employees with high need for power significantly reported higher knowledge sharing intention than employees with low need for power. This corroborated Wann-Yih et al. (2010) who reported a moderate impact of need for power on knowledge sharing intention. Studies (for example, Fuller et al. 1981; Shin-Peng et al. 2006) have also reported that those individuals with high need for social status spend considerable time in the organisation and are willing to participate or share knowledge in order to expand their influence.

## CONCLUSION

Conclusively, the results of this study revealed that bank employees who have high need for achievement and need for power reported higher knowledge sharing intention than employees with low need for achievement and low need for power. Other part of the results of this study also indicated that bank employees need for affiliation did not significantly influence knowledge sharing intention. This is an indication that need for affiliation is not a factor influencing bank employees' intention to share their knowledge. It therefore pertinent that bank management and human resource personnel should design recruitment and selection strategies that can help identify employees high in both need for achievement and need for power since they are more motivated to embrace knowledge sharing.

In spite the above findings, some limitations were noted in this study. One, the results of this study should be generalized with caution because

participants were drawn from only two commercial banks in Nigeria. Two, this study only investigated the influence of personality factors on knowledge sharing intention. Using more bank employees, future studies should investigate the influence of organisational climate, trust, support, age, gender, and job status in connection with personality factors on bank employees' knowledge sharing intention. Future studies should also focus on employees of other sectors.

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