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Creating Collaborative Cultures: The Effect of Rewards and Social Units on Knowledge Sharing in Culturally Diverse Academic Settings

Jaswinder Pal Singh[1] and Baljinder Kaur[1*]

[1]*Department of Library and Information Science, Punjabi University, Patiala, Punjab – India*

*baljinderpup@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

Background: The present study explores knowledge sharing in multicultural academic settings, focusing on gender dynamics. The study emphasizes the impact of rewards, social units, and cultural diversity on knowledge sharing behaviors. A deeper qualitative exploration could further highlight specific dynamics not captured in quantitative analysis.

Purpose: Taking higher education institutions (HEIs) in India as the research context, this paper aims to examine the knowledge sharing dynamics influenced by rewards, social units, and cultural diversity, focusing on gender-specific differences among faculty members. Additionally, the study provides recommendations for HEIs to foster inclusive knowledge sharing practices.

Method: This cross-sectional, quantitative study employed a convenience sampling method. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire. In this survey, 680 questionnaires were distributed to an entire university faculty. All respondents are affiliated with Chitkara University and Punjabi University, India. The survey measured demographic details, familiarity with knowledge sharing, and variables such as knowledge sharing, rewards, social units, and cultural diversity.

Result: The study reveals that gender-specific differences significantly impact knowledge sharing behaviors. Monetary rewards are more effective for male faculty members, while non-monetary rewards and institutional support for cultural diversity are more effective for female faculty members. Strong social units positively influence knowledge sharing for both genders, but more so for males. The combined effect of institutional support for cultural diversity and social units on knowledge sharing is perceived differently by male and female faculty members.

Conclusion: Gender dynamics play a crucial role in shaping knowledge-sharing behaviors within multicultural academic settings. Addressing these gender-specific influences through tailored rewards and inclusive social networks can enhance knowledge sharing. The study underscores the need for higher education institutions to develop gender-sensitive policies and cultivate inclusive environments to promote effective knowledge sharing among faculty members.

1. Introduction

Knowledge sharing is a cornerstone of organizational success, facilitating innovation, productivity, and competitive advantage. In multicultural organizations, where diverse perspectives and experiences converge, effective knowledge sharing becomes even more critical (Wilson, 2011). The unique chances for being creative or solving problems found in multicultural workforces also come with some unique problems. These can range from difficulty in understanding and working across different languages, to more subtle challenges that arise because of different nonverbal communication styles and patterns. When these challenges are not met well, working in a multicultural organization can become almost a parody of diversity, a living example of lives lived in parallel but not connecting, in a kind of cultural blender that does everything but blend. The academic setting thrives off the sharing of knowledge. It propels collaborative research projects, melds the curriculum, and shapes the individual learning experiences of students (Ayesu & Bengoa, 2020; Sie *et al.*, 2014). This sharing is the work of individuals: those who occupy rewarding roles and help to create the culture of an institution; those who engage in social modules in which knowledge is shared using a variety of mediums, from lectures and panels to conversations over a coffee cup; and, of course, the individuals themselves who are part of the academic community and contribute in their own unique ways (Haque *et al.*, 2015). The research in this area seeks to offer workable concepts that can assist higher education institutions in creating a cooperative, inclusive

culture. Such a culture is a prerequisite for performance improvement and for the realization of academic and executive potential.

The context of higher education, where the collaboration of various knowledge holders, is invaluable to the success of the many partners involved, makes for an ideal space in which to begin to unpick how and why gender might influence the access to and intensity of academic interactions (Tukiainen, 2016). We have focused on uncovering the gender dynamics in faculty collaboration at two very different universities. This study is important because it will produce a closer working relationship between school and university professors. It will provide a way for both groups to come together, with a common understanding of the nature of the teaching and learning that goes on in each place, and to talk and listen critically about that understanding. This conversation will also involve the students themselves, whose knowledge and learning come about in part from their involvement in effective or ineffective discussions, collective work, and other kinds of learning-together activities. By establishing an inclusive education space that caters to the diverse needs of students, higher education institutions can enhance students' educational experience, help them fulfill their potential, and provide them with a clearer pathway toward successful outcomes. Meanwhile, successful knowledge exchanges between institutional managers are paramount to the functioning of higher education institutes. Understanding that such exchanges are not simply about the sharing of information but are also processes heavily influenced by gender dynamics can thus aid these vital conversations. Addressing gender differences in knowledge exchange helps to find an inclusive academic culture for all. This not only enhances the overall learning and working environment but also supports gender equality initiatives, contributing to a more equitable and supportive institutional climate. In summary, the study's findings provide actionable insights that can help higher education institutions enhance their academic, administrative, and cultural environments by addressing gender-specific factors in knowledge sharing.

1.1. Knowledge Sharing and Culture

Organizational culture is pivotal in promoting sustainability and can provide a competitive edge when it integrates sustainable practices (Novy, 2012). The connection between culture and knowledge sharing is critical but often underexplored. Research indicates that a supportive organizational climate, particularly one that fosters collaboration and ethical leadership, significantly influences knowledge sharing (Ayu & Omari, 2012; Doukanari *et al.*, 2021). Clan-like cultures, which emphasize support

and collaboration, and adhocratic culture, known for their flexibility and innovation, are especially conducive to knowledge sharing (Ayesu & Bengoa, 2020; Kazemi *et al.*, 2020). Such cultures can mediate the relationship between organizational practices and knowledge-sharing behaviours, enhancing both explicit and tacit knowledge exchange. Collectivist cultures, characterized by strong internal relationships, tend to share knowledge more readily. However, barriers like communication issues and lack of trust can impede knowledge sharing, especially in project development contexts. Overall, a collaborative, supportive, and ethically guided organizational culture is essential for effective knowledge sharing.

1.2. Theoretical Foundation and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical foundation and conceptual framework of knowledge sharing in organizations is explored through various lenses, including the complexity and categorization of knowledge, cultural factors, and established theories. Key cultural elements like power distance, individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity/femininity significantly impact knowledge transfer. Agency theory provides insights into aligning individual interests with organizational goals, suggesting that compensation influences knowledge sharing (Mastilak *et al.*, 2018; Wang, 2021). In educational institutions, aligning the interests of deans and teachers through performance incentives can enhance knowledge exchange and collaboration (Sam, 2016). Social exchange theory posits that knowledge sharing is driven by the expectation of future benefits and the reduction of personal costs, with organizational trust and occupational security playing crucial roles (Kalema *et al.*, 2016; Kimble & Bourdon, 2013). High-quality leader-member relationships and effective knowledge-sharing systems are essential for fostering a culture of knowledge exchange, particularly in environments requiring tacit knowledge sharing.

1.3. Knowledge Sharing Barriers

The study investigates barriers to knowledge sharing at individual, organizational, and technological levels. Individual barriers include issues like poor communication, cultural differences, and lack of trust and motivation, while organizational barriers encompass insufficient rewards, lack of top management support, and inadequate HRM practices. Technological barriers involve a lack of technical support and reluctance to use IT systems (Khalil & Shea, 2012; Veer Ramjeawon & Rowley, 2017; Zhou & Nunes, 2012). The study suggests overcoming these

barriers through strategies such as fostering interpersonal trust, managing cultural diversity via human resources practices, and leader empowering behaviors (Elenurm, 2008; Madhavanprabhakaran *et al.*, 2022). It emphasizes the importance of knowledge technology and highlights intrinsic rewards, such as personal satisfaction and a sense of belonging, as key motivators for knowledge sharing (Amin *et al.*, 2011). Intrinsic rewards are particularly effective in encouraging participation and can also mitigate the negative impacts of relationship conflicts on knowledge sharing, underscoring their role in creating a collaborative environment (Dewah & Mutula, 2016; Griego *et al.*, 2000).

The role of reward systems, social factors, and cultural diversity are crucial in promoting knowledge sharing within organizations. Research suggests individuals are motivated to share knowledge when they anticipate positive outcomes, with both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards being influential, though their effectiveness varies across different cultural and industry contexts (Diriye, 2019; Griego *et al.*, 2000; Harandi *et al.*, 2019). Social factors, such as managers' influence, trust, and social interactions, significantly impact knowledge exchange, with social interdependencies and social learning theory emphasizing the role of collaborative efforts (Mansor & Saparudin, 2015; Phung & Hawryszkiewycz, 2017). Cultural diversity shapes knowledge-sharing behaviors, with Hofstede's cultural dimensions highlighting the impact of national culture on information exchange (Elenurm, 2008; Madhavanprabhakaran *et al.*, 2022). Cultural factors like collectivism, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance influence how knowledge is shared, with varying effects observed in different societies (Elenurm, 2008). As shown in Figure 1, understanding the interplay of reward systems, social factors, and cultural diversity is essential for fostering effective knowledge sharing across diverse organizational environments.
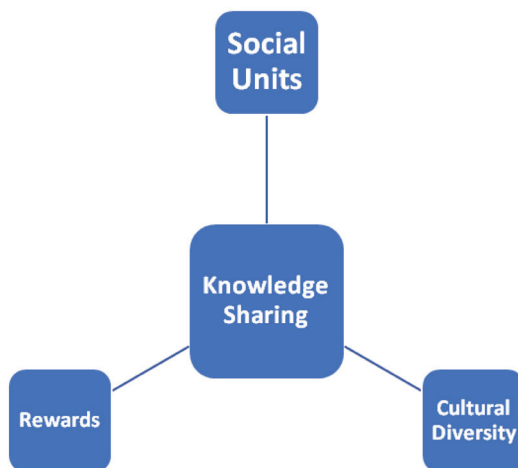

Figure 1: Research variables and conceptual framework

- Rewards directly influence Knowledge Sharing and Social Units.
- Knowledge Sharing is directly influenced by Rewards, Social Units, and Cultural Diversity.
- Social Units and Cultural Diversity have a reciprocal relationship, as strong social units support cultural diversity, and an inclusive culture fosters robust social units.
- Rewards also indirectly influence Cultural Diversity by promoting an inclusive environment that values diverse contributions.

This conceptual framework captures the dynamics between the key variables and helps illustrate the multifaceted nature of knowledge sharing in a multicultural organization.

2. Methodology

2.1. Need for the Study

The study focuses on the importance of knowledge sharing within culturally diverse workforces, particularly in multicultural organizations, where effective knowledge exchange is crucial for innovation, productivity, and competitive advantage. The research highlights the challenges posed by cultural differences in communication and social dynamics. It seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the factors that support or hinder knowledge sharing in such environments, with a specific focus on the roles of rewards, social structures, and cultural diversity interventions. The study also emphasizes the importance of exploring gender differences in communication and knowledge sharing, as men and women may have distinct preferences that impact how knowledge is shared and acquired. By addressing gender inequality and understanding these differences, organizations can create more inclusive and effective knowledge-sharing strategies. Additionally, the research aims to enhance collaborative efforts by promoting gender diversity and developing approaches that foster effective and inclusive collaboration in higher education institutions.

2.2. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to explore and explain the role of rewards, social modules and cultural diversity in promoting knowledge sharing within cross-cultural organizations. The aim of this study is to understand the dynamics that currently exist and result in the exchange of knowledge. More specifically, the manner in which individual and social factors influence the behaviors associated with knowledge exchange is at the center of this investigation. The study aims to identify the most effective strategies to create an environment conducive to the exchange of knowledge,

thereby improving the learning and performance of organizations. The goal of the study is to understand how various influences, both individual and social, shape the behavior of knowledge exchange. We end up with a pretty good picture of how this stuff works in reality; and once we have that, we are better able to design knowledge exchange schemes that work better in practice:

Identify Gender-Specific Barriers: The sharing of knowledge in academia is hindered by barriers that our teachers, staff members, and students face. What specifically gets in the way of folks being able to come together, to share what they know, and to do so in a forum that's either mandated and/or created for that specific purpose?

Develop Tailored Interventions: Create interventions and policies to work on these barriers and promote fair information exchange for people of all genders.

Enhance Institutional Policies: Inform institutional policies and strategies that aim to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for knowledge sharing, taking into account gender-specific needs and preferences.

Promote Gender Equity: Contribute to broader gender equity efforts by highlighting the importance of inclusive knowledge sharing and providing evidence-based recommendations to support these initiatives.

Research Questions

1. How do gender differences influence knowledge sharing among faculty members in higher education institutions?
2. How do rewards, social units, and gender diversity interact to influence knowledge sharing in higher education institutions?

2.3. Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework and the focus on gender dynamics in knowledge sharing within higher education institutions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

1. Gender differences significantly affect the frequency and quality of knowledge sharing among faculty members in higher education institutions.
2. The interaction between rewards, social units, and gender diversity has a significant impact on the effectiveness of knowledge sharing in higher education institutions.

This study has set out to establish the gender-specific forces that are in play when it comes to knowledge sharing in universities. We have framed our investigation of these phenomena around three broad-based forces: the impact of rewards; the generative power of social units; and the potential of cultural diversity. We hypothesize that each one of these is doing something quite distinct in universities when it comes to knowledge sharing.

2.4. Data Collection

How faculty members in India's higher education institutions think and feel about sharing knowledge in multicultural classroom environments was the central question for this study. The study followed a cross-sectional research design that surveyed a convenience sample of faculty members at these institutions. The survey used three parts. Part A collected demographic information about the respondents. Part B asked about their experiences with and across cultures and rated their encounters as knowledge or information exchanges between or within those groups. Part C asked about rewards for knowledge sharing, the social units in which it took place, the variety of cultures represented, and the record of those cultures represented in the systems and processes of the knowledge-sharing moments.

3. Discussion of Results

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to respondents affiliated with Chitkara University and Punjabi University in India.In order to have an equal number of participants from each gender; we distributed 680 questionnaires to an entire university faculty. We collected completed filled questionnaires until we had 150 responses from both male and female faculty members. There were a variety of reasons why this strategy was germane, but the most important might have been that it made possible an unbiased endeavor that could supply a certain impartiality of both result and interpretation. This prevented any gender-based prejudice, and the results were much more reliable and valid as a result. If there were any changes observed, the trial could say with far more assurance that they were real, not just variations in how the two groups of patients were made up. And by having more participants per treatment category, the trial could also claim, with equal if not greater authority, that any differences seen were truly due to the gender of the patient. We increased the likelihood of the results being generalizable by ensuring that we had the same number of men and women in our sample, thus giving us an accurate read on their combined viewpoints and qualities and allowing us to make judgments about the whole population. Furthermore, this approach demonstrated our commitment to fairness and impartiality in not just the research but also in the way that we considered the viewpoints of both genders and appreciated their diverse perspectives.

The breakdown of participants by designation and educational level can be observed in Table 1. The largest group of participants is made up of Assistant Professors. They account for 49.33% of male participants and 46.67% of female participants, with a slightly higher proportion of male

participants. The second-largest group is Associate Professors. They account for 26.67% of male participants and 33.33% of female participants; with a higher female proportion. Professors are the smallest group, comprising 24.00% of males and 20.00% of females. Regarding educational levels, a significant majority of participants hold a Doctorate degree, with 85.33% of males and 88.00% of females. In contrast, those with a Master's degree make up a smaller proportion, with 14.67% of males and 12.00% of females. This distribution highlights a higher prevalence of advanced degrees and a notable gender balance in educational attainment.

The study's findings reveal several critical insights into the dynamics of knowledge sharing in higher education institutions, particularly through the lens of gender. Overall, the data indicate that both male and female faculty members recognize the importance of knowledge sharing for academic and institutional success. However, significant gender differences emerge in how various factors influence this process.

Table 1: Demographic Information

Designation	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Assistant Professor	74	49.33	70	46.67
Associate Professor	40	26.67	50	33.33
Professor	36	24.00	30	20.00
Total	150	100	150	100
Educational Level				
Master	22	14.67	18	12.00
Doctorate	128	85.33	132	88.00
Total	150	100	150	100

Table 2 provides insights into the perceptions of knowledge sharing within an organization, broken down by gender. For the statement, "My organization has a process for sharing knowledge throughout the

organization," 60% of males and 53% of females strongly agree, indicating that a significant portion of both genders believes in the presence of such processes, though males are slightly more confident. When it comes to knowledge sharing with decision-makers, 59% of males and 50% of females strongly agree, reflecting a generally positive view but with a greater proportion of males recognizing this practice. Similarly, on transferring organizational knowledge to new employees, 57% of males and 52% of females strongly agree, showing a strong endorsement of this process, though males again slightly lead. In terms of personal effort in knowledge sharing, 63% of males and 55% of females strongly agree that they actively share knowledge, suggesting a higher personal commitment among males. Conversely, regarding time constraints for sharing knowledge, 59% of males and 52% of females feel that time is an obstacle, with a greater percentage of males expressing this concern. Overall, while both genders generally view the organization's knowledge-sharing processes positively, males tend to show slightly higher agreement in various aspects, including personal commitment and organizational processes, while also expressing more concerns about time constraints.

Impact of rewards shows that, both monetary and non-monetary rewards play a crucial role in encouraging knowledge sharing. However, the effect of these rewards varies by gender. Male faculty members tend to respond more positively to monetary rewards, perceiving them as direct incentives for contributing their knowledge. On the other hand, female faculty members are more motivated by non-monetary rewards, such as recognition, professional development opportunities, and supportive work environments. This suggests that higher education institutions should adopt a dual approach to rewards, combining financial incentives with non-monetary acknowledgments to effectively encourage knowledge sharing among both genders.

Table 2: Knowledge Sharing

Statement	Gender	SA	%SA	A	%A	N	%N	D	%D	SD	%SD
Knowledge Sharing											
My organization has a process for sharing knowledge throughout the organization.	Male	90	60%	45	30%	5	3%	6	4%	4	3%
	Female	80	53%	50	33%	7	5%	8	5%	5	4%

My organization has a process for sharing with those involved in knowledge making decisions.	Male	88	59%	50	33%	4	3%	5	3%	3	2%
	Female	75	50%	55	37%	8	5%	7	5%	5	3%
My organization has a process for transferring individuals such organizational knowledge to as new employees.	Male	85	57%	52	35%	5	3%	5	3%	3	2%
	Female	78	52%	54	36%	7	5%	6	4%	5	3%
I make an effort to share knowledge with other members of the organization.	Male	95	63%	40	27%	4	3%	6	4%	5	3%
	Female	82	55%	50	33%	6	4%	7	5%	5	3%
There is no time to share knowledge with my colleagues.	Male	88	59%	45	30%	6	4%	6	4%	5	3%
	Female	78	52%	55	37%	7	5%	6	4%	4	2%

Table 3 explores the impact of rewards on knowledge sharing, segmented by gender. Both males and females generally perceive rewards as a motivating factor for knowledge sharing, though males tend to show slightly higher agreement. Specifically, 67% of males and 60% of females strongly agree that their organization offers rewards for knowledge sharing. In terms of promotions, 63% of males and 57% of females believe that knowledge sharing increases their chances of receiving promotions. For monetary incentives, 61% of males and 53% of females feel these are offered, with males again showing a higher endorsement. Non-monetary rewards, such as appreciation and recognition, are seen positively by 65% of males and 57% of females. Both genders also agree that knowledge sharing enhances their expertise and provides opportunities for recognition, with 67% of males and 60% of females agreeing that it improves their expertise, and 65% of males versus 59% of females believing it leads to recognition.

Overall, while both genders acknowledge the benefits of rewards for knowledge sharing, males consistently show a slightly stronger positive perception across various aspects, suggesting that rewards play a significant role in encouraging knowledge sharing within the organization.

Social units, or the informal networks and relationships within the institution, significantly impact knowledge sharing behaviors. The study finds that male faculty members generally benefit more from strong social units, as these networks provide them with easier access to information and collaborative opportunities. Female faculty members also value social units, but their effectiveness is often moderated by the inclusiveness and supportiveness of these networks. Women may face additional barriers, such as exclusion from certain social circles or underrepresentation in key academic forums, which can hinder their ability to share and acquire knowledge. Therefore, fostering inclusive and supportive social units is essential to enhance knowledge sharing for all faculty members.

Table 3: Impact of Rewards

Statement	Gender	SA	SA%	A	A%	N	N%	D	D%	SD	SD%
Rewards											
My organization offers rewards for knowledge sharing.	Male	100	67%	40	27%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
	Female	90	60%	45	30%	7	5%	5	3%	3	2%

Statement	Gender	SA	SA%	A	A%	N	N%	D	D%	SD	SD%
I am more likely to receive promotions in return for knowledge sharing.	Male	95	63%	45	30%	4	3%	3	2%	3	2%
	Female	85	57%	50	33%	7	5%	5	3%	3	2%
My organization offers monetary incentives for knowledge sharing.	Male	92	61%	45	30%	5	3%	5	3%	3	2%
	Female	80	53%	52	35%	8	5%	6	4%	4	3%
My organization offers non-monetary rewards for and knowledge sharing (e.g., appreciation recognition).	Male	97	65%	40	27%	6	4%	4	3%	3	2%
	Female	85	57%	50	33%	8	5%	5	3%	2	1%
My knowledge sharing improves my expertise.	Male	100	67%	40	27%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
	Female	90	60%	45	30%	7	5%	5	3%	3	2%
My knowledge sharing provides opportunities for recognition.	Male	98	65%	42	28%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
	Female	88	59%	48	32%	8	5%	4	3%	2	1%

Table 4 examines the role of social units in knowledge sharing within the organization, with responses categorized by gender. Both males and females generally perceive social connections as influential in their knowledge-sharing practices. Notably, 63% of females strongly agree that they belong to the same social units as other members of the organization, compared to 59% of males, suggesting a slightly higher perception among females of shared social networks. When it comes to relationships with peers, 60% of females and 57% of males agree that they have good relationships, indicating generally positive peer interactions across genders. Socializing outside the workplace is more frequently reported by females (60%) than males (53%), reflecting a greater tendency for females to engage in informal interactions. Regarding the likelihood of sharing knowledge with those they socialize with outside of work, 61% of females and 57% of males strongly agree, demonstrating that social ties play a significant role in knowledge sharing. Both genders also express a higher likelihood of sharing knowledge with personal connections such as family or friends compared to other organizational

members, with 55% of males and 59% of females agreeing. Overall, while both genders recognize the impact of social units on knowledge sharing, females show slightly higher levels of agreement on social connections and informal interactions, which may enhance their knowledge-sharing practices.

Cultural diversity within the institution is broadly seen as a positive influence on knowledge sharing. Both male and female faculty members agree that diverse perspectives contribute to richer, more innovative academic discussions and collaborations. However, the perception of cultural diversity's impact differs slightly between genders. Male faculty members are more likely to view cultural diversity as a resource that enhances their own knowledge base, while female faculty members emphasize the need for institutional support to fully leverage the benefits of cultural diversity. This highlights the importance of not only promoting diversity but also creating an environment where diverse voices are heard and valued equally.

Table 4: Role of Social Units

Statement	Gender	SA	SA%	A	A%	N	N%	D	D%	SD	SD%
Social Units											

I belong to some of the same social units as some other members of my organization.	Male	88	59%	50	33%	5	3%	4	3%	3	2%
	Female	95	63%	45	30%	6	4%	3	2%	1	1%
In general, I have good relationships with my peers in the organization.	Male	85	57%	55	37%	4	3%	3	2%	3	2%
	Female	90	60%	50	33%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
I socialize with members of my organization outside of the workplace.	Male	80	53%	60	40%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
	Female	90	60%	48	32%	7	5%	3	2%	2	1%
I am more likely to share knowledge with members of whom I socialize organization with outside the workplace.	Male	85	57%	55	37%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
	Female	92	61%	48	32%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
I am more likely to share knowledge with members of my family, religious community, clubs, sports teams, or friend circle than with other members of my organization.	Male	82	55%	52	35%	6	4%	5	3%	5	3%
	Female	88	59%	50	33%	6	4%	3	2%	3	2%

Table 5 has presented how cultural diversity impacts knowledge sharing within the organization, with responses differentiated by gender. Overall, both males and females acknowledge the influence of cultural background on their knowledge-sharing practices, though with some variations. Females show a slightly higher tendency to share knowledge with members from the same state or country, with 55% strongly agreeing compared to 52% of males. Similarly, more females (57%) believe their supervisor shares their cultural background compared to 50% of males, suggesting a greater perception of cultural similarity in supervisory relationships among females. Regarding peers, 59% of females and 55% of males feel that most of their peers have a similar cultural background, reflecting a shared sense of cultural connection in the workplace. Both genders agree that sharing knowledge is viewed as honorable and enhances prestige, with 59% of females and 53% of males strongly agreeing. Additionally, the likelihood of sharing knowledge with influential colleagues is recognized by 61% of females and 57% of males, indicating that both genders value the reciprocal benefits of knowledge sharing. Overall, while both genders see cultural diversity as a factor in their knowledge-sharing practices, females tend to report slightly higher levels of agreement on cultural connections and the associated prestige of sharing knowledge.

Table 5: Cultural Diversity

Statement	Gender	SA	SA%	A	A%	N	N%	D	D%	SD	SD%
Cultural Diversity											
I am more likely to share knowledge with other of the from the members organization same state/ country of origin as myself.	Male	78	52%	58	39%	5	3%	5	3%	4	3%
	Female	82	55%	56	37%	5	3%	4	3%	3	2%

My supervisor has the same cultural background as mine.	Male	75	50%	60	40%	6	4%	6	4%	3	2%
	Female	85	57%	54	36%	5	3%	4	3%	2	1%
Most of my peers have the same cultural background as I do.	Male	82	55%	55	37%	5	3%	5	3%	3	2%
	Female	88	59%	52	35%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
Sharing knowledge is honorable and will increase my prestige.	Male	80	53%	60	40%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
	Female	88	59%	52	35%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%
I am more likely to share knowledge with who have influence and who colleagues more can help me in return.	Male	85	57%	55	37%	4	3%	3	2%	3	2%
	Female	92	61%	48	32%	5	3%	3	2%	2	1%

Interaction Effects: The interaction between rewards, social units, and cultural diversity reveals complex dynamics. For male faculty members, the combination of strong social units and monetary rewards significantly boosts knowledge sharing. Female professors benefit more from the potluck of rewards given by their institutions than from their paychecks, a new study has found. While non-monetary rewards—like reassurances that one is not cut off from the world outside academia—are important to all professors, it is the female faculty members for whom these "integration rewards" are especially crucial. They like working in the academy. The problem, for them, is that they have a harder time than their male colleagues melding their work and home lives.

Gender-Specific Barriers and Facilitators: This research highlights a very important point. It does so by using powerful, hot-to-the-touch language. The study says that when it comes to women and men in academia, there are distinct and different obstacles for each gender to overcome if they want to claim a seat at the knowledge-sharing table. For women, what holds them back is a lack of access to the informal networks that exchange information. For men, it's more an issue of the credit they feel they're not being given for what they do exchange. The study goes on to unpack these gender-specific problems. And it also highlights two different solutions to the two different problems it identifies.

4. Significance of the Study in Higher Education

- Theoretical Contribution: The research will bring something new to the understanding of gender and how it plays out in higher education. It will build on the existing base of what is known and fill in some of the many gaps. The study will provide a more detailed and complicated picture of gender's role in knowledge sharing in higher education than has so far been developed.

- Practical Implications: The study provides useful understanding to higher education leaders and policymakers about how to shape fair practices of knowledge transfer serving the diverse needs of faculty, staff, and students. It suggests that these practices must factor in the array of identities held by higher education personnel and the experiences that have shaped them, for better or for worse. The study presents clear opportunities for interventions, or the finding crossroads where different groups can work together.

- Policy Development: The research can help create policies that are sensitive to gender, and that promote equal sharing of knowledge and collaboration among genders in academic settings. In these spaces, a

more inclusive academic culture can be fostered—a culture that truly values what all genders bring to the academy.

- Enhancing Academic and Operational Performance: This study helps higher education institutions by giving them a look at the gender factors that enhance knowledge sharing. If these institutions can create an environment where these factors are present, they will see an increase in academic and operational performance, innovation, and competitiveness.

Gaining gender-based insights in higher education proves incredibly rewarding when it comes to understanding just how influential knowledge sharing is across the spectrum of gender dynamics. We, as a society, are perhaps beginning to understand the deep-seated ways that knowledge is bound up in gender. And there are few better places to start unpacking that understanding of the "gender-knowledge nexus" than in higher education institutions, which you accepted as the focus of your study.

5. Implications for Higher Education Institutions

The implications for higher education institutions trying to promote knowledge sharing are very important and stem from various findings in this study:

- Customized Reward Systems: Reward systems need to be designed to meet the unique needs and preferences of male and female faculty members. Our society thinks too often in terms of "one size fits all," and academia is no exception. Should we just assume that men and women want the same kind of recognition? Should we instead force-fit our male and female faculty members into some kind of straightjacket of sameness and leave it at that—at least until the next time we are called upon to revise the faculty handbook?
- Inclusive Social Networks: We should strive to create a more collaborative and inclusive academic community that treats all faculty, and especially women, with the fairness and respect they deserve.
- Support for Cultural Diversity: It is not enough for organizations to accept cultural diversity, they must also put into place the kind of rules, interactional norms, and operational practices that signal to those within and to those looking on that the pathways into and through these institutions are for a society that heralds not only diverse bodies but also diverse perspectives.
- Gender-Sensitive Policies: Fostering a work culture that acknowledges and deals with the specific demands and difficulties faced by male and female professors could improve the overall sharing of knowledge and would

help realize an academic environment that is genuinely equitable.

To promote a cooperative, creative and all-around inclusive academic atmosphere, colleges and universities must grasp the way men and women interact differently and seek to use that knowledge to our advantage. When we understand the dynamics of the parallel ways that men and women share knowledge, we will make much better use of the gender diversity on our campuses.

6. Conclusion

The world of business is now connected across the globe, and the need to share knowledge within these multilingual and multicultural organizations is at an all-time high. Of course, education if anything is even more similar to these heavily diverse coexistences found in multinational firms. This research shows that not only is sharing knowledge a very good thing, but the kinds of diverse collaborative environments required by our schools are the very places where knowledge sharing is most needed. When handled well, cultural diversity can really boost knowledge sharing. Different points of view and experiences are valuable assets in the quest for new insights and new knowledge. But there's often a downside: when people from different cultures work together, all sorts of misunderstandings are bound to happen. And the more inwardly diverse a higher ed mental health organization is, the more of this kind of thing you can expect. That's why it's so important to spend some time and effort thinking about the problems that can arise when a group of culturally different people tries to share knowledge, and how those problems can be overcome. Agency theory looks at educational institutions and how they can use aligned incentives to achieve their goals. This creates an environment in which sharing knowledge becomes an easy, almost natural thing for people to do. The two big incentives that can be put into place to promote this kind of knowledge sharing are financial: a faculty member who can show that her research is being used in the classroom (thus enhancing the reach and reputation of the university) and professional: that is, a strong belief that shared knowledge is a good and useful thing. Institutions can improve their academic, administrative, and cultural environments. Foster the mission to be innovative, collaborative, and superior in academia.

7. Practical Implications

The findings provide HEIs with insights to design gender-sensitive policies and reward systems, cultivate inclusive social networks, and support cultural diversity, enhancing overall knowledge sharing.

8. Originality/value

This study fills a gap in the literature by exploring the gender-specific dynamics of knowledge sharing within multicultural academic settings, offering actionable insights to improve collaborative and inclusive environments in HEIs.

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Both the authors have equally contributed to the research.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest

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