



Organizational Trust, Sharing Culture, and Knowledge Management Capability in Vietnamese Commercial Banks

Nguyen Dieu Ninh

Faculty of business administration, Foreign Trade University, Vietnam.

Abstract

Knowledge management capability has become increasingly important in knowledge-intensive industries, particularly within banking environments characterized by rapid digital transformation and increasing competitive pressure. Although commercial banks continue investing substantially in technological systems and digital infrastructure, many organizations still experience difficulties encouraging employees to exchange organizational knowledge effectively. This study investigates the relationships among organizational trust, sharing culture, knowledge-sharing behavior, and knowledge management capability in Vietnamese commercial banks. The study integrates Social Exchange Theory, the Knowledge-Based View, and Organizational Culture Theory to explain how trust-based organizational environments strengthen knowledge management capability through sharing culture and employee knowledge-sharing behavior. A quantitative research approach was employed using survey data collected from 319 employees working in Vietnamese commercial banks. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to test the proposed hypotheses and mediation effects. The findings reveal that organizational trust positively influences sharing culture, while sharing culture significantly enhances knowledge-sharing behavior. Knowledge-sharing behavior also positively affects knowledge management capability. Furthermore, sharing culture significantly mediates the relationship between organizational trust and knowledge-sharing behavior. The findings suggest that trust-based organizational environments facilitate collaborative norms encouraging employees to exchange expertise, experiences, and organizational knowledge. The study contributes to the literature by integrating trust, organizational culture, and behavioral perspectives into knowledge management research. The findings also provide important managerial implications for strengthening collaborative communication and knowledge-sharing culture within commercial banks.

Keywords: Commercial banks, Knowledge management capability, Knowledge-sharing behavior, Organizational trust, Sharing culture, Vietnam.

1. Introduction

The emergence of the knowledge economy has substantially increased the strategic importance of organizational knowledge within modern organizations (Grant, 2002). In knowledge-intensive industries, organizational competitiveness increasingly depends on the ability to create, share, integrate, and apply organizational knowledge effectively (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Consequently, knowledge management has become an essential organizational capability supporting innovation, operational efficiency, organizational learning, and sustainable competitive advantage.

Previous studies consistently emphasize that organizational knowledge creates value only when employees are willing to exchange expertise, experiences, and organizational insights (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Knowledge-sharing behavior therefore represents one of the most important dimensions of effective knowledge management systems (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). Organizations characterized by strong knowledge-sharing practices are generally more innovative, adaptive, and strategically flexible (Lee & Choi, 2003).

The banking industry represents an especially important context for knowledge management research because banking operations depend heavily on information processing, customer relationship management, risk management, technological expertise, and service innovation (Gold et al., 2001). Commercial banks currently operate within highly competitive and rapidly changing environments characterized by digital transformation, fintech competition, technological disruption, and increasing customer expectations (Verhoef et al., 2021). Consequently, organizational learning and knowledge-sharing capability have become increasingly important organizational competencies within banking environments.

Despite substantial investment in technological systems and digital infrastructure, many commercial banks continue experiencing difficulties encouraging employees to share organizational knowledge effectively (Bock et al., 2005). Employees often hesitate to exchange expertise because of interpersonal fear, organizational hierarchy,

internal competition, lack of trust, or concerns regarding loss of personal advantage and professional uniqueness (Wang & Noe, 2010). These communication barriers frequently weaken collaborative learning and organizational knowledge integration capability.

Previous knowledge management studies often focus on technological systems and structural mechanisms while paying insufficient attention to organizational culture and employee behavior (Inkinen, 2016). However, knowledge sharing fundamentally depends on interpersonal relationships, communication norms, and collaborative organizational culture (De Long & Fahey, 2000). Consequently, understanding organizational and behavioral dimensions of knowledge-sharing culture has become increasingly important.

Organizational trust therefore represents a critical organizational factor supporting collaborative behavior and knowledge-sharing culture. Organizational trust refers to employees' belief that organizational relationships and organizational systems are reliable, supportive, and fair (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust-based organizational environments generally encourage communication, cooperation, and collaborative interaction (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Employees are more likely to exchange organizational knowledge when they perceive trustworthy and supportive organizational relationships.

Sharing culture also represents an important organizational mechanism facilitating collaborative learning and knowledge exchange. Sharing culture refers to organizational norms encouraging openness, collaboration, communication, and collective learning (De Long & Fahey, 2000). Organizations characterized by strong sharing culture generally encourage employees to voluntarily contribute organizational expertise and experiences. Within commercial banks, sharing culture becomes particularly important because banking operations frequently involve tacit knowledge, operational expertise, customer information, and collaborative problem-solving. Effective knowledge-sharing culture therefore contributes substantially to organizational learning, innovation capability, and operational flexibility.

Although previous studies separately examine organizational trust, sharing culture, and knowledge-sharing behavior, several important research gaps remain.

First, many knowledge management studies continue focusing primarily on technological and structural perspectives while paying insufficient attention to organizational trust and sharing culture (Wang & Noe, 2010).

Second, previous studies rarely integrate organizational trust, sharing culture, knowledge-sharing behavior, and knowledge management capability into a unified framework explaining organizational knowledge capability.

Third, empirical evidence regarding sharing culture and knowledge-sharing behavior remains relatively limited within emerging banking markets such as Vietnam.

Vietnam represents an important research context because the Vietnamese banking industry has experienced substantial digital transformation and organizational restructuring in recent years. Commercial banks increasingly depend on technological expertise, collaborative learning, and organizational knowledge integration to respond to fintech competition and digital banking transformation. However, hierarchical organizational structures and communication barriers may continue influencing employee knowledge-sharing behavior. Therefore, understanding how organizational trust and sharing culture influence knowledge-sharing behavior becomes critically important for improving knowledge management capability within Vietnamese commercial banks.

This study aims to investigate the relationships among organizational trust, sharing culture, knowledge-sharing behavior, and knowledge management capability in Vietnamese commercial banks. Specifically, the study examines:

1. The influence of organizational trust on sharing culture;
2. The influence of sharing culture on knowledge-sharing behavior;
3. The influence of knowledge-sharing behavior on knowledge management capability;
4. The mediating role of sharing culture.

The study contributes to the literature in several important ways.

First, the study extends knowledge management literature by integrating Social Exchange Theory, Organizational Culture Theory, and the Knowledge-Based View into a behavioral framework explaining knowledge management capability.

Second, the study contributes to organizational behavior research by explaining how trust-based organizational environments facilitate collaborative culture and employee knowledge-sharing behavior.

Third, the study provides empirical evidence regarding organizational trust and sharing culture within an emerging banking market.

Finally, the findings provide important managerial implications for strengthening collaborative communication and knowledge-sharing practices within commercial banks.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1. Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (SET) explains social behavior through reciprocal interpersonal relationships involving trust, support, and exchange processes (Blau, 1964). According to SET, employees are more likely to engage in collaborative organizational behavior when they perceive fairness, support, and trustworthy organizational relationships.

Within organizational environments, trust-based relationships facilitate reciprocity, cooperation, and organizational communication (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Employees generally become more willing to contribute organizational knowledge when they perceive supportive organizational environments.

Knowledge-sharing behavior therefore represents an important form of social exchange because employees voluntarily contribute expertise and organizational knowledge to colleagues and organizational systems.

2.1.2. Knowledge-Based View

The Knowledge-Based View (KBV) considers knowledge the most strategically significant organizational resource (Grant, 2002). According to the KBV, organizations achieve sustainable competitive advantage when they

effectively create, integrate, and utilize organizational knowledge. Within knowledge-intensive environments, employee expertise and organizational learning become increasingly important organizational capabilities (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Consequently, organizations characterized by strong knowledge-sharing practices are generally more innovative and strategically adaptive. Knowledge-sharing behavior therefore functions as an important organizational mechanism transforming individual expertise into organizational capability.

2.1.3. Organizational Culture Theory

Organizational Culture Theory emphasizes the role of shared organizational norms, values, and behavioral expectations in shaping organizational behavior (Schein, 2010). Organizational culture influences communication patterns, collaborative interaction, and employee behavior.

Sharing culture specifically refers to organizational norms encouraging openness, communication, cooperation, and knowledge exchange (De Long & Fahey, 2000).

Organizations characterized by strong sharing culture generally facilitate organizational learning and collaborative communication. Within banking environments, organizational culture substantially influences knowledge-sharing behavior because employees frequently operate within formalized and hierarchical organizational structures.

2.2. Organizational Trust and Sharing Culture

Organizational trust refers to employees' confidence regarding organizational reliability, fairness, and interpersonal support (Mayer et al., 1995). Trust-based organizational environments generally encourage communication, collaboration, and collective learning (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Previous studies consistently suggest that organizational trust positively influences collaborative organizational culture because employees feel more comfortable communicating and cooperating within trustworthy environments (McAllister, 1995).

Employees working within high-trust environments are generally less concerned about interpersonal conflict, political behavior, or negative evaluation. Consequently, trust strengthens openness and collaborative interaction. Within commercial banks, organizational trust becomes especially important because banking environments frequently involve hierarchical communication systems and operational pressure.

Therefore:

H₁: Organizational trust positively affects sharing culture.

2.3. Sharing Culture and Knowledge-Sharing Behavior

Sharing culture refers to organizational norms encouraging openness, collaborative communication, and collective learning (De Long & Fahey, 2000). Previous studies suggest that organizations characterized by strong sharing culture generally encourage employees to voluntarily exchange organizational expertise and experiences (Lee & Choi, 2003).

Knowledge-sharing behavior frequently depends on organizational norms and collaborative expectations because employees are more likely to share knowledge when collaborative communication becomes socially accepted and organizationally supported. Within banking environments, sharing culture may substantially reduce communication barriers and encourage collaborative problem-solving.

Consequently:

H₂: Sharing culture positively affects knowledge-sharing behavior.

2.4. Knowledge-Sharing Behavior and Knowledge Management Capability

Knowledge-sharing behavior refers to employees' willingness to exchange expertise, organizational experiences, and tacit knowledge with colleagues and organizational systems (Wang & Noe, 2010).

Previous studies consistently emphasize the importance of knowledge-sharing behavior for organizational learning and knowledge management effectiveness (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Organizations characterized by strong knowledge-sharing behavior are generally more capable of integrating employee expertise and facilitating collective organizational learning (Gold et al., 2001).

Knowledge-sharing behavior therefore contributes substantially to organizational learning capability, innovation capability, and operational flexibility. Within commercial banks, knowledge-sharing behavior supports customer responsiveness, technological adaptation, and collaborative service innovation.

Thus:

H₃: Knowledge-sharing behavior positively affects knowledge management capability.

2.5. Mediating Role of Sharing Culture

Sharing culture may function as an important organizational mechanism linking organizational trust and knowledge-sharing behavior. Trust-based organizational environments generally encourage collaborative norms and communication openness (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Employees working within trustworthy organizational cultures are more likely to perceive collaboration and knowledge exchange as socially acceptable organizational behavior. Sharing culture subsequently encourages employees to voluntarily exchange expertise and organizational knowledge. Therefore, sharing culture explains how organizational trust facilitates employee knowledge-sharing behavior.

2.5.1. Consequently

H₄: Sharing culture mediates the relationship between organizational trust and knowledge-sharing behavior.

Based on these previous studies, this research proposes the theoretical framework depicted in Figure 1.

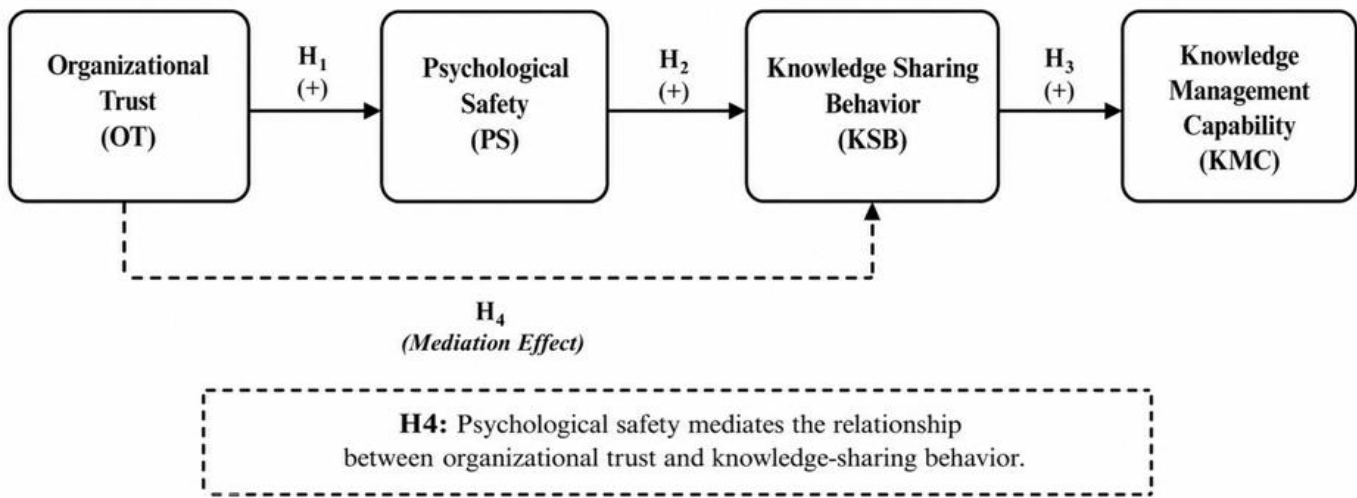


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model.

Note: Solid arrows indicate direct effects. The dashed line indicates the indirect (mediating) effect. (+) indicates a positive relationship.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach using cross-sectional survey data to examine the proposed relationships among organizational trust, sharing culture, knowledge-sharing behavior, and knowledge management capability.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed because the proposed model includes multiple latent constructs and mediation relationships (Hair et al., 2017).

3.2. Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire was developed based on measurement scales adapted from previous studies related to organizational trust, sharing culture, knowledge-sharing behavior, and knowledge management capability. The original English scales were translated into Vietnamese using translation and back-translation procedures to ensure linguistic consistency.

Pilot testing was conducted with banking employees and academic experts to improve questionnaire clarity and contextual suitability.

3.3. Sample and Data Collection

The research population consisted of employees working in Vietnamese commercial banks located in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Respondents included operational employees, specialists, middle-level managers, and senior managers.

A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed through online and direct survey methods.

After eliminating incomplete responses, 319 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis.

3.4. Measurement Scales

Table 1. The study employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).

Construct	Items	Sources
Organizational Trust	5	Mayer et al. (1995)
Sharing Culture	5	De Long & Fahey (2000)
Knowledge-Sharing Behavior	5	Bock et al. (2005)
Knowledge Management Capability	5	Gold et al. (2001)

3.5. Data Analysis Techniques

SPSS and AMOS software were employed for statistical analysis.

The analytical procedures included:

- Descriptive statistics;
- Reliability analysis;
- Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA);
- Structural Equation Modeling (SEM);
- bootstrapping mediation analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Respondent Profile

Among the 319 respondents, female employees accounted for 53.9%, while male employees represented 46.1%. Most respondents were between 25 and 44 years old.

The majority possessed undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications. Operational employees represented the largest proportion of participants.

4.2. Reliability and Validity Assessment

All constructs achieved Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 2. Reliability Analysis Results.

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Organizational Trust	0.882
Sharing Culture	0.874
Knowledge-Sharing Behavior	0.896
Knowledge Management Capability	0.907

Composite Reliability values exceeded 0.70, while Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values exceeded 0.50.

Table 3. Measurement Model Assessment.

Construct	CR	AVE
Organizational Trust	0.901	0.645
Sharing Culture	0.889	0.613
Knowledge-Sharing Behavior	0.918	0.691
Knowledge Management Capability	0.926	0.713

4.3. Structural Model Assessment

The structural model demonstrated satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices.

Table 4. Model Fit Indices.

Fit Index	Threshold	Result
Chi-square/df	<3.0	2.09
CFI	>0.90	0.961
TLI	>0.90	0.953
RMSEA	<0.08	0.056
SRMR	<0.08	0.047

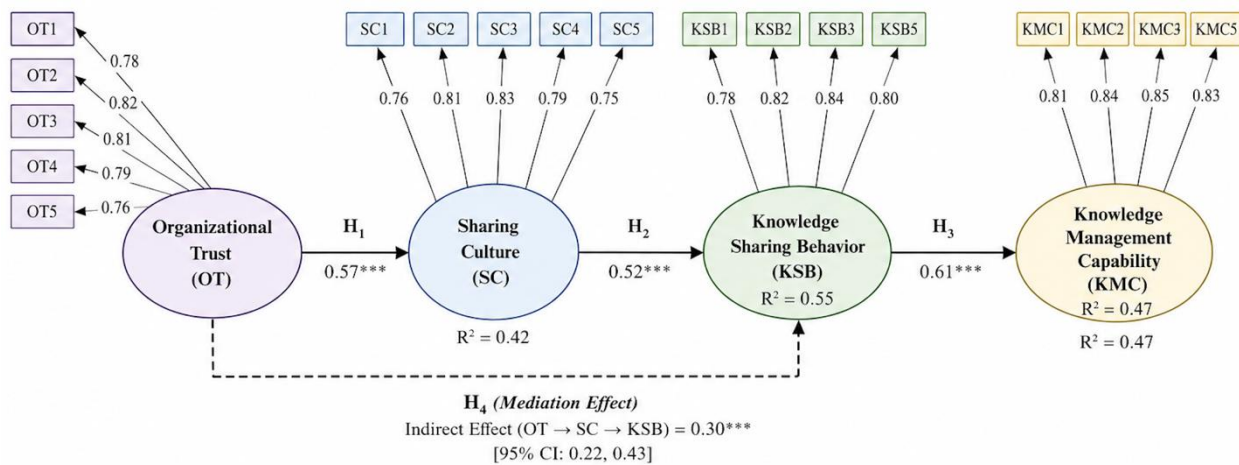


Figure 2. SEM Results.

4.4. Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results.

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	OT → SC	0.57	10.28	<0.001	Supported
H2	SC → KSB	0.52	9.67	<0.001	Supported
H3	KSB → KMC	0.61	11.38	<0.001	Supported
H4	OT → SC → KSB	0.30	5.74	<0.001	Supported

The findings reveal that organizational trust significantly influences sharing culture.

Sharing culture also positively affects knowledge-sharing behavior, while knowledge-sharing behavior significantly enhances knowledge management capability.

Bootstrapping analysis confirmed that sharing culture significantly mediates the relationship between organizational trust and knowledge-sharing behavior.

5. Discussion

The findings provide important insights regarding organizational trust, sharing culture, and knowledge management capability within Vietnamese commercial banks.

First, organizational trust significantly influences sharing culture. This finding suggests that employees working within trustworthy organizational environments are more likely to engage in collaborative communication and collective learning. Trust reduces interpersonal barriers and encourages organizational openness (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Within banking environments characterized by hierarchical structures and operational pressure, organizational trust becomes especially important for encouraging communication and collaborative interaction.

Second, sharing culture significantly influences knowledge-sharing behavior.

This finding supports Organizational Culture Theory and previous knowledge management studies emphasizing the importance of collaborative organizational norms (De Long & Fahey, 2000). Employees are more

likely to exchange organizational knowledge when collaborative communication becomes socially accepted and organizationally encouraged.

Third, knowledge-sharing behavior significantly enhances knowledge management capability. Organizations characterized by strong knowledge-sharing behavior are generally more capable of integrating organizational expertise and facilitating collective learning (Gold et al., 2001). Within commercial banks, knowledge-sharing behavior contributes substantially to customer responsiveness, operational flexibility, and technological adaptation.

The findings also reveal the important mediating role of sharing culture. Sharing culture functions as an organizational mechanism explaining how trust-based organizational environments encourage employee knowledge-sharing behavior. This finding represents an important theoretical contribution because it demonstrates that organizational trust alone may be insufficient unless collaborative organizational norms supporting communication and knowledge exchange are also developed.

From a managerial perspective, commercial banks should strengthen trust-based leadership and collaborative communication practices. Managers should encourage openness, reduce communication barriers, and support collaborative learning activities. Commercial banks should also strengthen organizational culture supporting knowledge exchange, teamwork, and collective learning. Furthermore, reward systems and leadership practices should encourage employees to voluntarily contribute organizational knowledge and collaborative expertise.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among organizational trust, sharing culture, knowledge-sharing behavior, and knowledge management capability in Vietnamese commercial banks. The findings reveal that organizational trust positively influences sharing culture, while sharing culture significantly enhances knowledge-sharing behavior and knowledge management capability.

The study contributes to the literature by integrating Social Exchange Theory, Organizational Culture Theory, and the Knowledge-Based View into knowledge management research. The findings also demonstrate that sharing culture functions as an important organizational mechanism linking organizational trust and employee knowledge-sharing behavior. Commercial banks should therefore strengthen trust-based organizational environments and collaborative communication culture to improve knowledge management capability and organizational learning.

Future research may extend the model to other industries and examine additional variables such as leadership style, employee engagement, organizational commitment, and innovation capability.

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