

FRAMING PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS EFFECT ON  
KNOWLEDGE SHARING BEHAVIOUR: MODERATING ROLE  
OF ISLAMIC WORK ETHICS

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## DEDICATION

In the name of most merciful and loving ALLAH S.W.T and all the highest appreciations be upon Him. This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Javaid Akhter S/o Haji Muhammad Aqber and Akseer Bibi D/o Farooz Khan, and my maternal brother Mr, Mubashir Javaid who have supported me in mentally, financially and spiritually all the aspects in my student life until now. It is also dedicated to my beloved sister, Sumera Yasmeen and Sidra Yasmeen, nieces, nephews. This thesis also dedicated to my mentor Dr, Farhan Aadil and Dr, Muhammad Yasir who motivated me in all aspects of my life and make me happy in the way of my study life.



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## ABSTRACT

Knowledge Sharing Behaviour (KSB) is an important activity for organizations and managing knowledge is critical to the organization's survival. However, preliminary interviews conducted with two managers at telecommunication companies in Pakistan, highlighted that KSB is low. Moreover, there were limited researches devoted to the psychological factors, Islamic work ethics (IWE) and KSB in Pakistan despite the fact that more than 90% of Pakistanis are Muslim. IWE not only promotes positive ethical behaviour but also position KSB as an important facet of Islamic values. The underpinning theory of this research was Social Cognitive Theory which examined the effects of psychological factors (self-efficacy, expectations and personality traits) on KSB. Based on contingency approach, IWE was hypothesized to moderate the relationship between psychological factors and KSB. This study adopted a quantitative research approach and used convenience sampling technique to select the respondents. Four hundred and fifty data were collected from seven different telecommunication companies in Pakistan and were analysed using SPSS and PLS-SEM. It is found that there are positive relationships between self-efficacy, personality traits (except neuroticism), expected reward and KSB in Pakistan telecommunication industry. IWE did not moderate the relationship between expectations and KSB. Nevertheless, it moderates the relationship between personality (except neuroticism) and self-efficacy with KSB. The findings of this research have both empirical and managerial contributions. It validates the use of Social Cognitive Theory in understanding KSB and fill in the empirical gaps. In conclusion, managers in telecommunication industry should select employees that are extroverted, have openness to experience and high self-efficacy to promote KSB in the companies.

## ABSTRAK

Tingkah laku Perkongsian Pengetahuan (KSB) adalah suatu aktiviti yang penting untuk sesebuah organisasi dan pengurusan pengetahuan adalah kritikal bagi kelangsungan sesebuah organisasi. Walau bagaimanapun, hasil temubual yang dijalankan dengan dua orang Pengurus di syarikat telekomunikasi di Pakistan, mendapati bahawa tahap KSB di kalangan pekerja adalah rendah. Selain itu, tidak banyak kajian yang mengkaji kesan factor-faktor psikologi ke atas KSB dan Etika Kerja Islam (IWE) walaupun terdapat lebih 90% rakyat Pakistan beragama Islam. Etika Kerja Islam bukan sahaja mengalakkan tingkahlaku beretika tetapi juga meletakkan tingkah laku Perkongsian Pengetahuan sebagai nilai penting dalam agama Islam. Teori asas kajian ini adalah Teori Kognitif Sosial yang berkisar kepada kesan faktor-faktor psikologi (jangkaan, efikasi dan personaliti) ke atas KSB. Teori kontingensi pula menjelaskan peranan Etika Kerja Islam sebagai moderator dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kajian kuantitatif serta kaedah persampelan mudah untuk memilih responden. Empat ratus lima puluh data telah dikumpul dari tujuh buah syarikat telekomunikasi di Pakistan dan telah dianalisis dengan menggunakan SPSS dan PLS-SEM. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan positif antara ciri-ciri efikasi sendiri, personaliti (kecuali neurotikisma) dan jangkaan ganjaran dengan KSB. Sumbangan kajian ini dapat dilihat dari sudut empirikal dan praktis. Ia mengesahkan penggunaan Teori Kognitif Sosial dalam memahami KSB dan mengisi jurang empirikal yang sedia ada. Akhir sekali, pengurus dalam industri telekomunikasi perlu memilih pekerja yang ekstrovert, mempunyai sikap keterbukaan kepada pengalaman dan mempunyai efikasi sendiri yang tinggi untuk menggalakan KSB di dalam organisasi.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>III</b>
	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>IV</b>
	<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>V</b>
	<b>ABSTRAK</b>	<b>VI</b>
	<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>VII</b>
	<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>XIII</b>
	<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>XV</b>
	<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATION</b>	<b>XVI</b>
	<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	<b>XVII</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Research Background	1
	1.2 Problem Statement	3
	1.3 Research Questions	5
	1.4 Research Objectives	6
	1.5 Significance of the Research	6
	1.6 Scope of the Research	7
	1.7 Definitions	8
	1.7.1 Self-efficacy	8
	1.7.2 Expectations	8
	1.7.3 Personality Traits	8
	1.7.4 Islamic Work Ethics	9
	1.7.5 Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	9
	1.8 Thesis Structure	9
	1.9 Conclusion	10

<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	Introduction	11
2.2	Overview of Telecommunication Industry in Pakistan	11
2.3	Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	17
2.3.1	Knowledge	18
2.3.2	Knowledge Sharing Definition	20
2.3.3	Importance of Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	22
2.3.4	Challenges of Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	30
2.3.5	Criticism of Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	32
2.4	Systematic Literature Review	32
2.4.1	Systematic Literature Review on Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	33
2.4.2	Factors Influencing of Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	36
2.5	Self-efficacy	40
2.5.1	Importance of Self-efficacy	41
2.5.2	The Relationship between Self-efficacy and Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	42
2.6	Expectations	44
2.6.1	Types of Expectations	45
2.6.2	The Relationship between Expectations and Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	47
2.7	Big-Five Personality Traits	51
2.7.1	Definition of Personality Traits	51
2.7.2	Dimensions of Big-Five Personality Traits	52
2.7.3	The Relationship between Big-Five Personality Traits and Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	55
2.8	Islamic Work Ethics	58
2.8.1	Ethics	59
2.8.2	Importance of Islamic Work Ethics	59
2.8.3	The Relationship between Islamic Work Ethics and Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	62
2.8.4	Islamic Work Ethics as a Moderator	63
2.9	Theories	66



2.9.1	Social Cognitive Theory	68
2.9.2	Contingency Theory	70
2.10	Research Hypothesis	71
2.11	Proposed Theoretical Framework	72
2.12	Conclusion	74
<b>CHAPTER 3</b>	<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>75</b>
3.1	Introduction	75
3.2	Research Process	75
3.3	Research Philosophy	78
3.4	Research Approach	80
3.4.1	Quantitative Research Approach	80
3.5	Research Design	81
3.5.1	Sample Design	81
3.5.2	Population of the Research	82
3.5.2.1	Sample Frame	82
3.5.2.2	Sampling Technique	82
3.5.2.3	Sample Size	83
3.6	Instrument Development	84
3.7	Measurement	85
3.7.1	Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	85
3.7.2	Self-efficacy	85
3.7.3	Personality Traits	86
3.7.4	Expectations	86
3.7.5	Islamic Work Ethics	86
3.8	Validity and Reliability	91
3.8.1	Validity	91
3.8.2	Reliability	92
3.9	Pilot Study and Pre-testing of Questionnaire	92
3.10	Data Collection Procedure	93
3.11	Data Analysis	93
3.12	Structural Equation Model	94
3.12.1	Partial Least Square (PLS)	95
3.12.2	Stages in the PLS-SEM Technique	96





3.12.3	Reflective and Formative Construct	96
3.13	Evaluation of Measurement Model	98
3.14	Evaluation of Structural Model	100
3.15	Conclusion	101
<b>CHAPTER 4</b>	<b>DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS</b>	<b>102</b>
4.1	Introduction	102
4.2	Pilot/ Pre-testing	102
4.2.1	Reliability Assessment	104
4.3	Data Analysis	105
4.3.1	Data Screening	106
4.3.2	Multivariate	112
4.4	Demographic Profiles of Respondents	113
4.4.1	Demographic Descriptive Statistics	113
4.4.2	Return Rate	115
4.4.3	Distribution of Respond based on Telecommunication Companies	115
4.5	Validity Assessment via Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)	116
4.5.1	EFA for Endogenous Variable Knowledge Sharing Behaviour	116
4.5.2	EFA for Exogenous Variable Psychological Factors	117
4.6	Evaluation Criteria	119
4.7	Assessment of Measurement Model	121
4.7.1	Convergent Validity	121
4.7.2	Discriminant Validity	125
4.8	Assessment of Structural Model	130
4.8.1	Path Coefficients	132
4.8.2	Coefficient of Determination ( $R^2$ )	133
4.8.3	Effect Size ( $f^2$ )	134
4.9	Assessing Moderation	134
4.9.1	Islamic Work Ethics as a Moderator	136



4.9.2	Moderating Interaction Effect between Psychological Factors and KSB	137
4.10	Hypothesis Testing	140
4.11	Conclusion	142
<b>CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION</b>		
		<b>143</b>
5.1	Introduction	143
5.2	Summary of Main Finding	143
5.3	The Study Findings and the Testing of Hypothesis	145
5.3.1	Group 1 Hypotheses: There is a positive relationship between self-efficacy and knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB)	145
5.3.2	Group 2 Hypothesis: There are positive relationship between expectations and Knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB)	146
5.3.3	Group 3 Hypothesis: There is a positive relationship between personality traits dimensions and knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB)	148
5.3.4	Group 4 Hypothesis: There is a positive relationship between Islamic work ethics and knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB)	151
5.3.5	Group 5 Hypothesis: Does Islamic work ethics moderate the relationship between Psychological factors (self-efficacy, expectations and personality traits) and knowledge sharing behaviour?	152
5.3.6	Final Model	154
5.4	Research Implication and Contribution	155
5.4.1	Theoretical Contribution	156
5.4.2	Practical Contribution	156
5.4.3	Policy Implication	157
5.4.4	Limitation of the Research	158
5.4.5	Recommendation for Future Research	159
5.4.6	Conclusion	160



**REFERENCE**

**162**

**APPENDIX A**

**202**

**APPENDIX B**

**203**



## LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Industrial contribution in GDP of Pakistan	12
2.2	Knowledge Sharing Definitions	21
2.3	Recent Publications on Knowledge-Sharing a across Disciplines	24
2.4	Number of variables founded from Database	34
2.5	Number of Reviewed studies with respect to publications years	35
2.6	Relationship between Psychological Knowledge-Sharing	39
2.7	Relationship between Expectation and Knowledge-Sharing	49
2.8	Definition of factors of Personality traits	55
2.9	Research Hypothesis	71
3.1	Determining sample size for a given population	83
3.2	Definition and Source of the Construct	87
3.3	Evaluation of measurement models	100
4.1	The respondent's information for pilot-test	103
4.2	Cronbach Alpha's Coefficient	104
4.3	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Reliability Test	105
4.4	Descriptive statistics	107
4.5	Skewness and Kurtosis Statistics	108
4.6	Tests of Normality	110
4.7	Residuals Statistics	112
4.8	Frequency and Percentage of Categorical Demographic Variable	114
4.9	Return Rate	115
4.10	Distribution of Respondents by Telecom Industry	115
4.11	KMO and Bartlett's Test	116
4.12	Component Matrix	117
4.13	KMO and Bartlett's Test	117
4.14	Items Loading of Psychological Factors	118
4.15	PLS-SEM model evaluation criteria	120

4.16	Outer loadings of items on constructs	123
4.17	Composite Reliability	125
4.18	Discriminant Validity	127
4.19	Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT)	129
4.20	Path coefficients	133
4.21	Moderation of IWE on the relationship between PF and KSB	136
4.22	Moderating effect of size scale ( $f^2$ )	139
4.23	Result of hypotheses testing	140
5.1	Summary of the Research Hypothesis	144



## LIST OF FIGURES

2.1	Annual Cellular Operator Subscriber in Pakistan	15
2.2	Data, information and knowledge	19
2.3	Proposed Framework	73
3.1	Research Process	77
3.2	Research Onion	79
3.3	Inductive and Deductive Approaches	80
3.4	Stages in PLS-SEM	97
3.5	Diagram of Reflecting and Formative Constructs	98
4.1	All variables Q-Q Plot	111
4.2	Structural Model	131
4.3	Structural Model with Moderation	135
4.4	Significant Moderating Effect of IWE	139
5.1	New Development Model	155



## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

<i>KM</i>	-	<i>Knowledge Management</i>
<i>KSB</i>	-	Knowledge Sharing Behaviour
<i>IWE</i>	-	Islamic Work Ethics
<i>SCT</i>	-	Social Cognitive Theory
<i>SE</i>	-	Self-Efficacy
<i>PTT</i>	-	Personality Trait Theory
<i>BFM</i>	-	Big Five Model
<i>FFM</i>	-	Five Factor Model
<i>PTA</i>	-	Pakistan Telecom Authority
<i>KM</i>	-	Knowledge Management
<i>SLR</i>	-	Systematic Literature Review
<i>OTE</i>	-	Openness to Experience
<i>JS</i>	-	Job satisfaction
<i>JP</i>	-	Job Performance
<i>PT</i>	-	Personality Trait
<i>PWE</i>	-	Protestant Work Ethics
<i>OC</i>	-	Organizational commitment
<i>IC</i>	-	Innovation capability
<i>EL</i>	-	Ethical leadership
<i>EI</i>	-	Emotional intelligence
<i>LP</i>	-	Leadership practices
<i>SEM</i>	-	Structural Equation Modelling

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
A	List of Publications	202
B	English Version Questionnaire	203



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Background

Knowledge is the main source of the organizational growth. It helps the organization to build basic skills and creates more opportunities. Based on existing knowledge, organizations make new strategies to improve their processes, do innovation and change way of work in order to create sustainable competitive advantages (Johannessen, Olaisen & Olsen, 2001). To perform daily tasks, make business strategies and do innovations an employee make use of existing knowledge and data to produce better results. This is why organizations put investments on employee training to enable them increase personal knowledge and share with others.

Knowledge sharing is not a new phenomenon but knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB) among individual employee has been linked with the overall effectiveness in an organization (Noaman & Fouad, 2014). The effectiveness in an organization can be further improved if employees exchange useful knowledge with one another. In addition, organization could be more effective when they have the culture of sharing knowledge through forums, internal trainings (Conner & Prahalad, 1996; Lin & Lo, 2015). The KSB among employees generates opportunities for learning, applying and designing new skills, which in turn decreases production expenditure, improves organizational performance and improves creativity competency (Wang & Noe, 2010; Wang & Wang, 2012). According to Amin, Hassan, Ariffin and Rehman (2011), KSB is a voluntary act among employees in an organization. Furthermore, every other resources diminish when put to use but KSB increases organizational competence (Usoro, Sharratt, Tsui & Shekhar, 2007). Therefore, knowledge sharing is beneficial to organization's effectiveness.

Previous studies have suggested KSB as a process where individual shared relevant expertise and job-related knowledge with each other in the organizations, which can contribute to the ultimate success of the organization (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). Knowledge-sharing is also a process where employees exchange their knowledge to generate new knowledge. KSB is considered to be a key factor for achieving sustained organizational success in the new era (Liou, Chih, Yuan & Lin, 2016). An employee is considered a key element for managers in KSB processes (Almeida, Lesca & Canton, 2016). Knowledge is a great deal to be created and collectively held when sharing of knowledge takes place among employees. As employees are central to KSM, the psychological factors are inherent issue to be focused on. Using the Social Cognitive Theory, this study attempts to examine the roles of psychological factors on KSB.

In retrospect, there has been an increasing research interest on variables affecting KSB such as demographic factors, performance and satisfaction (Kassim, 2006), corporate social responsibility, (Hamid & Atan, 2011), and perceived justice (Nikbin, Ismail, Marimuthu & Armesh, 2012) in telecommunication industry. However, there are few studies conducted on factors affecting KSB in the telecommunication organization in Pakistan.

Moreover, Muslims play a dynamic role with telecommunication companies operating in Pakistan. Religion motivates employees to achieve certain goals and religions to adopt certain values in the workplace (Ali, Falcone & Azim, 1995). Ali (1996) postulated that IWE plays a key role in bringing about positive change in the organization which include promoting KSB. It is moral responsibility of individuals to do their work in a cooperative and supportive manner towards their employees or colleagues, thus considering a more positive act that ultimately increases the outcome of work.

Telecommunication industry in Pakistan is very attractive to foreign investors due to availability of human resources (Pakistan has 197 million population) and its strategic position (Yasir, Khan & Shakir, 2015). It is investment heaven for telecommunication investors due to the growing population of mobile phone users and the incentives provided by the government. In Pakistan, Mobilink is the market leader with 38% of the market share, Telenor has the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest market share of 29%, Zong is having a market share of 20% and Ufone has 13% of market share that is very less as compared to the other companies (PTA Quarterly Annual Report, 2017). The

revenue growth of telecommunication was increasing this year by 15% as compared to last year which was 2% (PTA Quarterly Annual Report, 2017). The telecommunication continues to contribute to Pakistan's economy. Telecommunication in Pakistan offers services in more than 3,500 cities and towns, covering more than 90% of the population.

It is evident from this discussion that telecommunication industry is indeed an important industry to fuel the Pakistan's economy and socio-politics. The scarcity of studies on psychological factors on KSB in telecommunication industry lend support to the empirical gap. The inclusion of IWE is deemed necessary as majority of Pakistanis are Muslims.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB) practice in an organization is beneficial to the management as well as the employees because it would help to improve the work processes. KSB is also required in the industry more than before because of the evolving business environment and potentials for growth (Sharifkhani, Pool, & Asian, 2016). Similarly, as the telecommunication industry is shifting towards digital services, KSB becomes more important.

Preliminary interviews conducted with managers at telecommunication companies on in Pakistan (Personal Communication, 2017), highlighted that KSB is low among employees. The managers claimed that the major constraint to KSB is attributed to employee's self-confidence, personalities and expectations. Majority of employees are not sociable and interactive which hinder knowledge sharing processes. They also do not realize the value and benefit of shared knowledge. The fear or less self-confidence among individuals of losing superiority when sharing knowledge may increase perceived job insecurity. As knowledge is a powerful resource, sharing them might cause losing competitive advantage in industry. This notion is supported by Kang *et al.* (2008) who claim that employees who work in the organization did not share their best knowledge with others because of fear that their ideas may be stolen. Moreover, several employees might have low self-efficacy and realization of the value and benefits of sharing knowledge with others. Knowledge sharing should increase not only the employees' competencies but also increase self-confidence.

The current study focuses on the telecommunication industry in Pakistan, where the dominant religion is Islam. An Islamic work ethic embraces values such as hard work, collaboration, and ethically responsible conduct and is deeply grounded in how Muslim employees perceive their appropriate industrial roles (Khan & Rasheed, 2015). According to Hanefar, Sa'ari and Siraj (2016) Islamic work ethics (IWE) are not widely discussed in the context of an academic world and Islamic society. Perhaps, telecommunication companies do not emphasize IWE or any religion-based work ethics. As mentioned by Tufail, Ahmad, Ramayah, Jan & Shah (2017), IWE was not officially practiced in most organizations. The inconsistent findings suggest that the relationship between psychological factors and KSB may be influenced by a moderating variable, in particular, Islamic work Ethics (Kumar & Rose, 2012). However, this serves as the major important gap in the literature and Islam is the national religion of Pakistan, thus, it is proposed that IWE to be considered as a moderator among psychological factors and KSB.

On the theoretical perspective, previous researches in Pakistan have attempted to examine the factors that impede, determine and encourage knowledge-sharing in the education sector, pharmaceutical industries and banking industries (Bibi & Ali, 2017; Zubair, Ahmad & Ahmed, 2014; Yousaf, Ali, Sohaib & Ihsan, 2013). Other studies used variables such as collaborative, teams commitment, interpersonal belief, HR practice in organizations, and individual expertise in leadership as the factors that affect knowledge-sharing of workers in Pakistani organizations (Ahmed, Shahzad, Aslam, Bajwa & Bahoo, 2016; Tahir *et al.*, 2012). However, most of these studies concentrated on investigating the institutional factors and to some extent the socio-cultural factors with few others superficially including the behavioural elements (Mohammed, 2018).

The identified discrepancy of psychological factors is traceable to the behaviour of employees towards their sharing of knowledge. According to Mohammed (2018), the unwillingness of employees to share their knowledge could be attributed to the interplay of some psychological factors such as a form of personal, social and cultural embeddedness. These psychological factors on the other hand, originating from social cognitive theory (SCT) of psychology and contingency theory (CT) which has been under-explored in Pakistan telecommunication industry. Therefore, investigating the willingness of individual's employees to share their knowledge with others in the future using the SCT and CT approaches become necessary. The

justification for using SCT and CT is because it shows the interaction among personal, behavioural and environmental factors and these factors are necessary components for behavioural choice for the current study (Mohammed, 2018).

Moreover, there is the dearth of research covering combined effect of psychological factors (self-efficacy, personality traits and expectations) and KSB in the telecommunication industry in Pakistan as highlighted in grey areas, give a clear justification for conducting this study. Iqbal and Asrar-ul-haq (2017) indicate that research on investigating KSB with psychological factors in a different industry is required in Pakistan. Literature revealed that few studies have been conducted on factors encouraging shared knowledge practice in organizations (Muqadas, Rehman & Aslam, 2017). Despite the significance of KSB among telecom employees and importance of telecommunication, no study has been undertaken to examine the psychological factors that determine KSB of telecommunication employees in Pakistan (Teh, Yong, Chong & Yew, 2011). Therefore, it implies that very little research is done on the psychological factors (expect of self-efficacy, personality traits and expectations) and their effects on KSB with the moderating role of Islamic work ethics. Thus, this study mainly focuses on Pakistan telecommunication industry identified as the major gap in KSB in the country.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions are raised:

- i. What is the impact of psychological factors (self-efficacy, expectations and personality traits) on knowledge sharing behaviour in the telecommunication industry?
- ii. What is the impact of Islamic work ethics on knowledge sharing behaviour in the telecommunication industry?
- iii. Does Islamic work ethics moderate the relationship between psychological factors (self-efficacy, expectations and personality traits) and knowledge sharing behaviour?

#### 1.4 Research Objectives

In other to provide answers to the research questions raised, the following specific objectives were pursuit:

- i. To determine the impact of psychological factors (self-efficacy, expectations and personality traits) on knowledge sharing behaviour in the telecommunication industry.
- ii. To determine the impact of Islamic work ethics on knowledge sharing behaviour in the telecommunication industry.
- iii. To determine the moderating role of Islamic work ethics in the relationship between psychological factors (self-efficacy, expectations and personality traits) and knowledge sharing behaviour in the telecommunication industry.

#### 1.5 Significance of the Research

This study is expected to benefit both practitioners and researchers in the field of KSB. The study seeks to extend the current literature by providing empirical findings based on KSB. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by combining the effects of psychological factors and IWE on KSB while focusing on Pakistan telecommunication industry. Knowledge sharing behaviour is an important area to all industries but has not been focused by earlier researchers specifically in Pakistan telecommunication industries. Theoretical analysis was done with the help of surveys in telecommunication industry in Islamic state to put assumptions and recommendations for testing IWE relation with knowledge sharing parameters in the organization. By analysing the knowledge sharing behaviour of employees from different telecommunication industry it is foreseen that the finding of this research significantly contributed to the theoretical advancement in the area of knowledge sharing behaviour.

This study helps KS practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of what factors and patterns are involve in knowledge sharing process. Based on the study results, they can further work on the key factors to promote KS activities in telecommunication industries. This study mainly focuses on Pakistan telecommunication industry identified as the major gap in KSB in the country. It also addressed the relationship of employee trust, fairness and manager competency on KS

willingness, which would go a long way in reducing the barriers to KSB in the industries. To further minimize such barriers, managers need to understand the kind of knowledge shared between their employees. Hence, this study's findings would help to improve manager's competency in managing KSB in the telecommunication industries. Thus, it also helps employees to increase relevant knowledge and make more productivity within a limited time. This helps them to manage capacity and share latest updates related to their daily work.

Moreover, the finding of this study can help telecommunication industries to provide valuable guidance and information on how to make strategies for improving KSB in their organizations. Consequently, it helps assign the efforts to enhance abilities regarding the encouragement of knowledge-sharing and promotion among different employees within the telecommunication industries in Pakistan. By doing so, it helps to remove significant number of barriers in knowledge sharing behaviour faced by the telecommunication industries. This study further helps in sharing knowledge more effectively, which totally enhances organization market competitiveness and profitability.

### **1.6 Scope of the Research**

The research was limited to exploring the possibility of KSB in Pakistan telecommunication by identifying the factors that could influence the psychological factors such as self-efficacy, personality traits and expectations on KSB with moderating role of IWE. The telecommunication industry is one of the major sectors providing employment opportunities to workforce in Pakistan and is in the list of major contributors in Pakistan's GDP (PTA Annual Report, 2017). As a result, the study in the telecommunication industries were expanded toward positive behaviour and improve productivity. This study has also analysed the future of telecommunication in the context of KSB as well as the pros and cons of KS in Pakistan telecommunication. Respondents to this research were employees who are working in the seven telecommunication companies which are Mobilink, Telenor, Ufone, Zong, Wateen, Worldcall and Warid. In addition, this study used the quantitative method to achieve the research objectives because it gives the clearer numeric answer for findings which are very easy to be understood by the reader. In terms of geographical coverage, the

research only covered the province of Punjab. The reason for choosing telecommunications employees in Punjab province are headquartered in all industries are located in Punjab and has the largest number of employees (GDP et al., 2017). Specifically, the research area was limited to Islamabad aspect of telecommunication companies.

## **1.7 Definitions**

### **1.7.1 Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy relates to the belief of individual in their ability to efficiently use the skills and expertise that they keep to achieve their desired outcomes (Bandura, 1991).

### **1.7.2 Expectations**

According to Bock and Kim (2002) define expectations as beliefs about a future state of affairs and expectations state to the beliefs that individual has about the likelihood that they are responsible to accomplish their desired results. Expectations were divided into three types such as expected reward, expected association and expected contribution.

### **1.7.3 Personality Traits**

Personality is defined as the stability of an individual person includes emotional, intellectual and behaviour in different situations that structure to the Individual (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In emerging personality discussions, the most frequently raised traits for the discussions are that labelled openness to experiences, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness and neuroticism.



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