

# **The Influence of Internal Business Environment on Employees' Knowledge Sharing Intentions in Family Businesses in Sri Lanka**

Ravindra Hewa Kuruppuge, Ph.D.

Doctoral Thesis Summary



**Tomas Bata University in Zlín**  
**Faculty of Management and Economics**

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**The Influence of Internal Business Environment on  
Employees' Knowledge Sharing Intentions in Family  
Businesses in Sri Lanka**

Vliv vnitřního prostředí firmy na postoj zaměstnanců ke sdílení  
znalostí v rodinných firmách na Srí Lance

Author: **Ravindra Hewa Kuruppuge, Ph.D.**

Study Programme: P 6208 Economics and Management

Study Course: 6208V038 Management and Economics

Supervisor: doc. PhDr. Ing. Aleš Gregar, CSc.

Examiners: prof. Ing. Vojtěch Koráb, Dr., MBA  
doc. Ing. Miloslava Chovancová, CSc.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The literature on knowledge management indicates that the sharing of knowledge among the members of a business determines the long-term sustainability of a business through innovations, while the literature on family businesses shows that family businesses face challenges that often threaten their survival in the long-term. The present study is of the view that the employees of family businesses are in a position to change this situation by engaging in knowledge sharing practices. This study raised the specific question: why do the employees in family businesses not engage themselves in knowledge-sharing with the fellow employees? The main objective of the study was to develop a comprehensive model in human capital by reviewing the determinants of the employees' tacit and explicit knowledge sharing intentions in successful family businesses. The use of a mix of the survey method and the interview method enabled the researcher to develop and test the theories. The inductive approach based on the data collected using in-depth interviews of 10 key cases of family businesses explored the nature of the employees' knowledge sharing intentions. The deductive approach tested a set of hypotheses using the data collected from 390 employees employed in a selection of family businesses. While the qualitative data of the study were analysed using thematic analysis, the quantitative data of the study were analysed using multivariate multiple and hierarchical regression models. The qualitative data analysis indicated four main categories, namely sharer, company, knowledge, and family involvement. A detailed analysis of each category indicated the interconnection and interdependence of all categories together where individual motives & characters, institutional systems & procedures, teamwork, the nature of relationships, and leadership emerged as the major concerns of employees' knowledge sharing intentions. Quantitative analysis affirmed that employees' tacit KSIs have a greater influence on the explicit KSIs. The factors related to the organizational climate of the firm were identified as the key factors that determine the employees' tacit as well as explicit KSIs. Compared to the organizational climate, individual motivation and the social capital of the employees have little influence on the employees' KSIs. While the employees' attitudes mediate the relationship between social capital and KSIs, organizational identification partially mediates the relationship between the organizational climate and KSIs.

## ABSTRAKT

Literární zdroje zaměřeny na řízení znalostí indikuje, že sdílení znalostí mezi členy podniku vede k dlouhodobé udržitelnosti podniku pomocí inovací. Zatímco literatura zaměřena na rodinné firmy poukazuje na výzvy, které firmy tohoto typu ohrožují v kontextu dlouhodobé udržitelnosti na trhu. Tato práce je toho názoru, že zaměstnanci rodinných firem jsou schopni tuto situaci změnit tím, že se zapojí do praktik sdílení znalostí. Současně byla v práci představena otázka, proč se zaměstnanci rodinných podniků nezabývají sdílením znalostí se svými spolupracovníky? Hlavním cílem práce bylo vyvinout komplexní model lidského kapitálu tím, že prozkoumá determinanty záměrů zaměstnanců ke sdílení tacitních a explicitních znalostí v úspěšných rodinných firmách. Na základě využití smíšených metod umožnilo vyvinout a otestovat teorie. Induktivní přístup vycházející z dat shromážděných pomocí hloubkových rozhovorů s 10 klíčovými případy rodinných podniků vedl k prozkoumání povahy záměrů zaměstnanců ke sdílení znalostí. Deduktivní přístup testoval soubor hypotéz s využitím dat od 390 zaměstnanců z výběru rodinných firem. Zatímco kvalitativní data studie byla analyzována pomocí tematické analýzy, kvantitativní data byla analyzována pomocí mnohonásobných a hierarchických lineárních regresních modelů. Analýza kvalitativních údajů vedla k identifikaci čtyř hlavních kategorií. Mezi zmíněné kategorie patří sdílení, společnost, znalosti a zapojení rodiny. Podrobná analýza každé kategorie naznačila vzájemnou propojenost a závislost všech kategorií, kde se mezi hlavní záměry zaměstnanců ke sdílení znalostí řadí zejména individuální motivy a postoje, institucionální systémy a postupy, týmová práce, povaha vztahů a vedení. Kvantitativní analýza potvrdila, že záměry zaměstnanců ke sdílení tacitních znalostí mají větší vliv na záměry zaměstnanců ke sdílení explicitní znalostí. Faktory související s organizačním klimatem firmy byly identifikovány jako klíčové faktory, které určují záměry zaměstnanců ke sdílení tacitních a explicitní znalostí. Ve srovnání s organizačním klimatem má individuální motivace a společenský kapitál zaměstnanců malý vliv na záměry zaměstnanců ke sdílení znalostí. Zatímco postoje zaměstnanců zprostředkovávají vztah mezi společenským kapitálem a záměry zaměstnanců ke sdílení znalostí, přičemž organizační identifikace částečně zprostředkovává vztah mezi organizačním klimatem a záměry zaměstnanců ke sdílení znalostí.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

As Becker (2002) points out, in the 21st century, the world has reached a point where businesses are driven by knowledge resources embedded in human capital (HC). As a result, research studies in the area of knowledge management in businesses are multiplying, and their findings indicate that traditional physical resources, such as labour, capital and land, are gradually being replaced by intangible resources like knowledge, further affirming HC as the most precious resource in a firm (Ing-Long and Jian-Liang, 2014). Knowledge is also divided into two types as tacit and explicit (Polanyi, 1958). Interestingly, according to scholars, the value of this intangible resource increases when knowledge is shared with the aim of creating new knowledge and innovations (Choi et al., 2008). Moreover, a large body of literature in the field supports the argument that timely and efficient KS among executives and employees can create intellectual capital, which in turn enhances the firm's capabilities (Argote and Ingram, 2000; Kogut and Zander, 1992; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Miles et al (2008) argues that a major challenge faced by organizations is having to figure out the most effective methods of sharing, gathering, and applying knowledge en route to economic value creation. This argument implies that a firm's accumulation of knowledge is expressed through the actions of its employees. Yet, the main challenge to efficient knowledge management is making employees in an organization share with others the knowledge that is available only in their minds (Desouza, 2003). In addition, knowledge sharing (KS) behaviour is vital to organizations because it is relevant to the creation of new knowledge, which has a bearing on the competitiveness of the organizations. It is also a prerequisite for business success in the future (Krogh, Ichijo, and Nonaka, 2000). Therefore, enhancing the knowledge sharing behaviour of the employees of individual businesses is crucial to ensure the continuation of the business activities successfully. Yet, the employees' knowledge sharing behaviour is not static. Much depends on the nature of the business firm, too.

Family businesses (FBs), which are recognized as wealth creation agents, stand out as a separate type of business. Researchers identify a FB as 'a business entity which family and non-family members contribute to their vocation at the desire of the founders and their descendants keeping the ownership and management of their firm permanently in the family's hands' (Enrique et al., 2015, p 201). Obviously, one of the strategies that FBs practice in order to ensure their future survival concerns the promotion of intangibles, such as knowledge, which they inherit from earlier generations. The transfer of knowledge over generations has been identified as a strength (Chirico and Laurier, 2008). Similarly, human capital intangibles associated with FBs, such as knowledge, are mostly linked, among other things, to the founder-

entrepreneur's character, the values shared by the members of the family that is running the business or the knowledge acquired from ancestors, (Duh, 2014). Due to the relevance of such intangibles to business performance, HC in FBs is identified as a critical factor of business success and survival (Astrachan and Kolenko, 1994; Sirmon and Hitt, 2003). Understanding the knowledge sharing behaviour of the employees is not the only challenge for the owners and managers of FBs. A bigger challenge is to identify the knowledge sharing intentions (KSIs) of those employees who have accumulated the kind of knowledge that pertains to innovations related to products and services and the smooth functioning of the business gaining competitive advantage over similar firms.

## **1.2 Present State of the Researched Area**

According to Social Exchange Theory (Emerson, 1976), the exchange of benefits among the members in a diverse social context is common. The theory further posits that the social behaviour of exchanging benefits takes place among various units in sophisticated social contexts like business firms. The exchange of benefits between the employees and the firm is identified as a static relation that makes both parties stable. As far as the exchange of benefits is concerned, FBs are famous for offering welfare and other benefits to employees in a substantial manner (Kuruppuge and Gregar, 2017). Nevertheless, there is no much literature on the other side of the exchange, what the employees give to FBs in return. The future survival of FBs in general is at risk mainly due to their inability to make adequate product and service innovations for customers and create new knowledge, which helps business operations (Mojca, 2014). This finding indicates that the employees of FBs have failed somewhere to provide what the firms really need in return to their very good social welfare in FBs. As explained by the Social Exchange Theory, if both parties (the employees and the firm) are mutually benefited, FBs would also be able to generate and share new knowledge making an environment conducive to innovations. This idea is confirmed by the empirical studies on knowledge sharing, which have established that new knowledge and innovations are simply created in knowledge sharing activities (Suseno and Ratten, 2007). Such studies recognize the contradiction between the theories of social exchange and the actual practices seen in FBs.

AT the same time, earlier studies on knowledge capital show that effective knowledge transfer is one of the main indicators of long-term business success (Lane, Salk, and Lyles, 2001; Pak, Ra, and Park, 2009; Suseno and Ratten, 2007). Yet, the employees' knowledge sharing intentions (KSIs) differ due to various factors. One such factor, which earlier researchers have found, is the type of knowledge that facilitates the transfer of knowledge (Becerra, Lunnan, and Huemer, 2008). According to Becerra, Lunnan, and Huemer (2008), the employees' KSIs mainly fall into two categories: tacit and explicit



knowledge. Even though there are many studies on these two types of KSIs separately, very few studies have focused on both tacit and explicit knowledge together, and such studies, too, have produced inconsistent results (Dhanaraj et al., 2004). Some studies on KM have found that the internal business environment is one of the main determinants of the employees' KSIs (Hester and Meyer, 2012; Wolfe and Loraas, 2008). Few studies (Al-Alawi, and Mohammed, 2007; Bock et al., 2005; Ladd and Ward, 2002; Mueller, 2012) have explored organizational factors in general and the employees' knowledge sharing behaviour. Yet, only a limited number of studies have focused on the impact of the internal business environment on the employees' KS.

Further, most of the earlier studies of KS have mainly looked at manufacturing or service-oriented firms as their study context. Only a limited number of studies have explored specific business types like FBs. However, Literature on FBs confirms that the valuable knowledge, which could create innovations and develop product and process systems, resides within a limited number of individuals or groups who are closely related to the owning family (Shaker et al. 2007). Generally, employees of a FB are in a strong network of relationships. They possess a deep sense of self-identity, which facilitates KS among themselves. Yet, Lansberg (1999) found that senior members of a FB are reluctant to share their knowledge with the next generation due to family rivalries. Some family members show less enthusiasm or no interest at all to learn about their business even though they contribute to firm in some way. As a result, they have no knowledge to share with others (Grote, 2003; Miller et al., 2004). Further, the family members and non-family members in the business do not carry the same level of entrepreneurial and managerial expertise to meet the requirement of KS (Caberera-Suarez et al., 2001). Another common factor that could affect the employees' KS pattern is professional jealousy. Generally, non-family employees in FBs try to secure better job positions over others (Grote, 2003). As a result, an employee may think that it is against his/her self-interest to share his/her knowledge with other employees. Available literature not only on the developed Western business world, but also on the developing Eastern countries has indicated the same argument that employees are generally reluctant to share their knowledge with others. Gamage (2004) points out that the SME sector in Sri Lanka is highly dominated by FBs and that up to 85% of the SMEs face significant survival challenges while more than 75% of them fail within five years from the start of their business. Similarly, Ranasinghe (2011) argues that most of the businesses in Sri Lanka are struggling to survive in the long-run due to improper handling of HC. These two research findings establish that the majority of Sri Lankan FBs have not shown competitiveness the creation and maintenance of which is based on innovations and KS. Accordingly, family business literature of both Western and Eastern business worlds confirms that employees in family businesses are reluctant to share their knowledge with

others even though they have a deep sense of business identity and a close network within the business.

Based on this research gap in the area of KM, the researcher conducted a preliminary survey into the employees' knowledge-sharing practices in the context of FBs in Sri Lanka. A summary of the survey results is shown in Table 1.1

Table 1.1: Preliminary Survey Results on Employees' Opinion of Knowledge Sharing Practices in FBs in Sri Lanka

Employee opinion	Rate	Organization 01 (%)	Organization 02 (%)	Organization 03 (%)	Overall (%)
Employees' knowledge-sharing practices	High	21.4	14.3	21.4	<b>19.0</b>
	Average	57.1	50.0	50.0	52.4
	Low	21.4	35.7	28.6	<b>28.6</b>
Employees' skills-sharing practices	High	14.3	14.3	21.4	<b>16.7</b>
	Average	50.0	42.9	42.9	45.2
	Low	35.7	42.9	35.7	<b>38.1</b>
Employees' attitudes-sharing practices	High	21.4	28.6	14.3	<b>21.4</b>
	Average	35.7	35.7	42.9	38.1
	Low	42.9	35.7	42.9	<b>40.5</b>

Source: Preliminary survey by the researcher, 2014

Accordingly, the pilot survey resulted in the interestingly puzzling conclusion that the employees' tendency to share knowledge, skills and attitudes with fellow employees in FBs in Sri Lanka is either weak or moderate stage.

### 1.3 Research Problem

There is no doubt that effective KS in a business firm is a good indicator of long-term business success, especially where the internal business environment plays a significant role. Long-term business success is embedded in KS, as KS can create competitive advantages over similar firms through innovations and new knowledge. Nevertheless, FBs across the world face huge challenges in trying to attain success in the long-term, as in a majority of situations, they outperform in relation to non-family businesses in the short-run. In the meantime, the primary survey results indicate that the employees' knowledge sharing intentions in the context of FBs are moderate in an environment where the business runs successfully. This theoretical as well as the empirical gap with regard to KS among employees in FBs points in the direction of an interesting puzzle where the internal business environment of the business

plays a decisive role. The situation raises questions such as; Do employees of businesses share their knowledge? What kind of knowledge is shared by the employees? Why do the employees share their knowledge? In what ways is the knowledge transferred? What factors would be considered by employees in deciding to share/not share their knowledge? How does knowledge-sharing affects the business? These critical questions need to be addressed successfully, particularly given that a large number of businesses across the globe are run by families. Taking this situation into consideration, the present research sought to answer the overarching research problem, **‘Why do employees in FBs not engage themselves in knowledge-sharing with fellow employees?’**

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The study posed the following research questions in line with the research problem of this study. These research questions were created in relation to FBs in Sri Lanka.

1. How is knowledge sharing perceived by family and non-family employees?
2. What are the motives behind the employees’ decisions to share or not share their tacit and explicit knowledge?
3. Is there a relationship between the employees’ tacit and explicit KSIs?
4. In what ways do internal business environment factors influence the employees’ tacit KSIs?
5. In what ways do internal business environment factors influence the employees’ explicit KSIs?
6. Is there an intervening effect of employee attitudes on the relationship between the social capital of the employees and the employees’ tacit & explicit KSIs?
7. Is there an intervening effect of organizational identification on the relationship between the organization climate and the employees’ tacit & explicit KSIs?

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

The main objective of this research is to develop a comprehensive model in HC through an examination of the employees’ tacit and explicit KSIs of the case of sustaining businesses owned by families in the long-run. The other objectives of the study are as follows:

- To understand the perceptions of family and non-family employees about KS practices in FBs in Sri Lanka.
- To explore the driving motives of the employees, which can lever the intention to share or not share their tacit and explicit knowledge with fellow employees in FBs in Sri Lanka.

- To analyse the relationship between the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs in FBs in Sri Lanka.
- To examine the direct impact of each of the individual factors of the internal business environment on the employees' tacit KSIs in FBs in Sri Lanka.
- To examine the direct impact of each of the individual factors of the internal business environment on the employees' explicit KSIs in FBs in Sri Lanka.
- To review the intervening effect of employee's attitudes on the relationship between the social capital of the employees and the employees' tacit & explicit KSIs in FBs in Sri Lanka.
- To review the intervening effect of organizational identification on the relationship between the organizational climate and the employees' tacit & explicit KSIs in FBs in Sri Lanka.

## **1.6 Doctoral Thesis Outline**

This thesis will be contained by following main sections:

- 1) A comprehensive review of literature focusing on determinants of employee's knowledge sharing and family firms.
- 2) Understanding of internal business environment which affect to employee's knowledge sharing.
- 3) Operationalization of major factors/variables.
- 4) Extensive analysis of the variables of internal business environment and employee's knowledge sharing.
- 5) Discussion in detail about employee's knowledge sharing

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 The Argument of Reviewing the Literature**

The present global knowledge society identifies knowledge as the main source of business growth and sustainability. The traditional physical resources, such as land, capital, and labour, have been gradually replaced by knowledge resources which play a vital role in providing competitive advantages over other businesses. Further, as explained in the research problem, the employees of FBs have not shown significant enthusiasm regarding sharing their knowledge with their colleagues and companions within the firm. At the same time, FBs have been recognized in most economies as the most widely available and, at the same time, largely struggling type of business in the long-run operation. The main argument that the present literature review develops is as follows: **“The employees' knowledge sharing intentions differ comparatively in terms of**

**the type of knowledge (tacit & explicit) involved and is driven by the internal business environment which is of intervening by employees' attitude & organizational identification. In this regard, KS in FBs has a role to play in shaping the future of those businesses".** The literature review is organized under the following sub-sections: family business clarifications, Knowledge and knowledge sharing, why individuals are important?, internal business environment and determinants of tacit and explicit knowledge sharing, intervening aspects of knowledge sharing, and the role of knowledge sharing in case of business performance.

## **2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings**

This study seeks to explain the way workers conduct themselves in relation to KS in the context of the workplace. This type of study requires carefully identified variables and a well thought-out research design. The theoretical rigour of a research study helps the researcher to stay focused on the objective of the study, adhere to accurate methodology, and handle the data gathered from various sources effectively. Three theoretical lenses, namely Rational Action, Social Capital, and Field theories, were utilized to conceptualize the study problem and introduce a sense of theoretical rigour to the study. This Chapter elaborates these three theories. Finally, the antecedents of individual employees' KSIs in FBs are established based on these theories.

Rational Action or Rational Choice Theory was developed in recognition of the importance of the norms of individual behaviour. Established by Becker (1976), this theory argues that one's decision whether to carry out an offensive act or not is based on his or her analysis of the costs and benefits of the action in question. Numerous research studies on human behavior in the discipline of management have used this theory to explain the deviant behavior of individuals, like employees, managers, and customers.

Organizational, management, and social studies started to utilize social capital as a concept at different levels of individual and group analyses (Adler and Kwon, 2002). In general, among various definitions, scholars in this area are in agreement that social capital is created by a network of relationships among individuals and groups (Payne et al, 2011). Sometimes, social capital is recognized as the sum of latent or daily relationships, which individuals and groups have experienced, where such collaborations have shown the path to this latent capital (Fukuyama, 2001). Individuals and groups involved in such relationships embody pro-social behaviours as expected by the involved parties or community.

Field Theory explains how a group of individuals behaves in a physiological environment developed based on facts, which are considered mutually interrelated. According to this theory, individual behavior is shaped by field functions that people are engaged in (Martin, 2003). According to this

understanding, one's behaviour is determined by many factors which characterize the sub-society which he or she belongs to and where he or she develops activities interacting with others. As a result, if the organizational atmosphere is partial to knowledge sharing, individual employees are forced to share their knowledge. In the context of the present study, FT is used as theoretical lenses to elaborate the association of the organizational climate and tacit & explicit knowledge.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

The concept indicator model of a study structures the variables related to the research problem in a manner that facilitates the achievement of the research objectives. The development of the model in a research study takes place based on the theoretical and empirical findings of previous related studies.

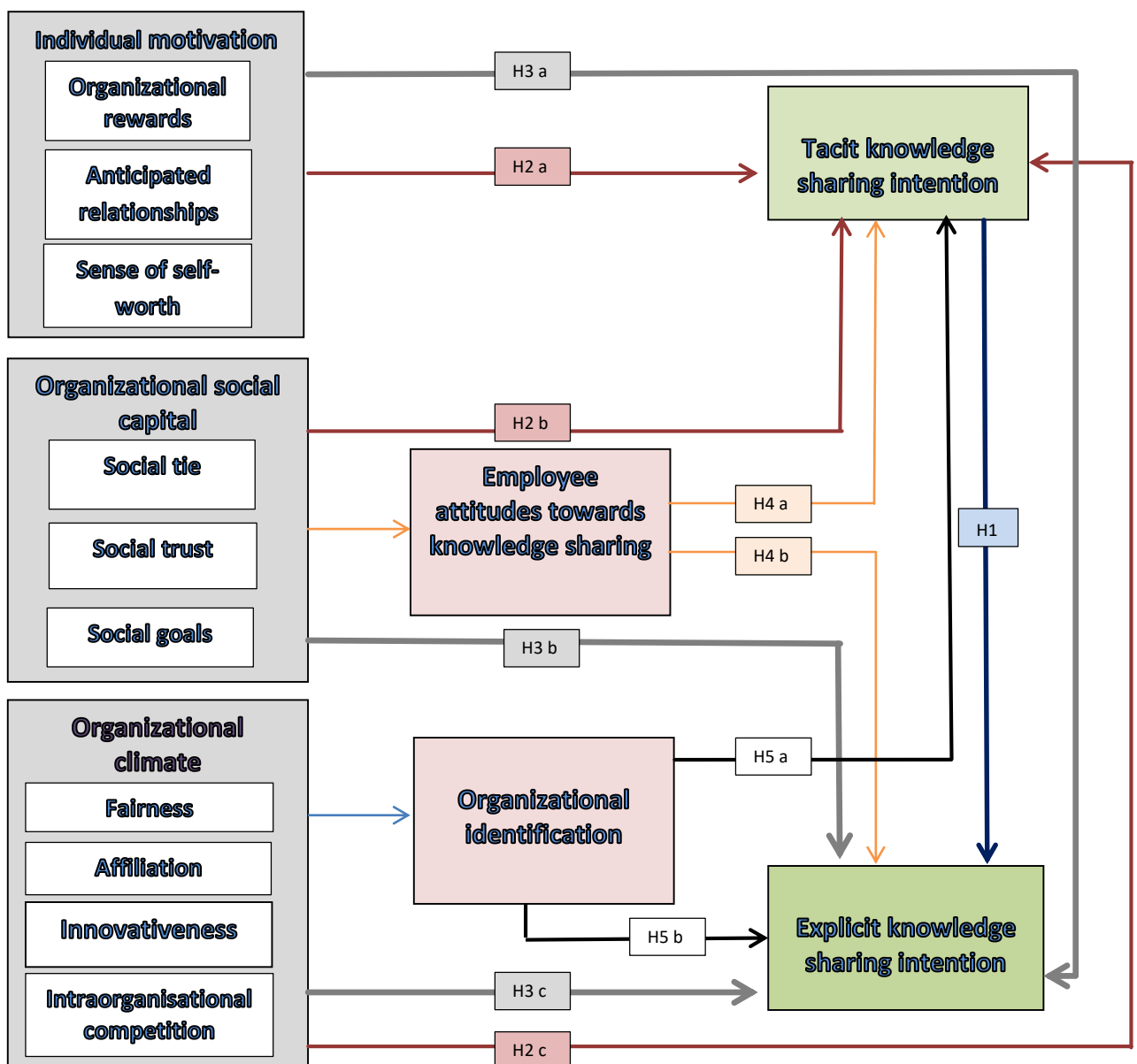


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

*Source: Researcher's original construction based on literature*

Firstly, the Literature Review of this study provided sufficient evidence to prove that the KSIs of the employees in FBs are of two kinds—tacit and explicit—thus pointing to two outcome variables. Secondly, it was also shown that existing literature support the argument that the internal business environment of FBs is a decisive determiner of the employees' KSIs. And this finding points to three predictor variables, namely individual motivation, social capital, and organizational climate of FBs. Thirdly, it was also found out that there is an intervening effect on the direct relationship between the predictor and outcome variables. Two variables show the intervening effect on this direct relationship. The required theoretical rigour for the conceptual framework was provided by three theories, namely the Rational Action Theory, the Social Capital Theory, and the Field Theory as shown in theoretical underpinning. Figure 2.1 which is the conceptual framework of this study indicates the relationship among the predictor, intervening, and outcome variables supported by the three main theories.

## 2.4 Operational Definitions of Key Constructs

It is difficult to find universally agreed upon definitions for most constructs/indicators, as constructs are physiologically developed based on the requirement of the studies. Therefore, the definitions of the key constructs of the conceptual model are given in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Definitions of Constructs and Indicators

Constructs / Indicators	Definitions	Key references
<b>INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION</b>		
<b>Organizational rewards</b>	The degree to which one believes that one will receive extrinsic incentives for one's knowledge sharing	Bock et al., (2005)
<b>Anticipated employee relationships</b>	The degree to which one believes one can improve his/her relationships with others through one's knowledge sharing	Deluga, (1998)
<b>Sense of self-worth</b>	The degree of one's positive cognition based on one's feeling of personal contribution to the organization (through one's knowledge-sharing behaviour)	Brockner, (1988)
<b>SOCIAL CAPITAL</b>		
<b>Social tie</b>	The degree of contact and accessibility of an employee with his	Chow and Chan,

	or her organizational members	(2008)
<b>Social trust</b>	The degree of an employee's willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of other members of the organization	Chow and Chan, (2008)
<b>Social goals</b>	The degree to which an employee shares collective goals, missions, and visions with the other members of the organization	Chow and Chan, (2008)
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE</b>		
<b>Fairness</b>	The perception that organizational practices are equitable and non-arbitrary or capricious	Koys and Decotiis, (1991)
<b>Affiliation</b>	The perception of togetherness	Farver, Kim and Lee (1995); Koys and Decotiis, (1991)
<b>Innovativeness</b>	The perception that change and creativity are encouraged, including risk-taking in new areas where one has little or no prior experience	Farver, Kim and Lee, (1995); Koys and Decotiis, (1991)
<b>Intra- organizational competitiveness</b>	Competition within an organization	Fred & Blake (1992)
<b>Employee attitudes towards knowledge sharing</b>	The degree of one's positive feelings about sharing one's knowledge	Bock et al., (2005)
<b>Organizational identification</b>	The perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization	Mael and Ashforth (1992)
<b>Tacit knowledge sharing intentions</b>	The degree to which an employee intends to engage in tacit knowledge sharing behaviour	Bock et al., (2005)
<b>Explicit knowledge sharing intentions</b>	The degree to which an employee intends to engage in explicit knowledge sharing behaviour	Bock et al., (2005)

*Source: Researcher original construction based on literature*



## 2.5 Research Hypotheses

The conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) elaborates the nature of employee behaviour in of the context of their KSIs in FBs. Figure 2.1 confirms that employee's KSIs are of two different kinds--tacit and explicit—and that KS is a function of the internal business environment of FBs. Accordingly, considering the nature of relationships displayed in the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are developed to test in the analysis of this study.

- H 1:** Tacit KSIs of employees of FBs are positively associated to their explicit KSIs.
- H 2:** Employees' organizational rewards, anticipated relationships and sense of self-worth in FBs are positively associated with their tacit and explicit KSIs.
- H 3:** The social tie, social trust and social goals of the employees working in FBs are positively associated with the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs.
- H 4:** The employees' attitudes towards KS mediate the relationship between the social capital and tacit & explicit KSIs of the employees in FBs.
- H 5:** The fairness, affiliation, innovativeness and intra-organizational competitiveness of FBs are positively associated with the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs.
- H 6:** One's sense of organizational identification mediates the relationship between the organizational climate and tacit & explicit KSIs of the employees in FBs.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

Locating this study in post-positivistic paradigm, the quantitative research methodology and deductive research approach are mainly used. The researcher's choice of methodology is mixed methods (Tashakkori and Cresswell, 2007) with more emphasis placed on questionnaire surveys as well as in-depth interviews. This study also accesses cross sectional, primary data both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, adaptation of features of explanatory design assisted finally, to develop the design the research as "combined design" (Cresswell, 2003).

The current study consists of two phases: qualitative phase (Phase 1) and quantitative phase (Phase 2). These two phases aim at testing the influence of the internal business environment on the employees' KSIs in FBs. While Phase 1 pursues the first and second objectives of the study, Phase 2 pursues the other

five objectives. The two objectives, which are explored through the qualitative approach, aim at understanding the content and context of the KSIs of the employees working in FBs. This stage, mostly took the form of case study research in the qualitative approach. Then, based on the emerging themes of the qualitative analysis, the collection and analysis of quantitative data was performed. In this stage, the study took the form of descriptive or exploratory research. Under this strategy, the qualitative analysis basically supplemented the quantitative analysis.

### **3.2 Data and Data Collection Methods**

As part of Phase 1 of the study, twelve (12) in-depth interviews were conducted based on an interview-guide with ten (10) respondents from the field of FBs in Sri Lanka. The two interview guides were used for the interviews with the employees and the owners. The interviews conducted with the respondents mainly consisted of open ended, semi-structured questions, which engaged with the history and development of the business/persons, the role of 'knowledge' in the business, different types of knowledge, KS among employees, the motives behind KS, business benefits and drawbacks of KS, the promotion of KS among the employees, and their experience with any critical incidents of KS in the firm. The primary data collection for Phase 2 of the study was carried out using a survey that involved the employees working in enterprising FBs in Sri Lanka. A structured, self-administered questionnaire (Tull and Hawkins, 2005) consisting of a seven-point Likert scale (Sekaran, 2009) was used for this purpose. The questionnaire was initially prepared in English based on measurements validated by other researchers and translated into Sinhalese using the back-to-back translation method (Mohatlane, 2014).

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Methods**

The ten respondents for the qualitative section of the study (Phase 1) were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The sample of ten respondents consisted of five senior employees who were working in FBs for more than twelve years, three family business owners, and two managers of FBs. These respondents were from different FBs. All these respondents, except for the owners, also became part of the quantitative survey.

As far as the quantitative section (Phase 2) of the study is concerned, the selection of respondents was done in two steps (Saunders et al, 2015). The first step was to select a sample of twenty (20) enterprising FBs, oriented towards skills-based manufacturing industries (population). These FBs were from twelve (12) different industries. The researcher applied the stratified random sampling technique, where the firms were divided into different strata and a sample was selected representing the different strata randomly. Again, the stratified random sampling technique was employed in selecting around 20 respondents from a FB. Stratified random sampling was used to make sure that the sample covers an

adequate number of employees from the members/relatives of the owning family, different job categories, different job orientations, etc. The sample size recommended for research in management is of 95 percent confidence level and a 5 percent margin of error (Saunders et al, 2015). Accordingly, using the Cochran's formula was used to select the sample from the population. This research includes three hundred-and-ninety (390) well experienced employees (more than one year of experience in the job) as respondents. The selection of about 20 respondents from each 20 FBs using the stratified random sampling technique resulted the total sample of this study (20 employees \* 20 firms on average).

### **3.4 Data Analysis Methods**

The data analysis for the qualitative part of the study was performed using an inductive approach (Kailasapathy and Metz, 2012). All the responses in the interview were recorded, transcribed, coded, and categorized along with accompanying extralinguistic gestures. The main themes and sub-themes were recognized manually using diverse codes. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) influenced by grounded theory was carried out to process interview data to reach the objectives of the study. In this process, the researcher's use of themes of interview data made the analysis more rigorous. Further, transcripts could be compared to arrive at new themes and categories, which enables one to recognize recurrent patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The second round of the analysis focused on combining the new and emergent themes together. At each round of analysis, the responses, which supported the main theme and sub-themes were taken into consideration in reaching a conclusion. In the meantime, the reliability and validity of the qualitative data were maintained practicing accepted practices of research methodology (Saunders et al, 2015) in the process of data collection and processing.

The tabulation of quantitative data took place parallel to the distribution and collection of the questionnaire. The responses to the questions were tabulated according to the sequence number given in the questionnaire. Both parametric and nonparametric tests were used to test the hypotheses. In addition to descriptive statistics, the main statistical tool/model of hypotheses testing used was multivariate multiple regression analysis. Hierarchical regression analysis was also used to test the hypotheses related to the intervening effects on the direct relationship between the predictor and outcome variables. These models provided adequate evidence to identify individual employee's KS practices. All the analyses and tests were done using the SPSS software.

## **4. DATA ANALYSIS (QUALITATIVE)**

### **4.1 The Development of Codes**

The development of codes of interview data was performed by the researcher systematically by following guidelines given by McCann and Clark (2003) through the theoretical lenses of three behavioural theories explained in the theoretical framework. Based on his prior knowledge of the theories, content, and context of the research study, the researcher started to code the transcribed interview data. The data of the interview held with one of the senior employees from a FB from the manufacturing industry were selected for the first coding. After reading the transcripts of that interview a couple of times, coding was performed by highlighting important statements in each paragraph/sentence using pens of different colours.

Based on the codes recognized in the first round of coding by Case One, all other 12 transcripts (10 respondents) were coded. This coding process resulted in the emergence of 60 diverse codes and 18 sub-categories. The successful coding process concluded with four categories, namely sharer (the unique character and attitudes of sharer and receiver/s), company (collective efforts that target united entity based on norms, practices, systems, and procedures), knowledge (a bundle of assumptions pertinent to the development of the firm), and family involvement (the influence of the members of the owning family), which emerged in the data analysis. It should be noted that five categories and few interrelationships are recognized by Wang and Noe (2010) in a similar study. However, the content and context of their study are qualitatively different from the present study.

## **4.2 Employees' Perception about Knowledge Sharing**

When analysing the employees' KS practices in FBs, it is important to understand how employees perceive the idea of KS in the firm, with a focus on how such assumptions relate to the actual KS practices of those employees. Accordingly, the researcher assigned a name to all individual cases separately. The five senior employees were named Case 1, Case 2, and so forth. The two owners were named Case 6 and Case 7, and finally the three family managers were given the labels Case 8, Case 9, and Case 10.

In the analysis of the employee's perceptions of KS, all four themes were analyzed to provide insights into the nature of KS in FBs. The researcher recognized a certain interrelation among these themes. The sharer, the company, knowledge, and family involvement have shown the interconnection in the context of the employees' KS practices in FBs. Interconnection among themes further confirms the larger scope of employees' KS in FBs. However, individual motives and characters, institutional systems and procedures (the sub-culture), team work, the nature of relationships, and leadership (favorable to KS or not) are determining themes of the employees' KSIs. Through their mixed-methods research, Cunningham et al. (2016) identified two different leadership approaches, namely participative leadership approach and supportive leadership

approach, which make KS visible in FBs. Further, as FBs are always surrounded by the members of the owning family, the congruence among the themes of KS is mostly centered on the factor of family involvement. However, determining factors of the employees' KS sometimes differ due to their relationship with the ownership. The same difference was evident in the perceptions regarding KS by the family and non-family employees.

Irrespective of their position as family or non-family employees, the respondents perceived KS as a voluntary activity than an obligation. However, KS is compulsory in teamwork. From the point of view of the employees, formal KS activities, such as training sessions and workshops are more valuable compared to informal KS in the firm. This is mainly due to the employees' perception that skills are not easy to transfer like knowledge and that knowledge can be transferred easily through formal training programmes. However, the employees are of the opinion that skills should be gained through experience in the firm. They also view the new recruits to the firm, as opposed to the senior employees of the establishment, as a group of people who need knowledge regarding the firm. Respondents believe that other employees in the firm should be treated same like how they are treated by the company in the past in case of KS. Due to this, employees' KS practices in present days in FBs reflect their past experience in the firm. Even though the existing literature highlights KS as a primary requirement for innovations and creativity, which are necessary attributes to ensure that the firm remains competitive in the market, the respondents' discussions rarely focused on the idea of innovation in the firm. This happens as KS is perceived by the employees only as a tool that makes a given job easy and not as a practice that gives rise to innovations.

Several conclusions could be derived on the basis of on the analysis of the interview data and relevant existing literature. However, the qualitative analysis finally ended with findings of: (1) The employees' KS practices in FBs in Sri Lanka is at a moderate level. (2) KS makes the employees' work efficient and effective in the firm. (3) The employees show a tendency to share EK than TK. (4) KS takes place more within the section where the concerned employs belong than among the sections. (5) KS is appreciated by both family and non-family members of FBs in Sri Lanka.

### **4.3 Employee's Motives behind Knowledge Sharing**

The second objective of the qualitative phase of this study is to explore the driving motives of the employees that result in leveraging their intention to share or not share their tacit and explicit knowledge with their fellow employees in FBs in Sri Lanka. It was observed in the analysis that one's decision to share or not share his/her knowledge depends on the characteristics of the individual (sharer motivation and recipient character), interaction & networking among the employees based on features like mutual trust, togetherness and commitment,

and finally the organizational sub-culture with family involvement, systems, procedures and practices. When digging further into the data, following motives and de-motives to share knowledge among employees appeared. Table 4.1 summerises the themes of motives of employees to share or not share their knowledge in FBs.

Table 4.1: Employees’ Motives for Decision to Share or not Share Their Knowledge with Fellow Workers

<b>Motives on decisions to share</b>	<b>Motives on decisions to not share</b>
Teamwork	Nepotism
Rewards, appreciation, and recognition	Employees’ turnover intentions
Supporting leadership	Job security
<b>Family involvement</b>	<b>Family involvement</b>

*Source: Researcher construction based on data analysis*

The analysis points to several interesting conclusions. Firstly, the business context has a critical role to play in shaping the employee’s KS practices in FBs. Creating a KS culture in FBs can be reached by making the firm’s policies and practices more friendly towards KS. Accordingly, the development of a familial business culture of KS through the generation of both owners and employees would be a possibility. This may be possible as many new employees of FBs are also recruited based on their relationship to existing employees of the firm (Kuruppuge and Gregar, 2017). Secondly, the themes of individual & team spirit, their demands, challenges, and visions are important for KS. As a result, interdependencies among the employees in performance in the job and outside the job and maintaining personal relationships among the employees and the owners would probably make a positive influence to KS. Thirdly, the degrees of trust and confidentiality maintained in relationships also determine the employee’s KSIs in FBs. As seen in the analysis, challenges and goals that the employees encounter in their jobs, motivate them to share their knowledge.

According to the analysis of the employees’ views, not only individual characters are critical, but also the organizational environment plays a key role in making KS in FBs. The individual member may be a family or non-family employee, knowledge sharer, or knowledge recipient. The organizational environment may contain with policies, practices, teamwork and work pressures. In this sense, the sharer & recipient motives for KS, perceptions regarding KS, groups, and teams of the firm, the contextual situation of the firm, and the sub-culture of the firm play a significant role in influencing the employee’s KSIs. More importantly, relationships among different players like among employees and between employees and the firm emerged as a main requirement of fulfilling a KS process. In this case, the relationships among different parties such as the

sharer and the recipient, the sharer and the nature of knowledge, the sharer and the firm as well as the firm and the nature of knowledge, the firm and recipient are critical in case of KS. Finally, it could be argued that the relationship between the recipient and the firm is critical for KSIs in FBs in Sri Lanka.

## 5. DATA ANALYSIS (QUANTITATIVE)

### 5.1 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

As discussed in the conceptual model, this study contained 14 variables where 10 variables were predictors, 2 variables were intervening variables and the other 2 were outcome variables (Table 5.1). All variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scales by a questionnaire and tabulated accordingly. The analysis of the measurements indicated that almost all variable values were reported above average (3.5). The highest value of all the variables is given by anticipating employees' relationships (5.9, SD=0.73) and the lowest is from both organizational rewards (4.41, SD = 1.01) and affiliation (5.41, SD = 1.06). Both tacit and explicit knowledge sharing intentions of the employees were reported as 4.91(SD = 1.01) and 4.90 (SD = 1.1) respectively.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Indicator	Mean	SD
Organizational rewards (ORE)	4.4064	1.01446
Anticipated employee relationships (ERE)	5.8779	.73339
Sense of self-worth (SWO)	5.3385	.83491
Social tie (STIE)	5.6658	.86952
Social trust (STR)	5.3761	.85638
Social goals (SGO)	5.5897	.82748
Fairness (FAI)	4.9607	1.45803
Affiliation (AFF)	5.4064	1.05909
Innovativeness (INN)	4.4385	1.18765
Intra-organizational competitiveness (IOC)	5.0048	.67372
Employee attitudes towards knowledge sharing (EAT)	5.2677	.74691
Organizational identification (OID)	5.5538	1.08268
Tacit knowledge sharing intentions (TKSI)	4.9821	1.01459
Explicit knowledge sharing intentions (EKSI)	4.9077	1.14801

Source: Survey data, 2017

## 5.2 Characteristics of Firms in the Sample

As explained in the methodology, the survey of employees was conducted in 20 FBs in 12 diverse industries. As shown in Table 5.2, a variety of industries was included in the survey and industrial contribution for the survey is given as a percentage. The majority of the respondents—85 respondents (21.9 % of the total sample)—were from the food and products industry.

Table 5.2: Nature of the Sample

Industry	No of firms	No. of response	Percent	Industry	No of firms	No. of response	Percent
Apparel	2	30	7.6	Leather products	2	54	13.9
Bakery Products	3	45	11.4	Machinery	1	15	3.8
Electronic and electrical	1	26	6.7	Pharmaceuticals	2	35	8.9
Food products	3	85	21.9	Property development	1	15	3.8
Hotel and restaurant	1	15	3.8	Retail	1	15	3.8
Jewellery	2	40	10.3	Timber and furniture	1	15	3.8

*Source: Survey data, 2017*

## 5.3 Characteristics of Respondents in the Sample

Knowing the responders' characteristics, as shown in Table 5.3, it is also important to reach precise conclusions in the study. The male respondents constituted 56.4% of the sample. Around 73 percent of the respondents had worked more than 6 years in their respective FBs. Among them, about 21 percent had more than 18 years of work experience in the respective firm. Yet, the respondents' having more than one year experience in the position, even though the firm they employed is different, is more than 91 percent of total samples. 65.1 percent of total respondents were not related to the owning families of the respective FBs. At the same time, around 65 percent of the respondents' jobs were oriented both in manual and machines. The respondents' responsibility of their positions also varied significantly. The sample contained 8 percent of top level managers, and they were either the owners or owner-managers of the FBs. The lower level managers and non-managers represented about 60 percent of the total sample.

Table 5.3: Socio-demographic Information of Respondents



Measure	Item	Frequency	Percent	Measure	Item	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	170	43.6	Gender	Male	220	56.4
Experience in the firm	< 6 yrs	107	27.4	Experience in the position	< 1 year	35	9.0
	6-12 yrs	154	39.5		1-5 years	75	19.2
	12-18 yrs	47	12.1		>5 years	280	71.8
	>18 yrs	82	21	Position	Top level manager	30	7.7
Link to owning family	Close relative	78	20.0		Middle level manager	127	32.6
	Relative	72	18.5		Low level manager	123	31.5
	Non-relative	240	61.5		Non-manager	110	28.2
Job orientation	Fully labour oriented	73	18.7				
	Fully machine oriented	63	16.2				
	Machine and labour oriented	254	65.1				

Source: Survey data, 2017

## 5.4 Testing Hypotheses

As explained in literature review, several hypotheses were set to address the research questions of this study. Nine main hypotheses containing several sub-hypotheses were set to test the direct and the intervening influence of the variables. Out of the nine main hypotheses, seven were set to examine the direct effect of a predictor variable on outcome variables. Accordingly, one main hypothesis was developed based only on the outcome variables: the tacit KSIs and explicit KSIs of the employees employed in FBs. A positive relationship is hypothesized in between two outcome variables. Three more main hypotheses were set to test the direct influence of the predictors: individual motivation,

social capital and organizational climate—on two outcome variables. A positive relationship is assumed in all of these three hypotheses.

#### **5.4.1 Direct influence of predictors on outcome variables**

To test the hypotheses related to the direct influence of the predictor variables on the outcome variables, a multivariate multiple regression model was used. Mainly, 10 predictor variables of 3 constructs (individual motivation, social capital and organizational climate), namely ORE, ERE, SWO, STIE, STR, SGO, FAI, AFF, INN, and IOC, were regressed against two outcome variables, namely TKSI and EKSI of the construct of the employees' KSIs. The model fits information about multivariate multiple regression confirms that 53 percent of variance [R Squared = 0.535 (Adjusted R Squared = .520) at DV is TKSI] and 58 percent variance [R Squared = 0.581 (Adjusted R Squared = .567) at DV is EKSI] of outcome variable is explained by the predictor variables.

As shown in Table 5.4, in the construct of the employees' KSIs, the variable of tacit KSIs ( $\beta = 0.726$ ,  $t = 20.805$ ) has a positive influence on the explicit KSIs. This result, which supports the first hypothesis, shows the perfect positive influence of the employees' tacit KSIs on their explicit KSIs. Generally, tacit knowledge is considered difficult to share, compared to explicit knowledge, as such knowledge is embedded in one's skills. Having a strong influence ( $\beta = 0.726$ ,  $t = 20.805$ ) signals that if an employee in an FB increases/decreases a unit of tacit KSIs, the explicit KSIs increases/decreases by 0.72 units. This finding further points to the idea that tacit KSIs in FBs more or less manage the overall KSIs of the employees in FBs. At the same time, reconfirming the previous research findings, this study also identified tacit knowledge as the most critical and important type of knowledge, which inculcates a KS culture in an organization.

The influence of individual motivation on tacit and explicit KSIs was tested. The influence of the three variables of the construct of individual motivation was tested against tacit KSIs first. The results as shown in Table 5.4 confirm that organizational rewards ( $\beta = 0.242$ ,  $t = 5.927$ ) and employee self-worth ( $\beta = -0.287$ ,  $t = -4.414$ ) have a significant influence on the employees' tacit KSIs. Contrary to the hypothesis, employee self-worth has shown a negative influence on tacit KSIs. It shows that the increment of self-worth results in the reduction of tacit KSIs. However, as far as the explicit KSIs are concerned, only organizational rewards ( $\beta = 0.204$ ,  $t = 4.641$ ) have a significant influence on the employees' explicit KSIs. These results can lead to the conclusion that individual motivational factors are also important for the employees' KSIs in FBs. In this regard, the influence is more intense for tacit KSIs than for explicit KSIs.

Similarly, the influence of the dimensions of social capital on the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs was tested. The influence of the three

variables of the construct of social capital was firstly tested with employees' tacit KSIs. The results indicate that social tie, social trust and social goals have no significant influence on tacit KSIs. However, as far as the explicit KSIs are concerned, as shown in Table 5.4, social tie ( $\beta = 0.441, t = 5.719$ ) and social trust ( $\beta = - 0.233, t = - 3.137$ ) have shown significant influence on the explicit KSIs of the employees. Again, this was different from the expected positive influence of the hypothesis. However, the analysis has shown that the social capital of FBs has no role to play as far as the employees' tacit KSIs are concerned. Yet, social tie has shown a greater positive influence on the employees' explicit KSIs, while social trust has indicated a negative influence. However, the overall results emphasize only a moderate influence of social capital on employees' tacit and explicit KSIs in FBs.

Finally, the influence of the organizational climate on tacit and explicit KSIs was tested. In keeping with the hypotheses, the influence of four variables of the construct, namely fairness, affiliation, innovativeness and Intra-organizational competitiveness, were tested against the tacit KSIs. The results, as shown in Table 5.4, confirm that fairness ( $\beta = 0.181, t = 4.790$ ) affiliation ( $\beta = 0.141, t = 2.081$ ) innovativeness ( $\beta = 0.188, t = 4.262$ ) and intra-organizational competitiveness ( $\beta = - 0.843, t = - 8.760$ ) have a significant influence on the tacit KSIs of the employees. However, in contrast to the hypothesis, intra-organizational competitiveness has shown a negative effect. These results have confirmed that when the intra-organizational competitiveness is high in FBs, the tacit KSIs of the employees becomes low. Similar results are shown regarding the influence of the organisational climate dimensions and the explicit KSIs of the employees. The results confirm that fairness ( $\beta = 0.258, t = 6.363$ ) affiliation ( $\beta = 0.161, t = 2.221$ ) innovativeness ( $\beta = 0.201, t = 4.247$ ) and intra-organizational competitiveness ( $\beta = - 0.637, t = - 6.158$ ) have a significant influence on the tacit KSIs of the employees. In contrast, intra-organizational competitiveness has shown a negative influence on the explicit KSIs of the employees in FBs. However, the organisational climate can be identified as the construct that has the most influence on the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs. Even though intra-organisational competitiveness has shown a negative influence on both tacit and explicit KSIs, all the other variables in the organisational climate construct have shown a positive influence.

Table 5.4: Hypothesis Testing Results of Direct Relationships

Hypothesis	Expected relationship - Positive	$\beta$	t	Sig.	Existed relationship	Remarks
H1	TKSI and EKSI	0.726	20.805	.000	Positive	Supported

<b>H 2.1</b>	ORE and TKS1	.242	5.927	.000	Positive	Supported
	ERE and TKS1	.122	1.309	.191	na	Not supported
	SWO and TKS1	-.287	-4.414	.000	Negative	Not supported
<b>H 2.2</b>	ORE and EKS1	.204	4.641	.000	Positive	Supported
	ERE and EKS1	-.180	-1.793	.074	na	Not supported
	SWO and EKS1	-.113	-1.615	.107	na	Not supported
<b>H 3.1</b>	STIE and TKS1	.104	1.450	.148	na	Not supported
	STR and TKS1	.027	.385	.700	na	Not supported
	SGO and TKS1	.090	.889	.375	na	Not supported
<b>H 3.2</b>	STIE and EKS1	.441	5.719	.000	Positive	Supported
	STR and EKS1	-.233	-3.137	.002	Negative	Not supported
	SGO and EKS1	-.002	-.020	.984	na	Not supported
<b>H 5.1</b>	FAI and TKS1	.181	4.790	.000	Positive	Supported
	AFF and TKS1	.141	2.081	.038	Positive	Supported
	INN and TKS1	.188	4.262	.000	Positive	Supported
	IOC and TKS1	-.843	-8.760	.000	Negative	Not supported
<b>H 5.2</b>	FAI and EKS1	.258	6.363	.000	Positive	Supported
	AFF and EKS1	.161	2.221	.027	Positive	Supported

	INN and EKSI	.201	4.247	.000	Positive	Supported
	IOC and EKSI	-.637	-6.158	.000	Negative	Not supported

Source: Survey data, 2017

#### 5.4.2 Intervening influence on predictors and outcome variables

As summarised in research hypotheses, four hypotheses were developed to test the intervening effect. Tables 5.5 present the results of the hierarchical regression showing the role of the employees' attitudes and organisational identification respectively as mediate variable on the relationships of predictor and outcome variables. The results of hierarchical regression in this study is used to test the intervening aspects (mediate) of the hypotheses in the same process recommended by Baron and Kenny's (1986). They have recommended four conditions or pre-requisites to confirm the mediation effect of a variable between two other variables. The existence of a relationship between independent and dependent variables, independent and mediate variables, mediate and dependent variables and, when the mediate variable is added to the model, the relation between independent and dependent variables become non-existent or weak. In that case, if independent and dependent variables become non-existent, it is identified as full mediation, while if the relation becomes weak, it is identified as partial mediation. Accordingly, two hierarchical regressions were run to test the mediatory effect of the employees' attitudes towards the relationship between social capital and the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs. Similarly, two more regressions tested the mediatory effect of organisational identification on the relationship between the organisational climate and the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs. The predictor variables were uploaded to regressions in stepwise. Firstly, individual motivation of the employees uploaded as a predictor in each regression model as individuals gives the first priority for their own motives. Then the relevant predictor and finally the mediate variable were uploaded to regression making 03 models all in one regression output. The results of the mediatory effect were interpreted after confirming the compatibility of the model-fit information.

The mediatory influence of the employees' attitudes on the relationship between social capital and the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs as well as the mediatory influence of organizational identification on the relationship between the organizational climate and the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs have finally confirmed the results shown in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5: Hypothesis Testing Results of Intervening Effect

Hypothesis	Expected relationship -	Existed relationship	Remarks
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	<b>Mediate</b>		
<b>H 4.1</b>	ATT between SC and TKSIs	Full mediation	Supported
<b>H 4.1</b>	ATT between SC and EKSIs	Full mediation	Supported
<b>H 6.1</b>	OID between OC and TKSIs	Full mediation	Supported
<b>H 6.1</b>	OID between OC and EKSIs	Partial mediation	Partially supported

*Source: Survey data, 2017*

As per the results of mediatory influence, it is clear that the employees' attitudes play a critical role in mediating the relationship between social capital and the employees' tacit and explicit KSIs. Similarly, the influence of organizational identification as a mediate variable on the relationship between the organizational climate and the employees' tacit KSIs is shown a full mediation. However, only a partial mediation is reported by organizational identification in the relationship between the organizational climate and the employees' explicit KSIs. These empirical findings have led to many theoretical and practical conclusions, which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

## **6. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

This study was conducted to address the identified research problem, filling the knowledge gaps in the area of knowledge management in the family business context. As shown in the discussion on in the data analysis, this study has successfully addressed the problem that it set out to address, achieving its objectives while pointing to valuable managerial implications. This section summarises the contribution of the current study towards knowledge (theory) and practice. It engages with three areas in this regard, namely theory, practice, and education.

### **6.1 Gains for Science (Theory)**

As mentioned in the objectives, this research study aimed at developing a comprehensive model in human capital based on a review of the employees' tacit & explicit KSIs in the context of continuing businesses owned by families. Even though KM literature is capable of explaining the KS behaviour of the employees of business firms to a certain extent, there is a dearth of research that studies the role of internal business environment factors in determining KS behaviour of employees. Supporting this argument, Le and Sherif (2008) argued that KM literature is lacking a theoretical basis for explaining the impact of internal business environment factors of businesses on the employees' KS. Theoretically, this study contributes to existing knowledge in two different

ways. First, the study explored the KSIs of the employees in relation to the internal business environment of a given business, which plays a decisive role in creating competitive advantages through innovations and new knowledge. Second, it explores KS as it happens in the context of FBs where KS has become a triggering point of continuing and surviving the business. In that sense, the theoretical contribution to extend human behavioural theories further and expansion of the knowledge base of internal business environment in FBs to enabling related theories to expand have made this study's novel. However, the theoretical contribution of content of KM and the context of FBs, has enabled to develop a comprehensive model in HC reviewing employees' tacit and explicit KS.

## **6.2 Gains for Practice**

This study is practically significant mainly due to the current globally competitive knowledge economy concept. No business can survive in this global competition without generating competitive advantages. In this context, the HC, which is knowledge embedded in the minds and hands of individual employees of a firm, has been recognized as the most valued resource compared to other resources available. Some characteristics of the employees' knowledge, such as the state of being valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, are believed to provide long-term competitive advantages through innovations and new knowledge. The recognition of factors that affect the employees' KS, which are the basic features of efficient KM, can make managers, owners, governors and policy makers effective and efficient in decision making. Accordingly, they can guide the business to obtain a long-term competitive advantage through efficient KM.

However, it is important to note that the employees' KSIs in FBs in Sri Lanka is at a moderate level. When FBs aim at gaining competitive advantages over similar firms, the business strategies of making innovations can integrate with the promotion of knowledge sharing in order to develop a knowledge driven business culture. Similarly, the value of the sharer and the receiver of knowledge, the environment of the company for KS, the type of the knowledge involved in the sharing activity, and family involvement can be considered critical, since those concepts emerged in FBs as most valued themes of KS. Managers and policy makers can develop strategies to promote KS in their firms. Further, this study revealed that individual motives & characters, institutional systems & procedures, teamwork, the closeness of relationships, and leadership are the factors that employees consider to be important in making their KS decisions. Accordingly, the promotion of these practices would guarantee the development of the KS culture in FBs. The promotion of the KS culture has been facilitated by the findings with regard to the employees' motives for sharing or not sharing their knowledge with fellow employees.

Similarly, the business need for developing tacit KSIs among employees as a fundamental requirement to gain competitive advantages through new knowledge and innovations can be achieved through these study findings. Accordingly, as a turning point, developing a knowledge sharing culture in FBs can be linked with tacit knowledge, making all strategies, practices and policies targeted to promote the tacit KSIs of employees. Based on the nature of the direct relationships of tacit and explicit KSIs with individual motivation, the social capital of the employees, and the organizational climate, the managers of FBs can ensure the long-term sustainability of their firms. This may be further facilitated by the employees' perception that KS is required to make the job easy. However, the identification of determinants and their direct impact on KSIs of the employees and the intervening influences would immensely facilitate the practitioners in this field.

At the same time, FBs, which constitute about 75% of the businesses, are in a dilemma across the world with regard to their sustainability in the long run (Miller et al., 2004, Salvato and Leif, 2008). It is natural that FBs across the world are in need of new knowledge to overcome the overwhelming problem that they have faced. Specifically, the creation of new knowledge in the area of the human capital in FBs is important as many FBs started before 1990 are ready to transfer the business to their successors. In the context of this transition, the new managers and owners are faced with the challenge of having to make their businesses a success, and the findings of this study will assist them to streamline their business decisions with global knowledge economy practices.

### **6.3 Gains for Education**

KM has become a popular study area in high schools and universities (Rismark and Solvberg, 2011). At the same time, the popularity of those schools that offer programmes related to FBs has increased (Sharma 2004). In order to cater to this societal requirement, the knowledge of KM in FBs is important to create new avenues for researchers in this field. Accordingly, education practitioners and policy makers can continue to develop and enhance the curriculum of KM and FBs. Furthermore, this study creates new avenues to compare the applications, practice changes across national, cultural and geographical boundaries of the area of KM in relation to FBs.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

This study set out to achieve seven objectives. In the process of achieving those objectives, several interesting findings emerged in the qualitative and quantitative data analyses. The qualitative analysis aimed at understanding the nature of the employees' perceptions regarding KS, while the quantitative analysis reviewed the influence of the internal business environment on the employees' KSIs. Both analyses led to several interesting conclusions to develop a model of human capital model on KS.



## **7.1 Direction for Future Research**

Removing one or several limitations of this study provides opportunities to expand the knowledge base of the KSIs employees in FBs. Apart from that, future research can focus on other avenues worthy of exploration to conduct the same kind of research base on the changes of the content or context of the study as suggested below.

Given that knowledge resides in the minds of people and the sharing feeling starts from the brain, the employees' psychological inducement can be given priority and be accommodated as a determinant of KS. In addition to factors used in this study, such as individual motivation, social capital and organizational climate, factors related to the employees' psychology can also be used. The next step for researchers would be to change several predictors and intervening variables of this study to inquire into the KS practices of employees.

At the same time, the same concept can be considered for non-family businesses as well. The possibility to study only a specific group of employees like managers, non-family employees, and employees from owning family is also open for future researchers to inquire. Further, as this research explores privately held enterprising FBs, future research should be undertaken into the same matter with regard to listed companies and lifestyle or small-scale businesses owned by families. Different geographical settings and contexts also to determine how these patterns differ from those found in this study in terms of family involvement in businesses would be of paramount importance. This may apply for outside Sri Lanka as well as FBs may be diverse based on cultural settings such as different provinces, regions and countries.

## **7.2 Scope of the Study**

These study findings and conclusions should be interpreted carefully keeping in mind the limitations of the thesis. These limitations are caused by various reasons, such as the unavailability and inaccessibility of data, time and budget constraints of the researcher and some other practical concerns. Yet, such limitations of the study foreground several fascinating issues that provide rewarding background for future research in the area of KM in relation to FBs. The limitations of this research can be listed as follows:

- This study considers only formal KS with direct involvement of employees. KS through such indirect channels, such as the internet and social media, has not been covered in detail in this study and it is a limitation.
- The employees' confusion regarding the difference among data, information and knowledge is another limitation of this study.
- KS is dependent on the contextual and situational factors of an organization. The current research is based only on cross section data in the primary data collection and it remains as a limitation.

- This study engaged only with privately held, skill oriented, manufacturing based and enterprising FBs. The inability to generalise the findings of this study for whole types of FBs, such as listed FBs, is a limitation of this study.

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## **AUTHOR'S CURRICULUM VITAE**

1. **Name in Full** : Ravindra Hewa Kuruppuge
2. **Address** : 59 F 1, Balabowa Watte, Develapola, Veyangoda, Sri Lanka
3. **Occupation** : Lecturer in Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
4. **Present status:** PhD Candidate, Tomas Bata University in Zlin
5. **Email** : kuruppuge@yahoo.com

### **Academic/ Professional Qualifications**

- Master of Business Administration, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Postgraduate Diploma in Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
- Master of Arts in Economics, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
- Bachelor of Commerce, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka
- Qualified TRAINAIR Course Developer, International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), Canada

### **Career Details**

- **Ph.D. candidate** at Tomas Bata University in Zlin, Czech Republic (2015 to date)
- **Senior Lecturer Grade II**, Department of Operations Management, Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, (2013 to date).
- **Lecturer (Probationary)**, Department of Management Studies, University of Peradeniya, (2007 to 2013).
- **Course Development Officer**, Civil Aviation Training Centre, Airport & Aviation Services (Sri Lanka) Limited, Ratmalana (2006/2007)
- **Management Trainee**, Airport & Aviation Services (Sri Lanka) Limited, Katunayaka (2005).
- **Project Coordinator – “JICA Japan NGO Desk”** (a project funded by Japanese International Cooperation Agency) conducted by Consortium of Humanitarian Agency (CHA) 2004.
- **Local staff member (Researcher – Environment Management)** under the project on “Solid Waste Management in Secondary Cities in Sri Lanka”, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), 2002 & 2003.

### **Contribution for Research Projects**

- Member of the research project titled ‘Vocational Educational Training Development plan for the Central Province of Sri Lanka’, Ministry Tertiary Education, Sri Lanka, 2013/2014. (*one year*)

- Member of panel of judges for National Competition in Solid Waste Management among Local Authorities in Sri Lanka 2011 and 2012, Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Council, 2013.
- Consultant to the Research Project titled “General Wage Situation of Apparel Industry Workers in Sri Lanka”. Clean Cloth Campaign: International Secretariat, Asia Floor Wage, Ireland (2013)
- Consultant to the Research Project titled “Sector-Specific Living Wage for Sri Lankan Apparel Industry Workers 2011”, Oxfam International, Australia (2012)
- Consultant to the Research Project titled “Tier Manufacturers and Wages in Sri Lanka, A Study Conducted on Selected Firms in Apparel Industry”. Clean Cloth Campaign: International Secretariat, Asia Floor Wage, Ireland (2010)

#### **Academic/ Research Interests**

Knowledge Management, Family Business, Organizational Learning, Tourism Management, Research Methodology and Living Wage

#### **Professional and Project Activities at FaME, TBU in Zlin**

- 2016 and 2017 - Head of the Research Team, Enhancing Business Performance through Employees’ Knowledge Sharing, Internal Grant Agency: No. IGA/FaME/2016/001 - Guarantor : Assoc. Prof Ales Gregar
- 2016 - Member of the Research Team, The Relationship between Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Implementation and Firm’s Performance in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Changing Condition, Internal Grant Agency: No. IGA/FaME/2016/020 - Guarantor : Prof. Dr. Ing. Drahomíra Pavelková
- 2018 - Co-member of the Research Team, Evaluation and Effectiveness of Extensive Training in Businesses (SMEs) in the Context of Funding Sources, Internal Grant Agency: No. IGA/FaME/2018/006 - Guarantor : Assoc. Prof Ales Gregar,

Ravindra Hewa Kuruppuge, Ph.D.

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