

Are You So Good That They Cannot Ignore You? Effect of Coworker Support on Knowledge Sharing Through an Affective Events Theory Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Drawing on affective events theory, this study considers knowledge sharing as an outcome of emotional responses resulting from an individual's experience of workplace events. This study aimed to empirically examine how coworker support as a work event encourages employees' knowledge contribution and knowledge-seeking behaviors through feelings of vitality. A structured, questionnaire-based survey was administered to 430 employees of knowledge-based organizations in India. The retrieved data were further analyzed using structural equation modeling. The results indicate that perceived coworker support positively influences the knowledge contribution and knowledge-seeking behavior of individuals in the workplace. Furthermore, vitality mediated the positive association between perceived coworker support and knowledge sharing. This implies that the perception of coworker support in the workplace augments employees' feelings of vitality, which further motivates them to contribute to and seek knowledge from coworkers. Therefore, this study critically underscores the existence of a "performance loop" in knowledge sharing, as coworkers find it difficult to bypass an employee because of their outstanding performance and the fact that the same virtuous cycle elicits greater knowledge sharing by coworkers. Such perceived goodwill makes employees so good that they cannot be ignored within an organizational setting. This is a pioneering study investigating how coworker support in the workplace stimulates knowledge sharing among employees by considering the mediating effect of feelings of vitality. This study also contributes to the positive psychology and knowledge management literature by revealing the implications of vitality for extra-role behaviors such as knowledge sharing.

KEYWORDS

Coworker Support, Knowledge Hiding, Knowledge Seeking, Knowledge Sharing, Vitality

INTRODUCTION

Knowledge sharing is the exchange of job-oriented knowledge, practical knowledge, or feedback with the intention of assisting colleagues, solving problems through collaboration, or creating new ideas (Cummings, 2004; Wang & Noe, 2010). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), knowledge sharing is an important activity that boosts organizational effectiveness; unless knowledge is shared, it does not add much value to organizational effectiveness (Ipe, 2003). Prior studies consider knowledge sharing as a prosocial behavior extending beyond formal job responsibilities (Gagne, 2009) and a primary way of expanding the experiential knowledge of organizational members (Wang & Noe, 2010). With the growing complexities of work life, knowledge-sharing behavior has become multifaceted (Hendriks, 1999). Approximately two decades ago, the factors behind knowledge sharing focused on the nature of knowledge, opportunities to share, motivation to share, and the culture of the work

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environment (Ipe, 2003). With an increasing number of studies on knowledge sharing, peer group support has gained attention (Cabrera et al., 2006). A critical knowledge management process enables organizational members to adapt to their work environments, create innovative ideas, and eventually contribute to a firm's innovation capabilities (Jackson et al., 2006; Al-Zoubi et al., 2020; Usmanova et al., 2021).

Among the many factors promoting knowledge sharing, the social context of the workplace plays a crucial role. The social context, which refers to the settings in which individuals interact to influence their thoughts, behaviors, and social standards (Casper, 2001), gives rise to knowledge sharing (Kim, 2020). A recent study by Kim (2020a) found that individualistic and collectivistic dispositions of individuals play a significant role in knowledge sharing, and employees' intentions to share knowledge differ based on these personal dispositions. However, in a similar context, when coworker support is high, knowledge sharing increases, irrespective of personal characteristics (Lee et al., 2015). Employees' social ties help counterbalance factors that demotivate knowledge sharing (Oye et al., 2011). These studies emphasize the importance of understanding the social context in knowledge management studies. Coworkers, who form a vital component of an organization's social climate, are critical partners in the knowledge-sharing process (Issac & Thomas, 2017). With the increasing emphasis on team-based work in contemporary organizations, employees are required to interact with coworkers more frequently than ever (Ho & Levesque, 2005), reinforcing the significance of coworker relationships in work settings. With the shift in decision-making responsibilities from supervisors to quasi-independent teams, relationships among coworkers have become more important and complex (Hodson, 2008). Building on an organization's social capital helps promote employees' knowledge-sharing behaviors of employees (Swart & Kinnie, 2003).

Prior research has identified coworker support as a significant predictor of knowledge sharing at the individual level (Kudisch et al., 2006; Carmeli et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2015). Similarly, studies have examined the role of workplace friendships and found a positive relationship with knowledge sharing (Nguyen et al., 2021). The role of coworker support in knowledge contribution has been explored by understanding how it affects knowledge hiding among employees (Batistič & Poell, 2022). Coworker support through the lens of workplace friendships has been studied in combination with respectful engagement as a precursor to knowledge sharing (Enwereuzor et al., 2022). However, the vast literature leaves room to explore how social relationships at work manifest through coworker support and their effect on knowledge sharing. Buvik and Tvedt (2017) argue that trust is instrumental in fostering knowledge sharing by enhancing commitment to teams and projects. Trustworthiness and the propensity to trust can develop from coworker support; however, this was not explicitly explored in this study. Related studies have highlighted the role of team member exchange and affective commitment through team member commitment in increasing knowledge sharing (Liu et al., 2011), which is an implicit cognate aspect of coworker support. Pinjani and Palvia (2013) concluded that trust manifests in knowledge sharing in global virtual teams and this trust is the confidence that team members have in each other. Existing research is sparse and requires an innovative explanation to propagate the understanding of coworkers' support and knowledge sharing. Likewise, Wickramasinghe and Widyaratne's (2012) study on interpersonal trust shows that "work-group communications" and "personal interactions" have significant positive value on knowledge sharing. Although coworker support plays a considerable role in encouraging knowledge sharing among employees, the underlying mediating mechanisms have rarely been examined. This study seeks to address this research gap.

Based on affective events theory (AET), a theoretical framework that casts knowledge sharing as a direct result of employees' affective experiences is presented. According to van den Hooff and de Ridder (2004), knowledge sharing encompasses a) knowledge contribution—voluntary exchange of personal knowledge to others, and b) knowledge seeking—asking others voluntarily for their personal

knowledge. Studies have emphasized the importance of social ties at work, which serve as catalysts for knowledge-sharing practices. Social cohesion often leads to the formation of communities in which knowledge sharing becomes natural (Oye et al., 2011). Emotions drive human interactions and result in a range of behaviors including helping coworkers (Staw et al., 1994). Hence, we adopt an affective events theoretical approach to explain our proposition.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

AET posits that events or environmental circumstances that people experience in the workplace trigger emotional reactions, and such affective responses subsequently influence employee behavior. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), who proposed the AET, asserted, "... certain work behaviors are direct responses to affective experiences" (p. 52). Affective experiences can take different forms: a) discrete emotions, which are intense and of short duration, b) generalized positive or negative affective states, or c) moods, which are mild and long-lasting. Using the lens of AET, coworker support as a workplace event is expected to elicit a positive mood state, such as vitality, among employees (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Kark & Carmeli, 2009). Vitality, characterized by enthusiasm and spirit, refers to a pleasurable state experienced by individuals that lasts longer than transient emotions (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Spreitzer et al., 2005).

Given that coworker support enhances vitality (Colbert et al., 2016; Kleine et al., 2019; Carmeli et al., 2020), this study treats employee vitality as a key mediator linking coworker support and knowledge sharing. It has been argued that the perception of coworker support in the workplace augments employees' feelings of vitality, which further motivates them to contribute and seek knowledge from coworkers.

In summary, this study investigated whether coworker support serves as a significant predictor of knowledge contribution and seeking among employees. It also advances earlier work (Carmeli et al., 2009; Chiaburu, 2010; Lee et al., 2015) that only examined the direct link between perceived support and knowledge behavior in the work environment by bringing in an additional element of vitality within the organization through outstanding performance and goodwill commanded by individual employees within the organizational setting. Such an image of the employee is grounded on a "performance loop," which enhances knowledge sharing by coworkers. This "performance loop" cements the position and goodwill of the employee within the organization and warrants greater knowledge sharing with time. Using AET as the overarching theory, this study attempts to explain the psychological processes underlying the effect of coworker support on knowledge sharing by revealing the mediating role of vitality in this relationship; thus, contributing to the understanding of individual-level knowledge sharing in the workplace.

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

PERCEIVED COWORKER SUPPORT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Coworkers form an integral component of a firm's social climate, which is imperative to create meaningful experiences at work (Hodson, 2001). Perceived coworker support refers to an individual's belief concerning the collective support he receives from coworkers and how they value their contributions (Ladd & Henry, 2000). It strengthens friendships and leads to solid emotional attachment among employees. Lin and Huang (2010) asserted that coworkers' support and caring behavior result in employees developing positive perceptions of them and an obligation to return the perceived support they receive from their colleagues. According to social exchange theory, when an individual receives favorable treatment from another individual, he feels obligated to the other person

and puts in the effort and dedication to reciprocate the favor (Gouldner, 1960). Within work settings, employees build social exchange relationships with various parties such as superiors, coworkers, and the organization itself (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange relationships lead to long-term commitment among employees and are characterized by the exchange of socioeconomic benefits based on reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960).

Chiaburu and Harrison (2008) suggested that supportive coworkers stimulate individual- and organizational-level citizenship behavior among employees. In another study conducted among nurses, Lavelle et al. (2009) reported a significant association between workgroup supportiveness and citizenship behaviors targeted toward the group. Knowledge sharing, regarded as a form of citizenship behavior, is an appropriate way to reciprocate because it offers multiple benefits to coworkers (Wang & Noe, 2010). Coworker support, as perceived by employees, also ameliorates the unfavorable situation created by abusive supervision and neutralizes the chances of knowledge hiding (Hao et al., 2022). Coworker support is vital for individual-level knowledge contribution activities by the members of an organization.

According to Carmeli et al. (2009), coworkers' support facilitates the acquisition of work-related knowledge and skills. Multiple studies claim that vitality builds a positive attitude toward self-development and provides the energy to engage in self-developmental activities, such as knowledge and skill acquisition (Porath et al., 2012; Paterson et al., 2014). Existing studies indicate that knowledge sharing has a positive relationship with vitality at work. For example, Ononye (2022) emphasizes the connection between tacit knowledge sharing and job thriving. Vitality is considered a component of job thriving (Chhabra & Pandey, 2022). With support from coworkers, people expect the availability of future helping behaviors (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2015), which may motivate them to seek knowledge from coworkers with less hesitance. Emotional support from coworkers enhances work engagement (Pohl et al., 2022), which can be related to involvement in activities such as knowledge sharing (Chen et al., 2011). Studies that have presented different perspectives on knowledge sharing, for example, through the understanding of communities of practice, have highlighted the role of coworkers' support in knowledge transfer in communities (Ingvaldsen, 2015; Guechtouli et al., 2013). As coworker support boosts the drive to express concern toward team members (Dutta & Rangnekar, 2022), knowledge sharing can be a byproduct of this concern. In another survey-based study conducted in a multinational firm, the authors demonstrated the positive effect of perceived peer support on active participation in knowledge sharing with other organizational members (Cabrera et al., 2006). Thus, this study considers perceived coworker support a significant antecedent of knowledge sharing, proposing the following hypotheses:

H1a: Perceived coworker support is positively related to knowledge contribution behavior of employees.

H1b: Perceived coworker support is positively related to knowledge seeking behavior of employees.

MEDIATING ROLE OF VITALITY

Past research has mainly investigated the direct impact of coworker support on knowledge sharing but has largely overlooked the mediators in this effect. A potential mediator is feelings of vitality, which are critical for employee motivation and involvement in extra-role behaviors.

Vitality can be defined as "one's conscious experience of possessing energy and aliveness" (Ryan & Frederick, 1997, p. 530). This makes people feel enthusiastic, energetic, and healthy, both mentally and physically, and manifests itself in the form of zest for life. Being vital gives employees a sense of personal growth and development (Spreitzer et al., 2005) and builds their confidence in the

organization regarding valuing their actions (Ryan & Bernstein, 2004). People with high vitality tend to have a positive outlook and are willing to invest more effort and time in different activities (Arkes et al., 1988).

Prior research has shown that supportive coworkers act as a source of vitality by facilitating employee growth and development (Colbert et al., 2016; Kleine et al., 2019). Carmeli et al. (2020) identified the social support received from coworkers as an important determinant of vitality among university students. Perceived coworker support leads to positive moods, feeling alive, energy, physical strength, and flourishing in multiple domains of life (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Shirom, 2011; Luke et al., 2012; Feeney & Collins, 2015; Lee & Ybarra, 2017). It helps build strong and long-lasting relationships, accords feelings of individual satisfaction, and eventually leads to employee vitality (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Ryan & Bernstein, 2004). Therefore, we posit that coworker support has a significant positive influence on employees' feelings of vitality.

According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), mood affects employees helping behaviors. When in a positive mood, employees tend to treat their coworkers favorably and consider opportunities to help them (Rosenhan et al., 1981). In line with this, positive affective states resulting from coworker support should influence extra-role behaviors such as knowledge sharing. Kabat-Farr and Cortina (2017) claimed that vital and energetic individuals in the workplace are inspired to go beyond their formal role expectations and are more likely to perform citizenship behaviors that aid their colleagues and the organization. When people experience positive emotions, they tend to engage more in work environments and activities that focus on learning and self-enhancement (Fredrickson, 2001). Furthermore, positive emotional energy creates an organizational climate in which employees feel free to share their knowledge without experiencing a decline in status (Yang and Wu, 2008). It also helps people recover quickly from heavy workloads and concentrate on formal responsibilities (Sonnetag and Fritz, 2007; Shirom, 2011), thereby creating further knowledge-sharing opportunities. Thus, feelings of vitality or a positive mood provide a psychological premise for an adequate flow of knowledge.

Conversely, negative affective experiences prevent people from interacting with others, developing their skills, gaining knowledge, and learning at work (Ryan and Frederick, 1997). Emotional exhaustion at work causes employees to conserve valuable resources and engage less in activities beyond their formal responsibilities (Lee et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2020). Based on this logic, the following hypotheses were proposed regarding the mediating role of vitality in the association between coworker support and knowledge sharing:

H2a: Individual feelings of vitality mediate the positive relationship between perceived coworker support and knowledge contribution behaviors.

H2b: Individual feelings of vitality mediate the positive relationship between perceived coworker support and knowledge-seeking behaviors.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

In this study, a structured questionnaire-based survey was administered to employees of knowledge-based organizations in India. This is the most suitable method for the current study because of its wider reach and capacity to compensate for the paucity of time. After obtaining informed consent, the participants were briefed on the main objectives of the study and assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and delivery of the findings upon request. The questionnaire was distributed to 585 employees selected through convenience sampling, 430 of whom completed the

survey, representing a response rate of 73.50%. A summary of the survey participants' profiles is provided in Table I.

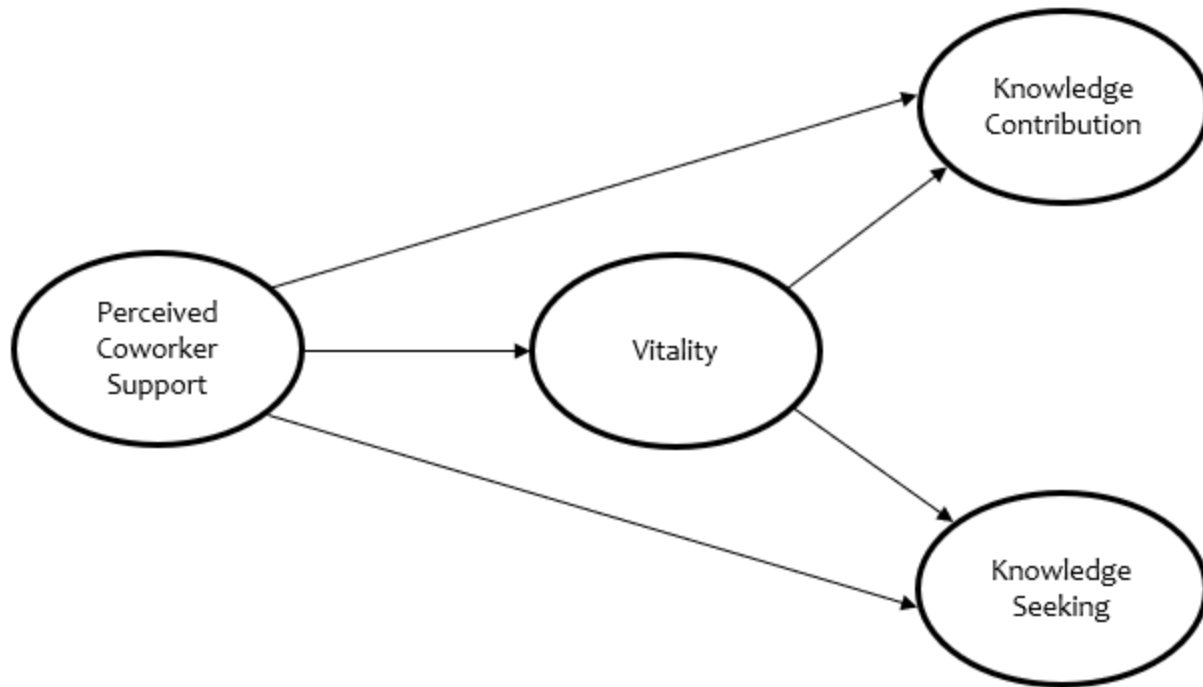


Figure 1. Research Model

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Survey Participants (N = 430)

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21-25	57	13.26
	26-30	170	39.53
	31-35	144	33.49
	Above 35	59	13.72
Gender	Female	149	34.65
	Male	281	65.35
Qualification	UG	222	51.63
	PG	185	43.02
	Others	23	5.35
Tenure	1-3	226	52.56
	4-6	150	34.88
	7-9	45	10.47
	10-12	9	2.09

MEASURES

Coworker support indicates the extent to which an individual perceives that their contributions are valued, and receives collective support from coworkers. It was assessed using the seven-item measure developed and tested by Ladd and Henry (2000), with responses ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a very large extent). The sample questions were: “My coworkers are complementary of my

accomplishments at work” and “Help is available from my coworkers when I have a problem at work.” Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was 0.91.

Vitality refers to the extent to which an individual feels energetic and alive at work. This was measured using Carmeli’s (2009) five-item scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The sample questions were, “I am full of positive energy at work” and “When I am with my coworkers, I experience a sense of vitality.” Cronbach’s alpha for vitality was 0.88.

To assess knowledge contribution and seeking, the four-item measures of van den Hooff and Hendrix (2004) were used, with responses for each item measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The sample questions for knowledge contribution were: “When I’ve learned something new, I tell my colleagues about it” and “I share the information I have with my colleagues.” The sample questions for measuring knowledge seeking were: “When I need certain knowledge, I ask my colleagues about it” and “When a colleague is good at something, I ask them to teach me how to do it.” Cronbach’s alpha values for knowledge contribution and knowledge seeking were 0.88 and 0.84, respectively.

CONTROL VARIABLES

Following the recommendations of previous studies (Connelly and Kelloway, 2003; Riege, 2005; Lin, 2006; Holste and Fields, 2010), this study included variables such as age, gender, education, and organizational tenure as control variables, as demographic factors are likely to influence knowledge-sharing behavior in the workplace.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

As the study had multiple dependent variables, structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS 24 was performed to test the research model and the hypothesized relationship between variables.

RESULTS

Table II reports the means, standard deviations, scale reliabilities, and intercorrelations among the research variables. The results of the correlation analysis indicated that perceived coworker support was significantly related to vitality ($r = 0.56, p < 0.01$), knowledge contribution ($r = 0.51, p < 0.01$), and knowledge seeking ($r = 0.36, p < 0.01$). The observed correlations between vitality and knowledge contribution ($r = 0.61, p < 0.01$), and between vitality and knowledge seeking ($r = 0.42, p < 0.01$) were also significant and positive.

COMMON METHOD BIAS

To minimize the possible threat of common method bias (CMB), procedural strategies such as ensuring respondent anonymity, random ordering of measurement items, and using different response anchors for dependent and independent variables were followed. Furthermore, we statistically examined the CMB using Harman’s single-factor test. The emerging factor explained only 38.44% of the total variance, indicating that the CMB was not a serious concern in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Table 2. Descriptives, Correlations, and Reliabilities of Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age								
2. Gender	-0.02							
3. Education	0.23**	0.01						
4. Tenure	0.66**	0.06	-0.12**					
5. Perceived Coworker Support	0.08	-0.01	0.04	0.09	0.91			
6. Vitality	0.04	0.04	0.10*	0.01	0.56**	0.88		
7. Knowledge Contribution	0.03	0.06	0.06	0.04	0.51**	0.61**	0.88	
8. Knowledge Seeking	0.06	0.04	0.01	0.09	0.36**	0.42**	0.36**	0.84
Mean	2.48	0.65	2.38	1.62	3.73	3.77	3.57	3.46
SD	0.89	0.48	0.59	0.76	0.66	0.61	0.72	0.66

Notes: N = 430; Cronbach's α s are reported in boldface along the diagonal; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; SD = Standard Deviation.

MEASUREMENT MODEL

The measurement model was tested using CFA to examine how well the measurement indicators loaded onto the associated scales of the latent constructs, as specified by the theory. CFA provides model diagnostics in the form of goodness-of-fit indices (GFI), which help improve the model and test measurement theory. A good model fit is achieved when χ^2/df is below 3, SRMR is below 0.05, CFI, GFI, and NFI are above 0.90 (Bentler and Bonett, 1980; Chow and Chan, 2008), and RMSEA is less than 0.06 (Hair et al., 2006). The measurement model of this study met the recommended threshold values ($\chi^2/df = 2.26$, GFI = 0.94, NFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.96, SRMR = 0.03, and RMSEA = 0.05), suggesting that the data exhibits a good fit to the model.

The measurement scales were assessed using convergent and discriminant validity. Standardized factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to examine the convergent validity of the constructs. The standardized factor loadings of the items to factors were statistically significant (t -value > 1.96), ranging from 0.66 to 0.83. Furthermore, the CR and AVE of all constructs exceeded the suggested thresholds of 0.80 and 0.50, respectively (see Table III), confirming good convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981).

The discriminant validity of a scale is demonstrated if the square root of the AVE for each latent variable exceeds the intercorrelation among the variables specified in the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The values of the off-diagonal elements presented in Table IV are lower than the square roots of the AVE (on the diagonal), which supports satisfactory discriminant validity among the study measures.

To reaffirm the independence of all measurements, the proposed four-factor model was compared with alternative nested models: (1) a one-factor model, (2) a two-factor model, and (3) a three-factor model. As indicated in Table V, the significant differences between the models confirm that the proposed four-factor model had a better fit to the data.

Table 3. Measurement Items, Scale Reliability, and AVE

Constructs	Indicators	Standardized Loadings	t-value	CR	AVE
Perceived Coworker Support (PCS)	PCS1	0.73	N/A	0.94	0.60
	PCS2	0.75	13.80		
	PCS3	0.78	15.55		
	PCS4	0.76	13.90		
	PCS5	0.80	13.06		
	PCS6	0.82	16.37		
	PCS7	0.77	15.33		
Vitality (VIT)	VIT1	0.80	N/A	0.93	0.59
	VIT2	0.75	16.51		
	VIT3	0.76	16.15		
	VIT4	0.79	17.26		
	VIT5	0.75	16.00		
Knowledge Contribution (KC)	KC1	0.83	N/A	0.92	0.66
	KC2	0.82	19.20		
	KC3	0.82	18.63		
	KC4	0.77	17.64		
Knowledge Seeking (KS)	KS1	0.77	N/A	0.89	0.57
	KS2	0.79	15.70		
	KS3	0.79	15.67		
	KS4	0.66	12.48		

Notes: CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted

Table 4. Discriminant Validity

Construct	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived Coworker Support	0.77			
2. Vitality	0.62	0.77		
3. Knowledge Contribution	0.56	0.69	0.81	
4. Knowledge Seeking	0.41	0.48	0.41	0.76

STRUCTURAL MODEL

The structural model was validated using AMOS 24. The overall fit of the structural model was good, as revealed by the fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.26$, GFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.96, SRMR = 0.034, RMSEA = 0.05).

Upon analyzing the main variables, it was found that none of the control variables, including gender, age, education, or organizational tenure, were significantly related to knowledge contribution

or knowledge-seeking behavior. Therefore, in light of Spector and Brannick’s (2011) recommendation, we omitted all non-significant control variables from further analysis.

Figure 2 illustrates the results of the structural model analysis used to test the hypotheses.

Table 5. Comparison of Measurement Models

	χ^2 (df)	χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	NFI
Four-Factor Model (Mo)	370.93 (164)	2.26	0.94	0.96	0.05	0.03	0.93
Three-Factor Model (M1)	960.29 (167)	5.75	0.75	0.84	0.11	0.08	0.81
Two-Factor Model (M2)	1491.99 (169)	8.83	0.67	0.73	0.14	0.11	0.71
One-Factor Model (M3)	1891.38 (170)	11.13	0.61	0.65	0.15	0.11	0.63

Notes: χ^2 = Chi-square; df = Degrees of freedom; GFI = Goodness-of-fit index; CFI = Comparative fit index; RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation; SRMR = Standardized root mean square residual; NFI = Normed fit index
 Mo – Proposed model; M1 – Perceived coworker support and Vitality are combined to form a single factor; M2 – Perceived coworker support and Vitality are combined to form one factor; Knowledge contribution and Knowledge seeking are combined to form another factor; M3 – All the four factors of the model are combined to form a single factor

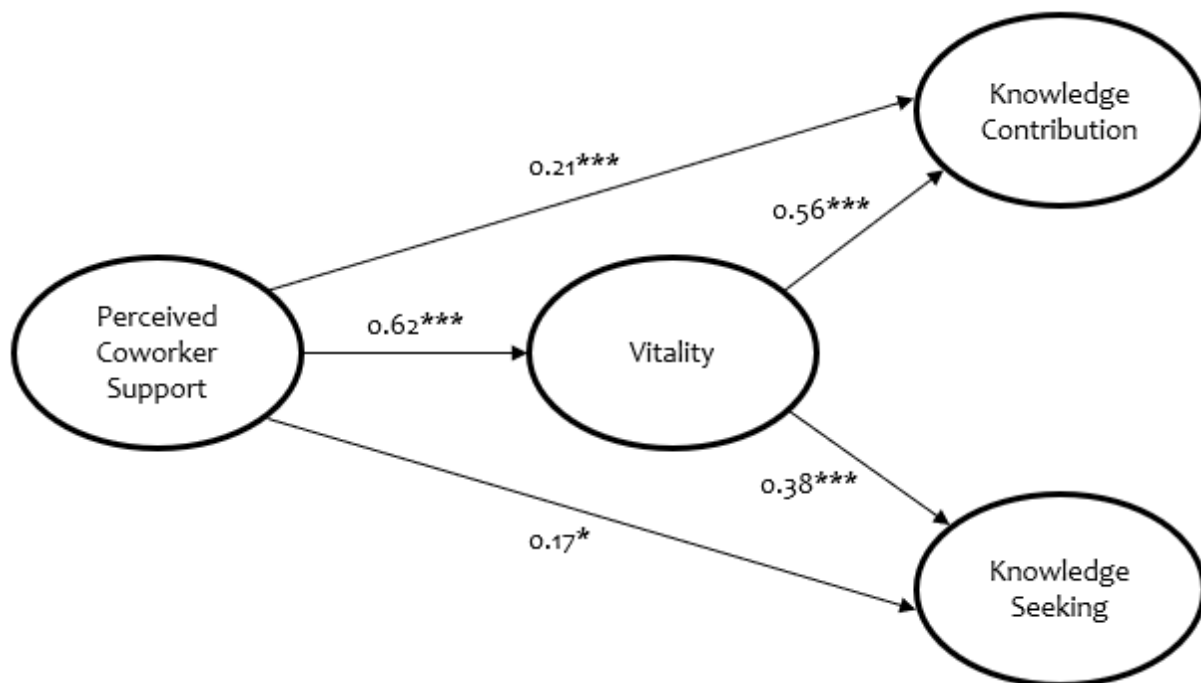


Figure 2. SEM Results; *** $p < 0.001$; * $p < 0.05$

These findings support H1a and H1b, which predicted that perceived coworker support will have a positive influence on knowledge contribution ($\beta = 0.21, p < .001$) and knowledge seeking ($\beta = 0.17, p < .05$). The results also revealed a significant positive effect of perceived coworker support on employees’ feelings of vitality ($\beta = 0.62, p < .001$). Finally, vitality positively affected knowledge contribution ($\beta = 0.56, p < .001$) and knowledge-seeking behavior ($\beta = 0.38, p < .001$).

The bootstrapping method in SEM was employed to assess the mediating role of vitality in the coworker support-knowledge-sharing relationship. The standardized indirect effects of coworker

support on knowledge contribution and seeking through vitality were 0.35 [95% bias-corrected CI 0.26, 0.44] and 0.24 [95% bias-corrected CI 0.15, 0.34], respectively (see Table VI). The mediation test confirmed that vitality significantly mediated the influence of perceived coworker support on employees' knowledge-sharing behaviors. Thus, H2a and H2b were supported. The multiple squared correlation coefficients (R^2) for knowledge contribution and seeking were 0.51 and 0.26, respectively.

Table 6. Mediation Analysis Results

Path	Indirect Effect	Bias Corrected 95% CI	
		Lower	Upper
Perceived Coworker Support → Vitality → Knowledge Contribution	0.35	0.26	0.44
Perceived Coworker Support → Vitality → Knowledge Seeking	0.24	0.15	0.34

DISCUSSION

The growth and survival of organizations in knowledge-based economies depend primarily on how they facilitate the sharing and utilization of knowledge held by employees (Wang & Noe, 2010). Scholars and practitioners assert that knowledge sharing among organizational members forms the foundation for new knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1994). Therefore, this study examined the factors that promote individual-level knowledge sharing in organizations.

Based on AET, this study's primary goal is to understand individual knowledge sharing in the workplace by examining support perceptions and feelings of vitality as predictors of knowledge sharing. Similar to prior research emphasizing the importance of social support and quality relationships in the workplace (Caesens et al., 2014; Burmeister et al., 2022), we found that perceived coworker support positively influenced employees' engagement in knowledge sharing in the workplace. When people receive care and support from colleagues, they tend to perceive interpersonal relationships as positive and have relatively fewer egoistic concerns, leading them to engage in extra-role behaviors such as knowledge sharing (Lu et al., 2006). High-quality connections in work settings provide a sense of safety for people to speak up and ask for help without fear of losing their status or confidence (Kark and Carmeli, 2009), motivating them to engage in knowledge-sharing activities. Furthermore, Zhang and Jiang (2015) found that in proactive knowledge-sharing situations, employees consider their personal relationships with colleagues before deciding whether to contribute their personal knowledge. The results also provide further support for social exchange theory by claiming that coworker support creates an obligation among employees to reciprocate the help they receive from organizational members.

Finally, the study results indicate that vitality explains the association between coworker support and knowledge-sharing behaviors; that is, this is a partially mediated relationship. This means that coworkers' support has a direct effect on employees' knowledge-sharing behaviors and an indirect effect on vitality. This finding is consistent with prior studies that highlight the significance of a positive work climate in boosting employees' emotional energy and leading to extra-role behaviors.

The findings also support the claims of the positive psychology literature that the positive affective state leads to positive outcomes such as intrinsic motivation and helping behaviors among employees (Isen & Reeve, 2005; Lamy et al., 2012). According to Frazier and Tupper (2016), when employees feel vital, they have the emotional resources required to perform their tasks and help coworkers who need assistance. Feeling energized at work motivates employees to move beyond self-interest (Batson et al., 2008), perform extra-role activities (Kabat-Farr and Cortina, 2017; Kleine et al., 2019), get involved

in thought-provoking conversations, and provide and seek ideas (Kark and Carmeli, 2009; van den Hooff et al., 2012).

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study adds to the “behavior-oriented domain of knowledge sharing” (Goswami & Agrawal, 2018) by revealing the psychological mechanisms through which social support influences employees’ knowledge contribution and knowledge-seeking behaviors. Therefore, it augments earlier work (Carmeli et al., 2009; Chiaburu, 2010; Swift & Virick, 2013) that only examined the direct link between coworker support and knowledge sharing. As employees’ engagement in knowledge sharing is influenced by feelings of vitality and perceived support from coworkers, it is necessary to integrate vitality and social support theories. Furthermore, studies that have examined how coworker support stimulates knowledge sharing have looked at it mainly from the perspective of the knowledge contributor and have often ignored the knowledge-seeking dimension of the process. This study provides a broader picture of the knowledge-sharing phenomenon by including both knowledge contribution and knowledge-seeking dimensions in the research model.

The findings also highlight the significance of possessing a certain goodwill and image within an organization, which makes it difficult for coworkers to hide knowledge from employees. This sheds light on the unavoidable association that may warrant conviviality and affinity in knowledge-sharing activities. Being so good will not only disable any act of indifference but also elicit caring and helping relationships among organizational members in fostering feelings of vitality and aliveness among employees. This is consistent with prior research emphasizing the role of social support and high-quality relationships in triggering positive moods and emotions in individuals (Carmeli, 2009; Carmeli et al., 2020). Additionally, this study contributes to the literature on positive psychology by revealing the implications of vitality for extra-role behaviors such as knowledge sharing. These results suggest that, when people have positive energy and enthusiasm in the workplace, they perform acts beyond their formal job responsibilities, leading to active participation in knowledge sharing with coworkers. Conversely, emotional exhaustion can hinder knowledge sharing (Lee et al., 2017).

This study adds value to the existing literature by utilizing the affective events approach. Although studies on affect in the workplace have gained considerable interest from researchers (Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2008) and the relationship of affect has been studied in consonance with job satisfaction (Brief & Weiss, 2002), creativity (James et al., 2004), and employee well-being (Dimotakis et al., 2011), among others, the finding that affective events can also trigger knowledge sharing is an interesting contribution to the knowledge management literature. This study can serve as a steppingstone toward further studies on affective events in the workplace and how this can improve overall productivity in organizations.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study has significant practical implications for strengthening voluntary knowledge sharing among employees. The results indicate that people feel alive and energetic in work environments that support their personal growth and development, and subsequently stimulate knowledge-sharing behavior. This implies that employees who perceive a lack of peer support tend to preserve personal resources, including knowledge and refrain from sharing knowledge with colleagues. This study also sheds light on the other end of the spectrum, in which employees command greater likability or referent power because of their performance and disposition. Owing to the aforementioned “performance loop,” such an enhanced image makes knowledge hiding difficult. Camaraderie developed in such situations, warranting proactive knowledge sharing that systemically triggered a better work environment.

Therefore, to promote knowledge sharing among the workforce, managers need to create a socially supportive work environment with informal interaction opportunities with employees who possess relatively greater referent power reinforced by the performance loop and are difficult to ignore within the organizational setting. Hence, to reinforce a supportive climate and encourage extra-role behaviors, organizations should focus on hiring employees with personality traits associated with helping behaviors and include interpersonal helping behaviors as performance criteria. Furthermore, managers can observe regular intervals for bottlenecks in task delivery due to knowledge-sharing issues. Although it might not be feasible every time to note a subtle form of behavior such as knowledge hiding directly, managers can attempt to pinpoint this problem in the team to foster interaction and coworker support, especially for targeted groups. Training modules for managers can incorporate the idea of encouraging peer and manager-to-subordinate support to enhance knowledge sharing. This helps overcome knowledge-withholding issues arising from power disparities (Issac et al., 2022).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

It is essential to highlight the limitations of interpreting the research findings. First, a cross-sectional research design was used, which does not provide sufficient evidence to determine the direction of causality. For instance, employees who actively contribute to and seek knowledge may perceive coworkers as supportive and helpful. Thus, future studies may use a longitudinal design with a time gap between the measurements of constructs for stronger causal interpretations, thereby offering more credibility to the findings. Second, the study focused mainly on the process of knowledge sharing and failed to capture other important aspects, such as the types of knowledge, quantity, and usefulness/quality of knowledge sharing, or solicited and unsolicited knowledge sharing. Future researchers can employ more fine-grained measures of the knowledge-sharing construct to develop a broader understanding of this phenomenon. Third, although workplace support can take different forms (emotional, instrumental, informational, and validation) and may emerge from different sources (supervisor, coworkers, and organization), such aspects were not considered in the research model. Hence, to obtain a more profound understanding, it is advisable for future researchers to further examine different types of coworker support and their differential impact on employees' emotions and knowledge-sharing behavior. Finally, to make studies in this area more robust, factors such as the cultural orientation of employees, perceived coworker support in online and hybrid workplaces, and their impact on diverse groups of employees can also be explored.

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