LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

The Impact of Knowledge Sharing on Employee Retention - Succession Planning as a Moderator

By

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Science in Human Resources Management

Adnan Kassar School of Business

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To my loving wife

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The Impact of Knowledge Sharing on Employee Retention - Succession Planning as a Moderator

Joe Obeid

ABSTRACT

This research contributes to the discussion of the complex issue of employee retention in developing countries such as Lebanon and the middle east. When considering the adoption of succession planning, the study aims to explore some noteworthy directions for data analytics and thus offers a significant step towards a comprehensive understanding of retention. The study aims to find the impact of succession planning on the link concerned between knowledge sharing activities and staff turnover/retention. In this research the theory of planned behavior and Herzberg's two-factor theory were adopted as theoretical frameworks. In addition, a quantitative empirical research via online questionnaire was conducted, and a total of 327 employees completed the survey. The study used SPSS statistical software version 26 to test the relationship between the variables. The demographic profile of respondents, the quality of data measured, the reliability of the instrument used, and hypothesis testing were all statistically assessed in order to determine the association between knowledge sharing and employee retention. The results conducted showed positive relationships between knowledge sharing (explicit and/or implicit) with employee retention. The statistical analysis signified that succession planning also acts as moderator on the relationships, where it showed a significant positive influence. This research findings confirm the importance of having a succession plan in place, especially when organizations want to encourage implicit knowledge sharing behaviors.

Keywords: Knowledge Sharing, Implicit knowledge, Explicit knowledge, Succession planning, Employee retention.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In today's changing corporate environment, competition is becoming more fierce, and long-term viability is becoming a concern. At all levels of an organization, knowledge is created, stored, transmitted, and utilized in order to meet goals and objectives. Employee turnover and organizational knowledge have both been extensively researched. One of the most important and essential topics in Human Resource Management (HRM) is retention management. Using the theory of planned behavior and Herzberg's two factor theory as theoretical frameworks, this study aims to examine the impact of succession planning on the relationship between knowledge sharing and employee retention. In addition, this examination extends the scope of knowledge sharing in terms of implicit and explicit knowledge sharing behaviors.

1.2. General Background

Since the mid-1990s, research has concentrated not just on finding the elements that drive personnel or staff to quit, but also on analyzing specific elements that have a good influence on retaining them (Moncarz, Zhao & Kay, 2009). Employee retention has been of serious importance to companies worldwide, especially as organizations struggle to retain their most important talents in the face of increasing technological innovation and globalization. For some time now, the subject of employee retention has sparked several debates in data analytics research and has become more important to firms.. Almost 80 percent of employees are expected to pursue improved working conditions (Guchait and Cho, 2010). Consequently, in the light of organizational support to retain talented employees, it becomes necessary to establish a favorable working atmosphere (Ghosh and Sahney, 2011).

For more than a decade, researchers have paid growing attention to knowledge sharing (explicit and/or implicit), which is the action of gained information that is shared with others. Knowledge may be passed down from person to group, and generation to generation as a result of sharing behavior (Pai and Tsai, 2016). Previous research has sought to analyze knowledge sharing

behavior (KSB) using a variety of theories (Chiu et al., 2006; Hau et al., 2013). Indeed, the theory of planned behavior, with its well-established conceptual perspective, was seen as the necessary foundation for examining the psychological factors underpinning KSB. As a result, the number of researchers that use TPB to explain KSB has expanded dramatically during the previous decade.

Also, succession planning can act as motivational factor in Herzberg's two factor theory. Because of the individual's need for self-development and self-actualization, motivation factors lead to job satisfaction and employee retention.

1.3. Need for Study

The researcher reviewed previous literature that identified several future suggestions proposed by others. Siewert & Louderback (2019) considered explicit and tacit knowledge as constructs in their study and recommended future research to analyze the role of knowledge transfer and succession planning on different HR approaches by gathering data from different industries. Moore, Dishman, & Fick (2021) recommended a cross-cultural analysis to enhance the validity of their research outcomes. The study considered succession planning, knowledge management, and employee turnover in its approach. It proposed that other variables linked to succession planning should be part of future studies. The same study should be done on other sectors, as well as future researchers can assess the role of different HR practices in enhancing employee retention in the organizations (Madhushani & Mudalige, 2020). On the other hand, Fait et. al, (2021) mentioned that more variables linked with knowledge sharing should be assessed in detail. Therefore, we will study these variables in Lebanon and the Middle East.

1.4. Purpose of Study

This research will contribute to existing literature by examining the impact of succession planning when introduced as a variable on the link between knowledge sharing and employee or staff retention. In addition, it will provide insight on how the components of knowledge sharing (explicit and implicit knowledge sharing) are affected when we introduce succession planning as a moderator.

Therefore, this paper aims to answer this basic question: If succession planning was implemented as a standard practice in organizations, will employees share more explicit or implicit knowledge? How will this affect employee retention rates?

1.5. Statement of Research Problem

The data for the Attraction and Retention of Talent in MENA survey showed that the top job attributes in Lebanon for 2021 are salaries, job security, and work environment. Hence, employee retention has become a challenge for companies whose profit margins drastically decreased due to the economic crisis facing the country. Many Lebanese companies are struggling to be able to offer attractive salaries or job securities to employees. On top of that, family firms make for 85 percent of the private sector in Lebanon, accounting for 1.05 million of the 1.24 million jobs (Fahed-Sreih, 2006). Succession planning in those organizations is not openly discussed; older generations tend to stay in charge and refuse to cede control as long as they can stay in company.

This study explores the impact of succession planning on the relationship between knowledge sharing and employee retention, and gives an insight about the moderating role that succession planning plays in the relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge sharing on one hand, and the employee retention on the other. Thus, it contributes to the literature by examining this relationship during the time of economic crisis in Lebanon and the trend to perform remote work that was seen after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chapter Two

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

2.1. Knowledge Sharing

The main role of knowledge is to make better decisions and transform actions for better outcomes. Knowledge sharing has a critical role in the making of all appropriate actions within an organization, in an attempt to serve its employees and customers more effectively and get higher competitive advantage. Generally, knowledge sharing builds a way towards employee's progress as well as organizational development. A successful knowledge exchange procedure generates a responsibility to respond. Szostek (2019) proposed that knowledge sharing be founded on exchange associations that include the prospects for the establishment of future financial and other benefits attached with the job. The KS process assists organizations to handle their services & products successfully and effectively. Several researchers defined this concept in similar meanings, that knowledge sharing in business is a process of spreading useful and beneficial information among organizational members, which generates positive outcomes (Madhushani, & Mudalige, 2020).

The concept of knowledge sharing is attached with the process of transferring explicit and implicit knowledge among different individuals, or different levels of posts within an organization. Implicit/tacit knowledge is resulting from persons' actions, practices, and principles, where it can't be expressed and organized as exactly or intensely as it can be recognized. When dealing with implicit knowledge, we have more knowledge stored as compared to that we express it to others (Asbari, et al., 2019). Face to face interaction is the most effective and common technique of transferring implicit knowledge. The study found that socialization of employees is best for transferring or sharing implicit knowledge, it enhances their experiences, understanding, and confidence. On the other hand, it is also helpful in removing several ambiguities between employees about work or organizational culture (Kanaan, Hussein, & Abumatar, 2019).

On the other hand, explicit knowledge is defined as the information in the form of visuals, documents, or any regulated form to express the information in a more organized manner. It can be expressed in the form of diagrams, tales, and key points. Therefore, explicit knowledge can be comparatively easy to share with employees or fellows as compared to implicit knowledge. Explicit knowledge is based on a proper system, formulas, guidelines, or simple facts that people can understand after reading or watching it several times (Singh et al., 2021). Sharing of explicit knowledge is an essential part of every organization, through it organizations can easily share their objectives, goals, vision and mission with their employees. Moreover, explicit knowledge sharing helps in understanding the strategic plan of the organization. This is helpful for employees to make better decisions about working with a specific organization (Absari, et al., 2019).

2.2. Employee Retention

Employee turnover is a key issue that takes the attention of several researchers and business managers. Employee retention is a rigorous effort to create and encourage an environment that permits employees to stay at the organization, by executing policies and actions that meet their diverse requirements (Khan et al., 2019). It is critical since employee turnover costs money. Drawbacks such as recruiting expenses, decreased efficiency, potential cost, or waste of any skills or specialty of an expert, may be evaded if employees were given a persuasive justification to remain at their jobs.

According to Abbasi and Hollman (2000), staff retention is defined as a company's propensity to maintain its employees and limit employee turnover. Employee retention, according to Sandhya and Kumar (2011), is the process through which firms implement policies and practices that allow their staff to stay at the company for an extended length of time.. Milkovich & Boundreau (1988) believed that retention of the employees may be a highly contentious problem, because it directly impacts an employee's life. They also argued that if a company cannot maintain its workers efficiently, it will do very little good to invest in legitimate selection, better pay or extra training. Kurdi and Alshurideh (2020) defined retention as the employees' practice to stay at the organization for a longer time period. This concept is described as the desire of a company or business management to keep its employees (Singh et al., 2021).

2.2.1. Knowledge Sharing and Employee Retention

Literature shows that knowledge sharing has a big role in retaining the key employees of the organization. Greater participation of employees in knowledge sharing enhances their own knowledge and skills, as well as their understanding of their work and the organization (Fait et al., 2019). Knowledge sharing (explicit and/or implicit) attitudes improve the abilities and skills to interact with each other, enhance communication skills, and enhance employee's engagement with their jobs (Fait et al., 2019). Also, an organizational culture within which knowledge is transferred and shared effectively also motivates employees to contribute more, and henceforth enlarge and extend their knowledge. Transfer of proper knowledge and information has great relevance for the company's success.

Though Fait et al. (2019) declare that usually individuals are concerned about job engagement, greater knowledge sharing enhances their engagement level with the job, which as a result enhances the employees' will to stay at their jobs. Overall, knowledge sharing enhances employee's morale and motivation to perform their work. It also creates a friendly environment in an organization (Madhushani, & Mudalige, 2020). According to the study of Johnson et al. (2018), it is proved that the positive work environment was negatively associated with turnover. Usually, negative work environments create an urge for employees to leave the job whenever they get another opportunity. Also, a study by Alyoubi, et al., (2018) found that employees are more loyal to their jobs when knowledge sharing is high.

Therefore, we draw the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and employee retention.

H1a: There is a positive relationship between implicit knowledge sharing and employee retention.

H1b: There is a positive relationship between explicit knowledge sharing and employee retention.

2.3. Succession Planning

Succession planning is an occurrence that becomes part of businesses irrespective of the business size (Dyck et al., 2002). It must take the maximum importance inside organizations in order to evade the condition of ‘‘dropping into a hole’’ (Yifei, 2018). The researchers Prathima and Sasibala (2020) defined succession planning as an attempt to offer all employees with clear career plans. Procedures such as recruitment, T&D, and orientation can be allocated to this concept.

It is a proper way of planning the human resource activities from hiring to training, and job growth in the organizations. It guarantees that turnover does not apply damage to organizations, and helps save the cost & time of external workers employment and selection (Ali & Mehreen, 2019). It enhances the worker’s faithfulness, engagement, confidence, and decreases the influence of re-engineering or re-structuring. Most significantly it generates the varied pool of experts and brilliant employees within the organization. In short, succession planning is said to be the strategy implemented by a company to fill its most relevant leadership and technical roles (Huang, 2001). Avanesh (2011) additionally characterizes succession planning as a conscious and coordinated work to expect and get ready for the future administration and skill needs of the organization. This is done by identifying prospective candidates, improving their managerial skills and competencies, and eventually selecting the most appropriate available candidate.

Many organizations disregard succession planning as a standard operational practice (Govender, 2010). Two distressing consequences can result from this unsafe approach: the loss of qualified and competent workers, and the rushed ill-advised advancement of ill-equipped or unfit individuals not yet prepared to move forward the company pecking order (Ali and Hamid Reza, 2014). Hence, in order to build and retain a competitive advantage, businesses need to leverage expertise while still finding ways of innovating intelligently (Lannon & Walsh, 2020; Pellegrinelli et al., 2015). The thinking for picking specific rules, that sway succession planning, is for leaders to find comparative examples in current organizations (Stewart, 2014). Representative degrees of consistency, remuneration rates, advancement rates, obligation levels, and the absence of a general succession plan, are on the whole qualities that intensely influence researchers (Gray, 2014).

2.3.1 Succession Planning, Knowledge sharing, and Employee Retention

Retaining the best employees after giving them proper training and time becomes beneficial for the organization. Different techniques and approaches for succession planning are helpful in retaining the best employees and reducing the employee's absence ratio (Ali & Mehreen, 2019). Nowadays, organizations observe employee turnover as an unavoidable issue; in this situation the best proactive approach is succession planning. There is a positive relationship present among employee retention, and effective process of succession planning (Ali, Mehmood, & Mehreen, 2019). Ultimately, succession planning plays a great role in building the organizational norms and culture to retain its best employees.

A study of the banking sector done by Edeh (2019) in Nigeria also revealed that talent management, employee retention, and succession planning have a positive link in managing positive and growing corporate culture. The study also provides evidence that succession planning techniques decreased employee turnover in the manufacturing sector of Nigeria. Moreover, the results show that job satisfaction level is high among employees and coordination was proven effective with succession planning (Edeh, 2019).

Ali & Mehreen (2019) found out that transfer of knowledge (explicit and/or) is critical in sight of a business's steadiness. Where knowledge and employees are the key resources of the organization for obtaining competitive advantage. A successful organization is a result of a knowledge sharing embedded culture (Yifei, 2018). Succession planning can give way to improve knowledge sharing inside and outside of the organization. It helps employees to develop their understanding of the organization and provide accurate and beneficial information to others. Some factors are highly relevant to the advantageous information sharing among employees that ultimately lead to the high staff retention in organizations (Johnson, et, al., 2018).

Barton (2019) depicts that most of the businesses face failure of knowledge management without proper succession planning. However, the existence of a trustworthy connection between the individuals involved facilitates information transmission and sharing (Hislop, 2009). This type of environment does not exist right away, but it requires a knowledge sharing culture in which employees with important information are driven to share it with their coworkers (Egbu et al., 2005), thus reducing the "fear of exploitation" (Wunram et al., 2004, p. 271). Employees are

anxious to know about the past trends of the organization in order to predict the future (Moore, Dishman, & Fick, 2021).

Moore, Dishman, & Fick (2021) found out that every business should appreciate the different skills of their employees, e.g. entrepreneurial skills, leadership skills, or decision-making skills. Transferring these skills to the employees or the group will build a proper platform for succession planning. Therefore, knowledge sharing (explicit and/ or implicit) is the most important outcome of the succession planning procedures (Johnson, et, al., 2018), which will ultimately lead to higher employee retention.

Hence, we hypothesize that succession planning plays an essential role in creating a knowledge sharing environment that will lead to employee retention.

H2: Succession planning has a moderating impact on the relationship of knowledge sharing and employee's retention.

2.3.2 Succession planning across Implicit and Explicit Knowledge Sharing

Both implicit and explicit knowledge are equally important for the success of an organization, and for retaining its best employees for a long time period (Alyoubi, et al., 2018). Employees resist knowledge sharing, particularly when they face problems in transferring tacit knowledge. This can be due to the ineffective succession planning and unfriendly organizational culture. This may enhance negative perception of employees towards the company administration, promote undesirable behaviors, and decrease performance (Siewert, & Louderback, 2019). Succession planning can pave a way for increasing the intention to share tacit knowledge during the process of grooming the successor.

Richey and Lathrop (2014) described different key techniques of succession planning that helps in transferring/sharing of both explicit and implicit knowledge within an organization. It consisted of teamwork, coaching, collaboration, a written document, or different types of training & seminars. The study also found that the processes for retaining explicit knowledge are more structured than those for sharing tacit knowledge. There are no mechanisms in place to protect tacit knowledge when employees leave, where communication and trust, leadership, and

organizational culture have all been highlighted as elements that assist in the retention of tacit knowledge. Although succession planning helps to transfer knowledge and make better decisions within the organization while implementing the strategic plan (Siewert, & Louderback, 2019), sharing of tacit knowledge can present a challenge for management. Its transmission is contingent on both the incumbent's willingness and capacity to communicate this information and the successor's willingness and ability to accept it. The willingness to share implicit knowledge should be embedded in the organization's culture and mentoring practices.

Therefore, we hypothesize that succession planning has a moderating effect on implicit and/or explicit knowledge sharing and employee retention.

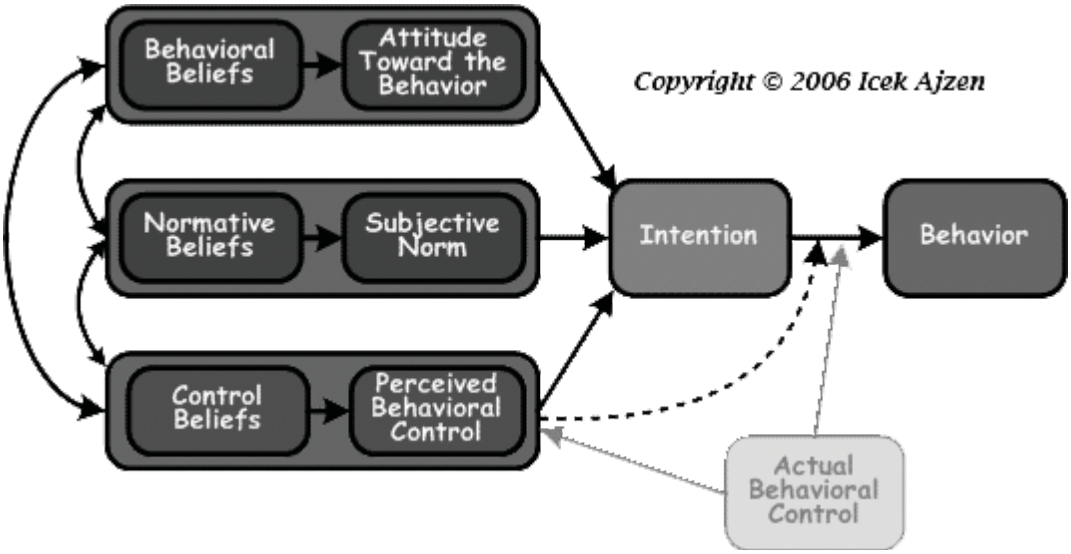
H2a: Succession Planning moderates the relationship between Implicit Knowledge sharing and Employee Retention.

H2b: Succession Planning moderates the relationship between Explicit Knowledge sharing and Employee Retention.

2.4. Theory of Planned Behavior

TBP supports the understanding of the relationship between knowledge sharing and employee retention, and whether succession planning can improve this relationship. It expands on this line of thinking by tying personal beliefs to actions and behaviors, as well as outlining how attitudes might affect real human interactions (Ajzen, 1985). Behavioral belief, as defined in figure 1 (Ajzen, 2006), is an individual's belief about the consequence of a certain activity. The social conviction concept (behavioral beliefs) upholds the individual's necessity for fostering a particular succession plan.

Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behavior Model.



The majority of TPB applications for predicting knowledge sharing included empirical investigations of the strength of correlations among components. Additionally, it included taking a gander at the general strength of the three predecessors that upholds the expectation to share data (behavioral beliefs, normative convictions, and control beliefs). The exact outcomes introduced in the writings show a ton of assortment (Nguyen et al., 2019).

With a growing demand for succession, there is also a need to investigate managerial groups' goals, attitudes, and actions (Bandura, 2011). A more competitive economy and changing company conditions have demanded for more strategic activities (Schlaegel & Koenig, 2013). "Perceived behavioral control", in the hypothesis of TPB, is developed from the self-adequacy framework of Bandura (2011). The researcher fostered the self-adequacy speculation in the wake of taking note of specific assumptions that could impact conduct. Inspiration, execution, and dissatisfaction related with disappointment, for example, can all set off a conduct response (Bandura, 1977). Different types of human social behaviors are assessed in the theory (Dewberry & Jackson, 2018). The behavioral belief includes picking the best individual as a replacement for limited time possibilities, and afterward the replacement ought to help with that development (Spurk and Abele, 2011). Succession planning fosters the assessment of leadership goals and mentalities that are intended for the hypothesis of planned behavior (Sánchez-Medina et al.,

2014). During which, one can execute and complete vital and long haul planning that is basic to an organization's prosperity.

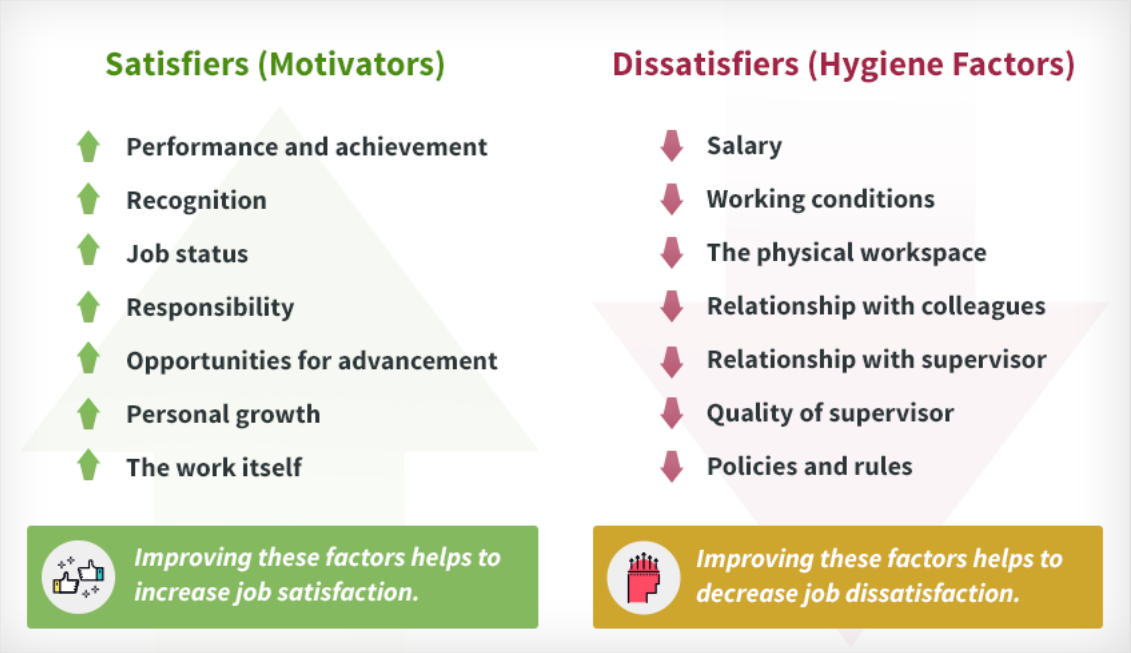
The theory of planned behavior is highly linked with the concepts of succession planning, knowledge sharing, and employee turnover or intention to stay at a job. The research related this theory with the theory of reasoned action, which means human behavior can be better projected through their intentions. According to the TPB, the most proximal factor of behavior is the intention of an individual to be involved in it. Strategizing the energy to implement in order to accomplish the behavior is fundamental to this process (Dewberry & Jackson, 2018). Therefore, TPB guides and directs the employees to set their intentions to stay or leave at the organization.

Our research theoretical framework relies on the theory of planned behavior, where it is assumed that implementing succession planning in organizations will elevate the employees' intentions to share knowledge. More specifically, succession planning can elevate the employee's intentions to share explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge, thus strengthening the positive relationship between knowledge sharing and employee retention.

2.5. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene (two-factor) theory

Individuals, according to Herzberg, are dissatisfied with the fulfillment of lower-order criteria at work, such as those associated with minimum salary levels or pleasant and secure working conditions. People seek satisfaction of higher-level psychological demands relating to success, acknowledgment, accountability, development, and the nature of the work itself (Herzberg, 1966). Succession planning positively affects personal growth, job status, responsibilities, and opportunities for advancement which are motivators or satisfiers in Herzberg's two-factor theory (Hackman et al., 1976).

Figure 2: Herzberg's two factor theory

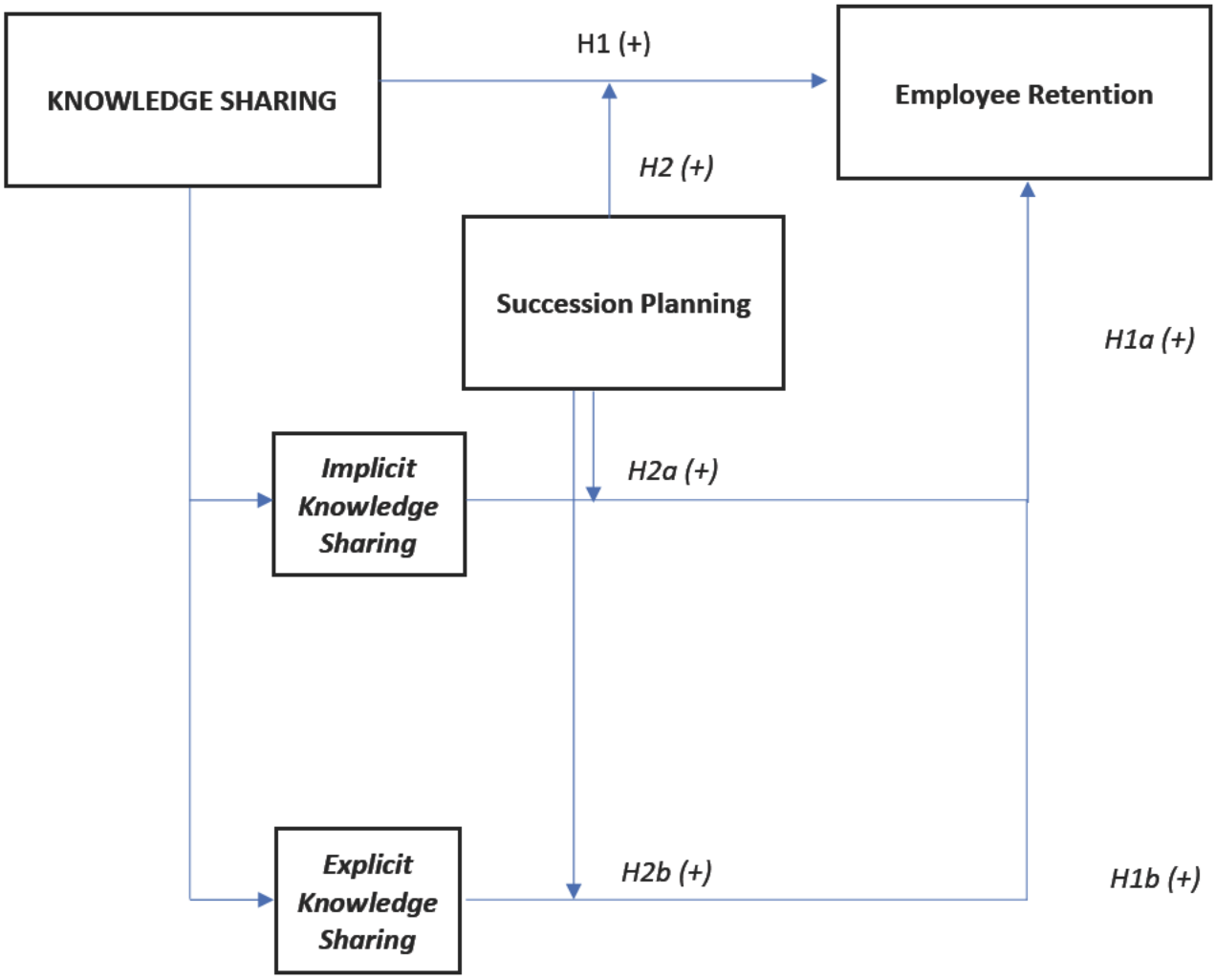


Source: www.simplypsychology.org

This research theoretical framework also relies on Herzberg's two-factor theory, where it is anticipated that employing a succession plan in companies can elevate the satisfaction levels of employees and decrease turnover rates (Döckel, 2003).

2.6. Conceptual Framework of the study

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework



Chapter Three

Methodology

A survey questionnaire is created utilizing validated scales that examine the conceptual model's construct validity. Respondents are given a survey to fill out in order to get their thoughts on succession planning, employee retention, and knowledge sharing. Using IBM SPSS software, the data provided statistical information to assess whether the stated hypotheses are supported by evidence.

3.1. Survey Method

The questionnaire was prepared with "Google Forms" and distributed by email, posted on Linkedin, Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and other social media platforms to participants and was made of close-ended questions.

3.2. Questionnaire Design

The Google survey was designed specifically for the study of testing the moderating effect of succession planning on the relationship between knowledge sharing and employee retention. More specifically, to test its moderating effect on the relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge sharing and retention.

The survey consists of 7 sections. Section one includes the title of the survey and consent form. Section 2 included a “yes” or “no” button indicating if the respondent agrees to participate in the survey study or not. Section three examines the respondents’ demographics including age, gender, educational level, occupation, years of employment with current employer. Section four includes questions on knowledge management, where its data was not considered in the current study. Section five, six, and seven include questions on the independent variable, the moderator, and the dependent variable.

For a copy of the questionnaire, please refer to Appendix 1.

The Lebanese American University's (LAU) Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the survey before it was distributed. For a copy of the IRB approval letter, please refer to Appendix 2.

3.3. Ethical considerations

The research was conducted based on ethical standards and considerations. The respondents had the right to anonymity and confidentiality. The survey did not collect data regarding detailed personal information. A consent was attached to the survey to ensure voluntary participation that needed the participants approval in order to continue the survey. During the construction and administration of the survey, the researcher took into consideration the necessary ethical concerns as per CITI program standards.

3.4. Measurement Instruments

3.4.1. Independent Variable

The statements on knowledge sharing were taken from the work of Bock et al. (2005). A total of 6 items that are divided into a set of three statements measuring the intention to share explicit knowledge and three measuring the intention to share implicit knowledge. For the purpose of this research, all statements were modified to reflect self-reported levels of knowledge sharing rather than intentions to share knowledge (e.g., 'I will share . . . ' was changed to 'I share . . . '). We also added one statement to the explicit knowledge section ('I share databases with other team members'.) in order to include modern methods of explicit knowledge sharing. The respondents assessed the knowledge sharing statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree' (Appendix, Figure A2). To obtain a general measure of knowledge sharing, both the implicit and explicit measures were averaged, also yielding a measure with values ranging from 1 to 5.

3.4.2. Moderating Variable

The statements on succession planning were adopted from the work of Berke (2005). A total of 25 items that the respondents assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree' (Appendix, Figure A2).

3.4.3. Dependent Variable

The statements on employee retention were adopted from the work of Sandhya and Kumar (2011). A total of 11 items that the respondents assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree' (Appendix, Figure A2).

3.5. Sample & Data Collection

The survey was filled by 327 respondents who fit the following criteria: Full-time/part-time employees who have or have not experienced knowledge sharing and succession planning in their working experience. The surveys of 4 respondents were omitted after disagreeing to participate. This was done to increase the survey's credibility and connect the results with the study's goals. Hence, the analysis was performed on a total of 323 respondents.

Friends, colleagues, acquaintances, professional networks, and family who met the aforementioned criteria received an electronic copy of the survey. E-mails, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and other social media sites were used to distribute the Google survey link. Snowball sampling was used in this study. Respondents were also encouraged to forward the link to their peers and acquaintances.

3.6. Analysis Methods

3.6.1. Descriptive Statistics

Using IBM SPSS software, and after coding the data (1= Female, 2= Male), the study produces descriptive statistics to highlight the characteristics of the existing sample. "Descriptive statistics may be used to measure a population's varied characteristics." (Bickel & Lehman, 1975).

3.6.2. Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha was used to evaluate the reliability and consistency of each of the variables. When a study questionnaire contains numerous Likert scales, Cronbach's alpha is frequently used. A minimum coefficient alpha of 0.70 is required for an item to be regarded appropriate for a research (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's alpha values above 0.7 indicate substantial inter-correlations among the elements of a variable.

The Cronbach's alpha for knowledge sharing in our dataset was 0.967 and the item-to-scale correlations ranged from 0.76 to 0.95, significant with a *p*-value less than 0.001. As for succession planning in our dataset the Cronbach's alpha was 0.984 and the item-to-scale correlations ranged from 0.27 to 0.90, significant with a *p*-value less than 0.001. The Cronbach's alpha for employee retention in our dataset was 0.963 and the item-to-scale correlations ranged from 0.22 to 0.90, significant with a *p*-value less than 0.001.

3.6.3. Linear Regression Analysis

In order to verify the relationship between the independent and dependent variable a linear regression analysis of the variables was performed on IBM SPSS.

3.6.4. Multiple Regression Analysis

In order to verify that the moderating variable, succession planning, has an impact on the dependent variable, employee retention, a multiple regression analysis was performed using IBM SPSS, Hayes Process Macro model 1 (Hayes, 2018).

Chapter Four

Data Analysis & Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The demographic data included age, gender, educational level, occupation, and years of employment with the current employer. Table 1 summaries the results of the demographics section.

The results show that 133 of our participants belonged to the generations of 1995 or later (Gen Z) with 41.2%, 143 participants from the generation of 1977-1994 (Millennials) with 44.3%, and 24 participants from 1966-1976 (Gen X) with 7.4% and 23 participants from 1965 or earlier (Baby boomers) with 7.1%. This indicates that more than 80% of the population belonged to the age bracket below 45 years old. With respect to gender, 150 of our participants are females 46.4% and 173 are males 53.6%. From these results, we can conclude that we have gender equality in our sample since the percentages are almost equal. Concerning the level of education, 212 of our participants have undergraduate degrees representing 65.6%. 95 of our participants are graduates representing 29.4%, and only 16 participants hold doctoral education level representing 5%. This indicates that our sample includes educated participants with university degrees. Concerning occupation the majority of participants are employees with 57.2%, followed by supervisors with 18%, then middle management with 14.6%, followed by top management with 9% and finally custodians with 1.2%. This shows that the majority of responses belonged to employees' occupation. In regards to participants' years of experience at their current employer 62.2% of participants had between 0-10 years, while 27.3% of participants had between 10-20 years, 7.7% of participants with 20-30 years, and finally 2.8% of participants with 30 years and above years of experience at their current employer.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Demographic Variable	Respondents	
	Number	Percentage
Age		
1995 or Later	133	41.2%
1977-1994	143	44.3%
1966-1976	24	7.4%
1965 or earlier	23	7.1%
Gender		
Female	150	46.4%
Male	173	53.6%
Education Level		
Undergraduate	212	65.6%
Graduate	95	29.4%
Doctoral	16	5%
Occupation		
Top Management	29	9%
Middle Management	47	14.6%
Supervisor	58	18%
Employee	185	57.3%
Custodian	4	1.2%
Years of Employment with Current Employer		
0-10	201	62.2%
10-20	88	27.2%
20-30	25	7.7%
30+	9	2.8%

Chapter Five

Hypothesis Testing & Results

5.1. Measurement Model

The measurement model examination includes internal reliability of the measurement items. The reliability results are displayed in Table 2 below. All constructs scored above 0.7, which is the recommended threshold of Cronbach's alpha (Hair et a l., 2009). This shows that the measures are reliable as all Cronbach Alpha values are well above the minimum threshold of 0.7.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity of Constructs

Variable	Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Knowledge Sharing		0.967
	Explicit KS	0.954
	Implicit KS	0.975
Succession Planning		0.984
Employee retention		0.963

5.2. Factor Analysis

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Variable	Dimension	KMO	Bartlet's Test Chi Square.
Knowledge Sharing		0.870	2906.458
	Explicit KS	0.764	1027.669
	Implicit KS	0.776	1402.311
Succession Planning		0.972	9445.042
Employee Retention		0.951	4305.897

The suitability and adequacy of the factor analysis in our sample is verified by the results of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity as shown in Table 2 above. Moreover, the factor analysis results show good factor loadings since all values except one were above 0.7 as represented in the tables below regarding the Component Matrix of each construct.

Table 4: Knowledge Sharing Component Matrix

	Component Matrix
KSEXP1	0.913
KSEXP2	0.941
KSEXP3	0.901
KSIMP1	0.949
KSIMP2	0.940
KSIMP3	0.935

Table 5: Explicit KS Component Matrix

	Component Matrix
KSEXP1	0.961
KSEXP2	0.966
KSEXP3	0.943

Table 6: Implicit KS Component Matrix

	Component Matrix
KSIMP1	0.982
KSIMP2	0.970
KSIMP3	0.977

Table 7: Employee Retention Component Matrix

	Component Matrix
RET1 R	0.866
RET2	0.907
RET3	0.916
RET4	0.948
RET5 R	0.421
RET6	0.927
RET7 R	0.897
RET8 R	0.856
RET9	0.891
RET10	0.928
RET11 R	0.839

Table 8: Succession Planning Component Matrix

	Component Matrix
SP1	0.900
SP2	0.855
SP3	0.767
SP5	0.834
SP6	0.911
SP7	0.840
SP8	0.909
SP9	0.927
SP11	0.873
SP12	0.907
SP13	0.923
SP14	0.908
SP15	0.891
SP18	0.873
SP19	0.902
SP20	0.895
SP21	0.900
SP23	0.840
SP24	0.867
SP25	0.937

Factor analysis are used in order to construct a score for knowledge sharing, explicit knowledge sharing, implicit knowledge sharing, employee retention, and succession planning. When we were conducting factor analysis for succession planning the results were showing two components instead of one so we had to omit five questions from our study related to succession planning; questions (4, 10, 16, 17, and 22). Then these scores are used to measure the impact of knowledge sharing, explicit knowledge sharing, and implicit knowledge sharing on employee retention while succession planning is a moderator.

5.3. Pearson Correlation

Table 9: Correlation between Variables

		Knowledge Sharing	Explicit KS	Implicit KS	Employee Retention	Succession Planning
Knowledge Sharing	Pearson Correlation	1	.960**	.964**	.826**	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	323	323	323	323	323
Explicit KS	Pearson Correlation	.960**	1	.851**	.749**	.732**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	323	323	323	323	323
Implicit KS	Pearson Correlation	.964**	.851**	1	.838**	.829**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	323	323	323	323	323
Employee Retention	Pearson Correlation	.826**	.749**	.838**	1	.885**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	323	323	323	323	323
Succession Planning	Pearson Correlation	.812**	.732**	.829**	.885**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	323	323	323	323	323

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Pearson Correlations was developed to test the relationship between the variables and the results are shown in the above Table 9. The results show that there is a positive link between KS and retention, where the correlation had a value of 0.826 and p-value < 0.01. In addition, there is a positive correlation between explicit knowledge sharing and employee retention, where the correlation had a value of 0.749 and p-value < 0.01. Moreover, there is a positive relationship

between implicit knowledge sharing and employee retention, where the correlation had a value of 0.838 and p-value of 0.000. Another positive link was found between succession planning and retention, where the correlation had a value of 0.885 and a p-value <0.01.

5.4. Structural Model & Regression Analysis

The structural model forecasts the coefficient of determination (R^2). The coefficient of determination (R^2) is the amount of variance encountered by independent variables.

Figure 4: Structural Framework

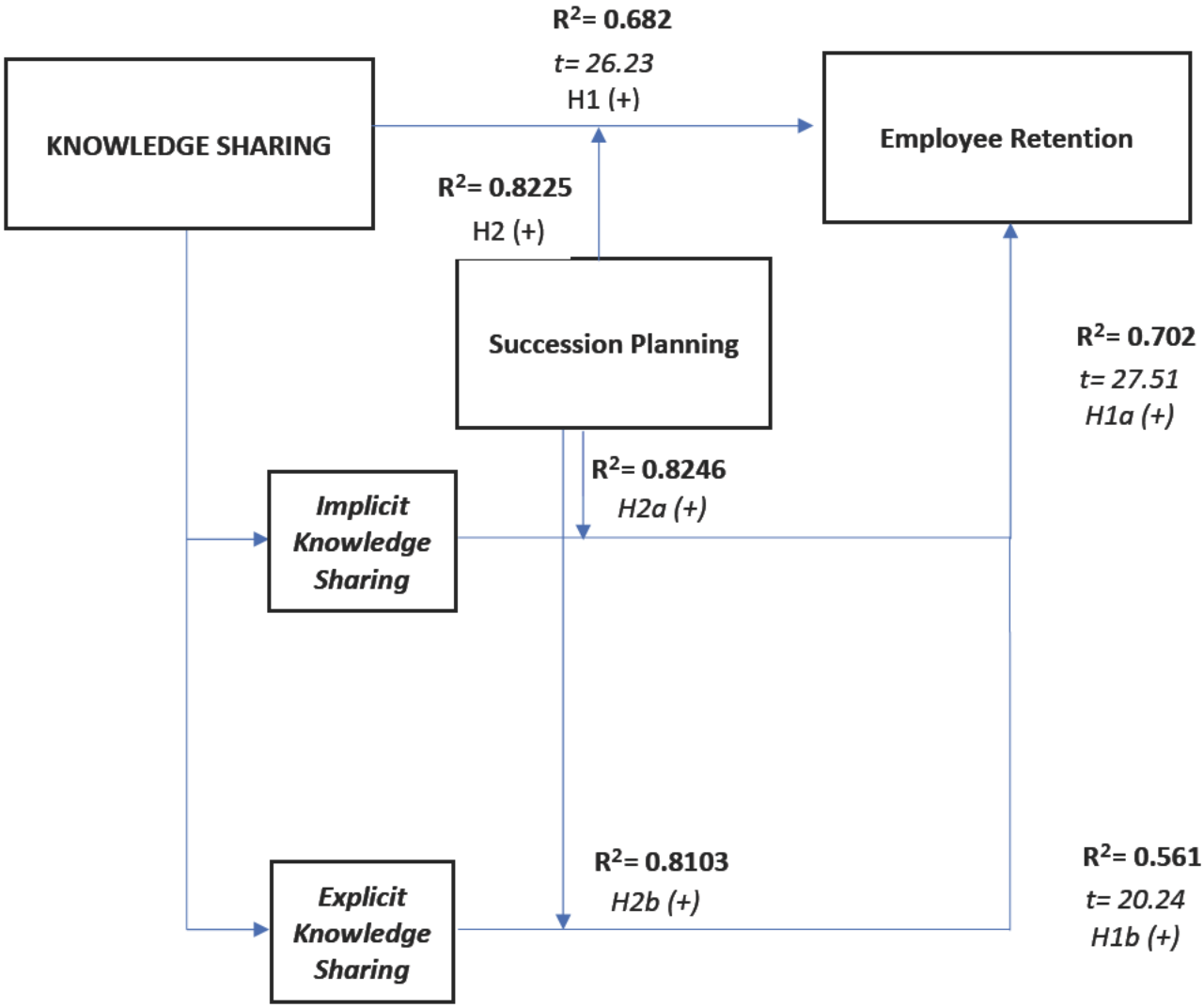


Table 10: Regression Analysis

Regression Analysis	R Square	Sig.
Knowledge Sharing → *Employee Retention*	0.682	.000
Implicit Knowledge Sharing → *Employee Retention*	0.701	.000
Explicit Knowledge Sharing → *Employee Retention*	0.561	.000

The structural model supported all the hypothesized relationships. As shown in Table 10, Figure 4 illustrates the framework of the model. The analysis of the relationship between knowledge sharing and employee retention had an R-squared of 0.682 and a p-value < 0.01. Implicit knowledge sharing and employee retention had an R-squared of 0.702 and a p-value < 0.01. Explicit knowledge sharing and employee retention recorded an R-squared of 0.561 and a p-value < 0.01.

5.5. Moderation Test using Hayes Process Model

5.5.1. Testing H2

As shown in table 11 below, the effect of our moderator succession planning on our variable knowledge sharing to employee retention was significant with a p-value < 0.01, R-square of 0.8225, and an R2-chng of 0.0059.

Table 11: Moderation of SP on KS & Retention

```
Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .9069      .8225      .1792   492.6598     3.0000   319.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant      .0854      .0352     2.4285      .0157      .0162      .1546
KS            .2308      .0479     4.8191      .0000      .1366      .3250
SP            .6808      .0434    15.6803      .0000      .5954      .7663
Int_1        -.1055      .0323    -3.2696      .0012     -.1690     -.0420

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        KS       x        SP

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W      .0059    10.6900     1.0000   319.0000      .0012
```

5.5.2. Testing H2a

As shown in table 12 below, concerning the effect of our moderator succession planning on our variables implicit knowledge sharing to employee retention the result was significant with a p-value < 0.01, R-square of 0.8246, and an R2-chng of 0.0068.

Table 12: Moderation of SP on Implicit KS & Retention

```
Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .9081      .8246      .1770   500.0471     3.0000   319.0000      .0000

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant      .1022      .0373     2.7421      .0065      .0289      .1756
KIS           .2430      .0493     4.9309      .0000      .1460      .3399
SP            .6664      .0451    14.7744      .0000      .5777      .7552
Int_1        -.1237      .0351    -3.5234      .0005     -.1927     -.0546

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        KIS      x        SP

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W      .0068    12.4146     1.0000   319.0000      .0005
```

5.5.3. Testing H2b

As shown in table 13 below, with respect to explicit knowledge sharing to employee retention the result was also significant with a p-value < 0.01, R-square of 0.8103, and an R2-chng of 0.0053.

Table 13: Moderation of SP on Explicit KS & Retention

```
Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .9002      .8103      .1915   454.1799     3.0000   319.0000      .0000

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant      .0678      .0332     2.0397      .0422      .0024      .1332
KES           .1423      .0438     3.2489      .0013      .0561      .2285
SP            .7654      .0382    20.0279      .0000      .6902      .8406
Int_1        -.0929      .0310    -2.9965      .0029     -.1539     -.0319

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        KES      x        SP

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W      .0053     8.9793     1.0000   319.0000      .0029
```

Chapter Six
Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the theoretical framework that this research utilizes (theory of planned behavior and Herzberg's two-factor theory), and after reviewing previous literature conducted by researchers, this study was set to explore the impact of succession planning on the relationship between knowledge sharing and employee retention. More specifically it set out to uncover the impact of succession planning on the relationship between explicit/implicit knowledge sharing and employee retention.

6.1. Discussion

The study's results indicated that there is a significant positive relation between knowledge sharing and employee retention. However, the relation between implicit knowledge sharing and employee retention was higher than the one between explicit knowledge sharing and employee retention. Signifying that implicit knowledge sharing plays a more important role in affecting employee retention than explicit sharing does. This can be associated to Herzberg's two-factor theory that satisfies personal growth, recognition, and performance. Data showed that implicit knowledge sharing motivates the employees to stay at their jobs for a longer period of time. This shows that a learning culture and a job that promotes continuous knowledge advancement does have a positive effect on retention rates.

Also, the results showed that succession planning has a moderating role on the positive link that exists between KS and retention. Yet, results showed that succession planning has a slightly higher impact on implicit knowledge sharing and retention than it has on explicit knowledge sharing and retention. This can be due to the encouragement that an employee feels when being

promoted, thus leading them to search for more implicit knowledge that would aid with their future performance. The theory of planned behavior coincides as a theoretical framework with these results, since succession planning can trigger positive behavioral intentions in the workplace. These intentions should be translated into knowledge sharing behaviors and activities. The findings of this research suggests that having a succession plan in place encourage knowledge sharing activities that will ultimately lead to better retention percentages.

6.2. Limitation of Study & Future Research

This research study has several limitations that needs to be underlined. First, the study collected data from Lebanon mainly and few other middle eastern countries. Future research should look at other geographical areas to broaden the target audience. Second, this study was conducted during COVID-19, where some respondents were experiencing remote work that affected their view on retention and satisfaction. This factor may have affected the results, since remote work presented technical connectivity challenges for employees. Third, the study did not analyze the different dimensions of succession planning and employee retention. Future research should focus on dissecting those variables in order to obtain a narrower view of the relationships. Fourth, the age group tested was mainly composed of millennials (44.3%) and Gen z participants (41.2%). A look at other generations would be interesting to compare with these findings.

In addition, more variables affecting employee retention should be tested. Variables such as leadership, organizational transparency, job rotation, and other facets that would have a significant impact.

The researcher recommends expanding the scope of succession planning's impact on employee retention, satisfaction, engagement and other facets.

6.3. Managerial Implications

This research finding may call for readers, particularly those in management or top management positions in any firm looking to grow and boost employee retention rates. The findings also show that succession planning has the potential to create a knowledge-sharing company culture and reduce turnover. In order to retain a competitive staff, organizations should monitor the levels of knowledge sharing activities, especially the sharing of implicit or tacit knowledge.

6.4. Conclusion

This research studied the impact of knowledge sharing on employee retention while having succession planning as a moderator. The findings provided significant correlations and validated the positive impact that knowledge sharing has on employee retention. Which means that higher knowledge sharing will lead to better employee retention. Moreover, the study found that implicit knowledge sharing has a higher impact on retention than explicit knowledge sharing does. This concurs with previous literature which also demonstrates that sharing of implicit knowledge enhances employees' will to stay with their organization (Siewert, & Louderback, 2019). Also, it asserted that succession planning can play a moderating role in the relationship between knowledge sharing and retention. The wish of every organization to retain its best staff is a significant factor of effective succession planning (Khan et al., 2019). The results pointed that having a succession plan in place will enhance the sharing culture of the organization, thus improving retention rates. On a narrower scope, adding to the existing literature, the results showed that succession planning has a slightly higher impact on implicit knowledge sharing than on explicit knowledge sharing. This is linked to the theory of planned behavior where having a succession plan in place would create beliefs and can set intentions to share more knowledge. Since succession planning draws routes for sharing of knowledge, this will ultimately lead to

higher employee retention. The research of Fait et al. (2019) concluded that knowledge sharing (explicit and/or implicit) is helpful in reducing an employee's intention to leave the organization. The results of this study coincided with this, where sharing of explicit knowledge was shown to have a significant positive impact on retention rates.

Incumbents tend to share more explicit knowledge than they share implicit knowledge, and that is because explicit knowledge is easier to identify and share with others. Organizations face the challenge of codifying tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge that can be easily transferred. So to answer the research question, having a succession plan in place can assist organizations in establishing a better sharing culture amongst its employees, and encourage the sharing of implicit knowledge. This will lead to better retention rates. But this cannot happen overnight, employees should be sharing knowledge from the get-go.

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Appendix 1: Survey

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

My organization has processes for generating new knowledge from existing knowledge.
My organization has processes for distributing knowledge throughout the organization.
My organization has processes exchanging knowledge with our trading partners.
My organization has processes for exchanging knowledge between employees.
My organization has processes acquiring knowledge about new products/services within our industry.
My organization has processes for acquiring knowledge about competitors within our industry.

My organization has processes for filtering knowledge.
My organization has processes for transferring organizational knowledge to employees.
My organization has processes for absorbing knowledge from employees into the organization.
My organization has processes for integrating different sources and types of knowledge.
My organization has processes for organizing knowledge.
My organization has processes for replacing outdated knowledge.
My organization has processes for converting knowledge into design of new products/services.

My organization has processes to apply knowledge learned from mistakes.
My organization has processes for using knowledge to solve new problems.
My organization makes knowledge accessible to those who need it.
My organization takes advantage of new knowledge.
My organization has processes for using knowledge in development of new products/services.

My organization has processes to protect knowledge from inappropriate use inside the organization.
My organization has processes to protect knowledge from inappropriate use outside the organization.
My organization has processes to protect knowledge from theft from within the organization.
My organization has processes to protect knowledge from theft from outside the organization.
My organization has incentives that encourage the protection of knowledge.
My organization has technologies that restrict access to some sources of knowledge.
My organization has extensive policies and procedures for protecting trade secrets.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING
Explicit Knowledge
I share my work reports and official documents with other team.
I share my manuals, methodologies and models with other team.
I share databases with other team members.
Implicit Knowledge
I share my experience or know-how with other team members.
I share my know-where or know-whom at the request of other team.
I share my expertise from my education or training with other team.

Succession Planning
In my organisation, succession planning puts into consideration all key positions
In my organisation, performance appraisals are always conducted annually
Job rotation is well implemented across all departments in my organisation
In my organisation, rewards are given to all employees without any form of discrimination
Bonuses and incentives are benefits given to all employees in my organisation based on their performance
In my organisation, management supports employees who wish to advance in their careers through the Education Policy and sponsorships for training
In my organisation, employee career paths are clearly defined and are available from the HR Department
In my organisation, every year employees are always given feedback about their talent reviews
In my organisation, training and development opportunities are available to all employees
In my organisation, it is evident that managers and supervisors have effective management and leadership skills
In my organisation, occasionally employees are allowed to define their own rewards
In my organisation, mentoring and coaching is well practiced by most managers and supervisors
In my organisation, talented employees are always considered for sponsorships
In my organisation, there are opportunities for employees to continuously improve their skills
In my organisation, the pay and grading structures allow employees to define their own remunerations
In my organisation, succession planning is strictly considered for top level management
In my organisation, employees are usually recruited from diverse demographic backgrounds
In my organisation, the succession plan encourages promotion from within strictly based on merit
In my organisation, rewards are always given to talented employees
In my organisation, any changes in HR policies are communicated to all employees
Talented employees are always attracted to join my organisation due to its good reputation in retaining talent
In my organisation, diversity management policy disregards any form of discrimination against gender, religion and sex
In my organisation, there are flexible rewards and benefits that cater for family and individual needs/preferences
In my organisation, we have an “open door policy” which enables smooth communication between management and employees
In my organisation, employees are internally offered internship opportunities so as to assist them advance their careers

Employee Retention
I’m planning on working for another company within a period of three years.
Within this company my work gives me satisfaction.
If I wanted to do another job or function, I would look first at the possibilities within this company
I see a future for myself within this company.
It doesn’t matter if I’m working for this company or another, as long as I have work.
If it were up to me, I will definitely be working for this company for the next five years
If I could start over again, I would choose to work for another company.
If I received an attractive job offer from another company, I would take the job.
The work I’m doing is very important to me.
I love working for this company
I have checked out a job in another company previously.