Sense of Belonging and Inclination Towards Knowledge Sharing in Organizations

ABSTRACT
For an organization to continue its growth, sharing of knowledge amongst its employees and recording and maintaining this knowledge is of outmost importance. Knowledge management provides proper practices to ensure the documentation and preservation of institutional knowledge for future employees and the organization. However, for these practices to be effective, employees need to feel inclined to share their knowledge. Studies have looked at various reasons that encourage or discourage an employee from sharing their knowledge. Knowledge may be viewed as a source of power that puts an employee at an advantage (Yang & Wu, 2008), therefore impeding the knowledge sharing. In various models and frameworks that are conceptualized for knowledge sharing, factors such as culture of the organization, motivation for sharing knowledge, receiving a benefit or reward, opportunities to share knowledge, and employee relationships have been discussed (Ipe, 2003; Razmerita et al., 2016). However, one of the important factors that requires more attention is belongingness, or the sense of being accepted, needed, and appreciated in the workplace. A recent study shows enhancing the sense of belongingness by practicing fairness and inclusion in the workplace creates a conductive atmosphere that encourages knowledge sharing (Enwereuzor, 2021). This poster aims to call attention to the importance of belongingness in organizations and its effect on employee’s inclination to share their knowledge.

KEYWORDS
Knowledge Sharing; Belongingness; Inclusion

INTRODUCTION
Growth and progress of an organization is highly dependent on knowledge sharing of its employees. Knowledge sharing, in this poster, is defined as the willingness of an employee to share their knowledge with other employees. This act also enables employees to build on the previous knowledge which at the end benefits the individuals and improves the organization. Studies have looked at factors that might affect an employees’ inclination to share their knowledge with others. Although knowledge can provide certain type of power and job security for an employee (Yang & Wu, 200), creating a collaborative atmosphere in the workplace that promotes and rewards knowledge sharing can encourage sharing of knowledge among employees (Ipe, 2003; Razmerita et al., 2016).

Some barriers to knowledge sharing mentioned in the literature include competitiveness in the workplace, lack of time, or having formal organization structures (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Nooshinfard & Nemati-Anaraki, 2014). Personal characteristics of each person and their expectation in the workplace also affect the way they share knowledge. For example, altruism has been shown to directly impact tacit knowledge sharing among the employees in a company (Obrenovic et al., 2020). Among many factors included in previous studies, belongingness has received less attention. The current poster draws attention to this gap and calls for research in this area.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING MODELS AND FRAMEWORKS
Various models and frameworks have been conceptualized to envision how knowledge sharing works for an individual and what factors affect it. By reviewing the literature, Wang and Noe (2010) created a framework in which environmental factors, individual characteristics, motivational factors, and perceptions related to knowledge sharing all affect sharing of knowledge (p.116). Other models have proposed that attitude, satisfaction, motivation, culture of work environment, reciprocity, and relationship with the recipient also play an important role in sharing of knowledge (Gagné, 2009; Ipe, 2003). Trust has been the main focus of one framework (Panteli & Sockalingam, 2005) while another framework has included technology as an influential factor (Nooshinfard & Nemati-Anaraki, 2014). However, most frameworks are lacking one factor: the sense of belongingness and inclusion in workplace. As belongingness can also create job satisfaction which ultimately facilitates sharing of knowledge, this factor in the current work environment which is becoming more and more diverse, can not be disregarded. Future research, models, or frameworks can study belongingness from various aspects to investigate how this factor can influence the workplace environment, the employees, and their inclination to share their knowledge.
CONCLUSION
With the growth of diversity in workplace, creating a sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace gains more importance. Belongingness can affect many areas of the work environment, from the general feeling of satisfaction in the workplace to the inclination of sharing knowledge with other employees. As organizations highly rely on the knowledge of their employees to be able to grow and progress, it is imperative for them to find ways to encourage and improve knowledge sharing. Afterall, even if only a few employees feel dejected about sharing knowledge in their current work environment, this feeling of discontent can affect others (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002) leading to a culture of siloed employees each working in isolation from another.

REFERENCES