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# **Influence of Trust on Sharing of Knowledge in a Cross-Cultural Working Environment**

## **Volume One**

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## Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this research project is entirely my own work and that any additional sources of information have been duly sighted.

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## Abstract

This research was carried out to theoretically and empirically examine the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment, with the objectives to investigate: the influence of trust on knowledge sharing (KS) and the relative influence of trust on KS compared to other factors; the antecedents to trust development; the influence of culture on trust development; the influence of culture on KS, and; the individual and organizational antecedents to KS in a cross-cultural working environment. The research was conducted at three Health services institutes in Islamabad, Pakistan, through 75 semi-structured qualitative interviews and was analyzed through thematic analysis. This was underpinned by a constructivist ontology and interpretive epistemology, deemed appropriate in order to analyze and understand social reality through exploring a context based on the study of the interactions among people, groups, firms and society. This allowed an exploration and analysis of new contexts through the research participants' eyes.

The main findings of this study are as follows: (1) Trust is the most important factor for KS compared to other factors including: cultural similarity, organizational duty, professional relationship, authenticity of shared knowledge and personality factors of the person involved in KS; (2) Although cultural similarity is also an important factor for KS, trust is much more important for KS as compared to culture or common ethnicity; (3) Culture has a substantial role in trust building; (4) Professionalism, sincerity, length of relationship, commitment, confidentiality/keeping secrets, religiosity and mutuality of ideas, interests and activities are important antecedents to interpersonal trust development; (5) Culture and ethnicity is a hurdle in the process of KS and language difference has a negative impact on KS; (6) Cultural similarity, organizational culture, managerial support, employee empowerment, motivation and organizational rewards, organizational justice and organizational resources

are the major organizational antecedents to KS and (7) Interpersonal trust, intention and attitude towards KS, self-efficacy, organizational commitment, religiosity and passion to help others are the major individual antecedents to KS.

This research from both a theoretical and practical perspective, offers several key contributions. Firstly, this work contributes to the existing and growing literature on trust, knowledge sharing and culture by examining the impact of trust on KS and the impact of culture on KS and trust development in a cross-cultural working environment. As such it provides a more comprehensive picture by not only building on important existing research but also attempting to incorporate and merge several key dimensions; trust, knowledge sharing and culture, which have not been studied together in prior studies.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will open up several new productive paths for research in relation to key findings of this study. For example, the importance of authenticity of shared knowledge and personality factors for KS; influence of culture on KS and trust building; importance of professionalism and religiosity as antecedents to KS; gender biases in KS; language barriers in KS; role of organizational resources, organizational justice, employee empowerment, organizational rewards, organizational commitment and religiosity in KS. The findings of this research identify the adoption of trust as a strategic initiative for organizations to foster organizational KS. Although the influence of trust on KS has been investigated previously in multiple studies, it has not studied in a cross-cultural working environment and not in a professionalized field like the medical profession. Moreover, previous research studies have been focusing on national culture, while analysing KS from cross-cultural point view. This has largely ignored the impact of sub-culture, which can be more significant and critical, as the findings of this research have suggested. Hence, this

study contributes towards the existing field by providing another more detailed analysis of the mediating effect of trust in a cross-cultural professionalized workplace for the purpose of knowledge management.

The findings go further to identify the individual and organizational factors other than trust that facilitate KS and the factors that cultivate interpersonal trust. The results from this research reinforce the need for organizational focus on training and development of employees, employee empowerment, organizational rewards and organizational resources. This research has identified ethnic differences being detrimental towards organizational KS and therefore it calls on managers to eliminate or properly manage ethnic or language based biases and conflicts, gender based biases and organizational injustice based issues in order to facilitate and promote organizational knowledge sharing. According to the findings of this research, the successful implementation of effective organizational KS depends on the creation and development of an organizational culture characterised by a learning orientation, interpersonal trust among organizational members, a strong sense of self efficacy, professionalism, organizational commitment, initiative to share knowledge and provision of managerial support and organizational resources including men, methods and machines. This research also suggests that the identification and acquisition of organizational resources and adoption and application of information is a very critical factor in encouraging organizational KS that leads to effective firm performance.

**Key Words:** Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Trust, Culture, Pakistan, cross-cultural management.

## Table of Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Influence of Trust on Sharing of Knowledge in a Cross-Cultural Working Environment ..... | I   |
| Volume One .....   | I   |
| Declaration of Originality .....   | IV  |
| Abstract .....   | V   |
| List of Figures .....  | XIV |
| Volume One .....   | XV  |
| Chapter One .....  | 1   |
| INTRODUCTION.....  | 1   |
| 1.0. Chapter Introduction .....  | 1   |
| 1.1. Introduction to the Research .....  | 1   |
| 1.2. Research Objectives, Questions and Underlying Rationale .....                       | 7   |
| 1.2.1. Research Objective # 1 .....  | 7   |
| 1.2.2. Research Objective #2 .....   | 12  |
| 1.2.3. Research Objective # 3 .....  | 16  |
| 1.3. Proposed Model of Research .....  | 21  |
| 1.4. Chapter Summary.....  | 24  |
| 1.5. The Scheme of the thesis.....   | 25  |
| <br>   |     |
| Chapter Two .....  | 26  |
| Theoretical Foundation .....   | 26  |
| AN INTRODUCTION TO PAKISTAN AND ITS ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY.....                   | 26  |
| 2.0. Introduction .....  | 26  |
| 2.1. Fundamental Facts about Pakistan .....  | 27  |
| Figure 2: Political Map of Pakistan.....   | 29  |
| 2.2. Cultural Traditions of Pakistani Society.....                                       | 29  |
| Figure 3: Cultural Map of Pakistan .....   | 31  |
| 2.3. Ethnic and Cultural Differences in Pakistan .....                                   | 31  |
| 2.4. Pakistan a Cradle of Languages.....   | 34  |
| 2.5. Foundations of Cultural Diversity in Pakistan .....                                 | 35  |
| 2.6. Analysis of Pakistani Culture on Hofstede’s Cultural Model .....                    | 37  |
| 2.7. Analysis of Provincial Cross-cultural Differences .....                             | 42  |
| Consolidated Graph.....  | 46  |
| Consolidated Table.....  | 46  |
| 2.8. Chapter Summary .....   | 48  |



|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Chapter Three .....  | 50      |
| Theoretical Foundation .....   | 50      |
| KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING .....                               | 50      |
| 3.0. Introduction .....  | 50      |
| 3.1. Conceptualization of Knowledge .....                                      | 52      |
| 3.1.1. Data, Information and Knowledge .....                                   | 56      |
| 3.1.2. Types of Knowledge.....   | 56      |
| 3.2. Why is it important to manage knowledge? .....                            | 59      |
| 3.3. What is knowledge management and how does it work in organizations? ..... | 61      |
| 3.3.1. Functions/Processes of a Knowledge Management System.....               | 63      |
| 3.4. Conceptualization of Knowledge Sharing .....                              | 66      |
| 3.4.1. Strategic Implications of Knowledge Sharing.....                        | 68      |
| 3.4.2. Processes of Knowledge Sharing.....                                     | 70      |
| 3.4.3. Social Capital and Knowledge Sharing Communities.....                   | 71      |
| 3.5. Critical Perspectives on Knowledge Management.....                        | 73      |
| 3.5.1 Cognitive constructivism .....   | 75      |
| 3.5.2. Socio-cognitive or collectivism .....                                   | 77      |
| 3.5.4. Social Constructionism .....  | 79      |
| 3.6. Barriers to Knowledge Sharing .....                                       | 84      |
| 3.7. Knowledge Sharing in Medical Profession .....                             | 86      |
| 3.8. Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing.....                                     | 88      |
| 3.8.1. Individual Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing .....                       | 90      |
| 3.8.2. Empirical Evidence.....   | 96      |
| 3.9. Organizational Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing.....                      | 101     |
| b. Organizational Absorptive Capacity .....                                    | 102     |
| d. Interpersonal Relationships and Social Networks.....                        | 104     |
| 3.9.1. Empirical Evidence.....   | 116     |
| 3.10. Chapter Summary .....  | 122     |
| <br>Chapter Four.....  | <br>124 |
| Theoretical Foundation .....   | 124     |
| TRUST AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING .....  | 124     |
| 4.0. Introduction .....  | 124     |
| 4.1. Conceptualization of Trust.....   | 125     |
| 4.2. Influence of Trust on Knowledge Sharing .....                             | 129     |
| 4.3. Antecedents to Interpersonal Trust Development .....                      | 136     |
| 4.4. Empirical Evidence: Influence of Trust on KS .....                        | 148     |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 4.4.1. Empirical Evidence: Antecedents to Trust Development.....                                | 151 |
| 4.5. Chapter Summary .....  | 156 |
| <br>  |     |
| Chapter Five .....  | 158 |
| Theoretical Foundation .....  | 158 |
| CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TRUST AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING .                                      | 158 |
| 5.0. Introduction .....   | 158 |
| 5.1. Culture and its Impact on Thinking and Behavior .....                                      | 159 |
| 5.1.1. The Multiplicity of Cultural Identities .....  | 161 |
| 5.2. Cross-Cultural Knowledge Sharing.....  | 162 |
| 5.2.1. Dearth of Research and Literature Gap.....   | 164 |
| 5.2.2. Cross-cultural Differences in Knowledge Sharing Patterns.....                            | 167 |
| 5.3. Issues of translating knowledge from one language to other.....                            | 176 |
| 5.4. Is Cultural Difference a Facilitating or Impeding Factor for Knowledge Sharing?.....       | 179 |
| 5.5. Empirical Evidence .....   | 182 |
| 5.5.1. Research Studies Finding Cultural Diversity as a Barrier for Knowledge Sharing.....      | 182 |
| 5.5.2. Research Studies Finding Cultural Diversity as a Facilitator for Knowledge Sharing ..... | 186 |
| 5.5.3. Research Studies with Mixed Findings .....   | 187 |
| 5.6. Influence of Culture on Trust Development.....   | 189 |
| 5.6.1. Cultural Bases of Trust Differences .....  | 189 |
| 5.6.2. Is Trust an Etic or Emic Construct? .....  | 190 |
| 5.6.3. How Culture Affects Trust Development? .....   | 191 |
| 5.7. Influence of Language on Trust Development .....   | 198 |
| 5.7. Empirical Evidence .....   | 200 |
| Influence of Culture on Trust.....  | 200 |
| 5.7.2. Empirical Evidence: Cross-cultural studies on trust development ...                      | 203 |
| 5.8. Chapter Summary .....  | 206 |
| <br>  |     |
| Chapter Six.....  | 208 |
| RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....  | 208 |
| 6.0. Introduction .....   | 208 |
| 6.1. Research Philosophy .....  | 209 |
| 6.1.1. Ontology: Subjectivist.....  | 211 |
| 6.1.2. Epistemology: Interpretivist.....  | 213 |
| 6.2. Research Approach: Qualitative .....   | 218 |
| 6.3. Sampling Technique: Purposive/Selective.....   | 224 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 6.3.1. Double Sampling .....  | 226 |
| 6.4. Data Collection Tools: In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Group 228                             |     |
| 6.4.1. In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews .....  | 228 |
| 6.4.2 Focus Group .....   | 232 |
| 6.4.4. Interview conditions and Reflections of the Researcher regarding the interviews .....                    | 235 |
| 6.5. Quality and Rigor of the Research .....  | 238 |
| 6.5.1. Reliability .....  | 239 |
| 6.5.2. Validity .....   | 241 |
| 6.5.3. Triangulation and Testing of Validity and Reliability.....   | 245 |
| 6.5.4. The Role of Researcher .....   | 248 |
| 6.6. Provisions to Ensure Reliability and Validity in the Current Research Project 250                          |     |
| 6.7. Data Analysis Technique: Thematic Analysis .....   | 259 |
| 6.8. Ethics of the Research .....   | 269 |
| 6.9. Chapter Summary.....   | 272 |
| <br>  |     |
| Chapter Seven .....   | 273 |
| Data Analysis and Research Findings.....  | 273 |
| 7.0. Introduction .....   | 273 |
| 7.1. Section One: Influence of Trust on Knowledge Sharing .....   | 274 |
| 7.1.1. Other Factors Influencing KS .....   | 282 |
| 7.1.2. What is more important for knowledge sharing: Trust or Ethnicity?289                                     |     |
| 7.2.1. Cultural Differences and Individual Ethnic Behaviors and Tendencies with Respect to Trust Building ..... | 292 |
| 7.3. Section Three: Antecedents to Trust Development .....  | 294 |
| 7.3.1. Some Don't Believe in Trusting Others .....  | 304 |
| 7.4. Section Four: Influence of Culture on Knowledge Sharing .....  | 306 |
| 7.4.1. Cross-cultural Biases in knowledge sharing .....   | 307 |
| 7.4.2. Individual Ethnic Differences, Behaviors and Tendencies with Respect to Knowledge Sharing .....          | 310 |
| 7.4.3. Language is a Barrier in KS.....   | 313 |
| 7.4.4. Cultural Diversity, a Hurdle in KS .....   | 315 |
| 7.4.5. Racial Differences and Discrimination.....   | 317 |
| 7.4.6. The Other Side of the Picture: Cultural Diversity is Blessing and Exciting .....                         | 320 |
| 7.5. Section Five: Organizational Antecedents to knowledge sharing .....  | 323 |
| 7.5.1. Cultural/Language Similarity.....  | 323 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| 7.5.2 Organizational Culture .....   | 325 |
| 7.5.3. Management Support.....   | 328 |
| 7.5.4. Motivation and Organizational Rewards .....                                     | 330 |
| 7.5.5. Organizational Justice .....  | 333 |
| 7.5.6. Organizational Resources .....  | 336 |
| 7.5.7. Time Factor .....   | 338 |
| 7.5.8. Employee Empowerment.....   | 341 |
| 7.6. Section Six: Individual Antecedents to knowledge sharing .....                    | 344 |
| 7.6.1. Reciprocity .....   | 344 |
| 7.6.2. Organizational Commitment .....   | 346 |
| 7.6.3. Self-Efficacy .....   | 348 |
| 7.6.4. Attitude and Intention towards Knowledge Sharing.....                           | 351 |
| 7.6.5. Religious Duty.....   | 354 |
| 7.6.6. Passion to Help Others .....  | 356 |
| 6.10. Chapter Summary.....   | 359 |
| <br>   |     |
| Chapter Eight.....   | 361 |
| DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS .....                             | 361 |
| 8.0. Introduction .....  | 361 |
| 8.1. Discussions .....   | 361 |
| 8.1.1. Influence of Trust and other Factors on KS .....                                | 361 |
| 8.1.2. Influence of Culture on Trust Development .....                                 | 371 |
| 8.1.3. Antecedents to Trust Development .....  | 373 |
| 8.1.4. Influence of Culture on KS.....   | 382 |
| 8.1.5. Organizational Antecedents to KS.....   | 389 |
| 8.1.6. Individual Antecedents to KS .....  | 402 |
| 8.2. Implications for Managers and Recommendations .....                               | 411 |
| 8.3. Distinctive Features of the Study and the Contribution of the<br>Researcher ..... | 436 |
| 8.3.1. Theoretical Contribution.....   | 436 |
| 8.3.2. Contextual Contribution.....  | 444 |
| 8.3.3. Methodological Contribution.....  | 445 |
| 8.4. Theoretical Contributions in the light of the findings of the study .             | 446 |
| 8.5. Limitations of Research and Directions for Future Researchers .....               | 450 |
| 8.6. Chapter Summary.....  | 456 |
| <br>   |     |
| REFERENCES: .....  | 459 |
| Appendice.....   | 560 |

Questionnaire.....560  
Interviewees' Profile.....565

## List of Figures

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Research.....</b> | <b>23</b> |
| <b>Figure 2 Political Map of Pakistan.....</b>     | <b>40</b> |
| <b>Figure3: Cultural Map of Pakistan.....</b>      | <b>42</b> |
| <b>Figure 4: Power Distance Index.....</b>         | <b>54</b> |
| <b>Figure 5: Individualism.....</b>                | <b>54</b> |
| <b>Figure 6: Masculinity Index .....</b>           | <b>55</b> |
| <b>Figure 7: Uncertainty Avoidance Index.....</b>  | <b>56</b> |
| <b>Figure 8: Long-term Orientation Index.....</b>  | <b>56</b> |
| <b>Figure 9: Consolidated Graph.....</b>           | <b>57</b> |
| <b>Figure 10: Consolidated Table.....</b>          | <b>57</b> |

## **Volume One**

This research report is split into two volumes. This is volume No 1 which consists of first 6 chapters including Introduction, Theoretical Foundation and Research Methodology and Volume 2 consists of the last two chapters, Data Analysis and Findings, Discussions and Implications, and References.

# Chapter One

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0. Chapter Introduction

This chapter introduces the research project, including the research objectives, research questions and the rationale behind conducting this research. The chapter also includes the motivation of the researcher for conducting research in this area and explains the intended contribution of the researcher, the distinctive features of this research, the conceptual model of the research and the possible benefits of this research study.

### 1.1. Introduction to the Research

This research is aimed at studying the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in the cross-cultural working environment at three health service institutes in Islamabad, Pakistan. The research project has five research objectives. First, to investigate the impact of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment; second, to investigate the impact of cross-cultural working on knowledge sharing; third, to investigate the influence of culture on the development and maintenance of trust; fourth, to study the antecedents to trust development; and fifth, to study the antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment. Keeping in view the research questions and research objectives, the study is underpinned by constructivist ontology, interpretive epistemology, a qualitative research approach based on selective purposive sampling; which seem most appropriate for this research. This will be discussed in detail in the Research Methodology chapter.



Knowledge management over the last two decades has gained increasing acknowledgement and popularity all over the world across disciplines and industries, and to many it is one of the most discussed and dominating topics of today's business world (Zhu, 2004). Numerous research studies have identified that successful transfer and sharing of knowledge can provide competitive advantage for companies (Teece, 1998, Argote & Ingram, 2000; Szulanski, 1996). As knowledge sharing is a knowledge-centered activity, it is fundamental to employees' contribution towards the creation, application and utilization of knowledge and ultimately contributes to a firm's competitive advantage (Jackson et al., 2006).

The challenges of the modern business world call for a serious focus of organizations on the internal skills and talents of their employees, namely the knowledge of an organization and the way this knowledge is gathered and managed (López et al., 2004). Consequently, knowledge and its management are these days considered key activities and strategic assets for any organization (Grant, 1996; Spender, 1996; Kogut & Zander, 1992) and the effective creation and sharing of knowledge crucial to an organization's success (Argote et al., 2000; von Krogh, 1998; Mooradian et al., 2006; Eisenhardt & Santos, 2002). Since the time teamwork achieved recognition in the business world (Du Plessis & Hoole, 2006; Wang, 2001), companies have almost given up evaluating their employees solely on the basis of their own capability to complete a task with their individual expertise, but evaluate them on the basis of the value they can add to their team by sharing their knowledge with their teammates (Tagliaventi & Mattarelli, 2006; Bechky, 2003). Wenger and Synder (2000) have thrown light on how firms achieve excellence by capitalizing on the power of their employees' knowledge through creating cross-functional teams and work groups in order to create and share new ideas and knowledge.

Studies (e.g. Collins & Smith, 2006; Hansen, 2002; Cummings, 2004; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009; Lin, 2007) have found a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and individual and team performance, innovation, faster production cycles, cost reductions, faster completion of new product development projects, and an increase in sales, revenues and market share of the organizations. Keeping in view the countless benefits of knowledge sharing, many organizations have shown interest in taking serious initiatives to fully optimize the sharing of knowledge (King, 2006), and others have invested huge amounts of time and funding into knowledge management activities like the development of knowledge management systems which use state-of-the-art technology to facilitate the creation, identification, collection, processing, storage and sharing of organizational knowledge (Wang and Raymond, 2010). It is notable here that despite such heavy investments, it has been calculated that due to being unable to share knowledge, Fortune 500 companies lose \$31.5 billion every year (Babcock, 2004). One of the most compelling reasons for this failure of knowledge sharing is due to lack of awareness and consideration of individual characteristics and interpersonal, organizational and contextual factors that affect knowledge sharing (Voelpel, Dous, & Davenport, 2005; Carter & Scarbrough, 2001).

However, effective sharing and transfer of knowledge among the employees of an organization, is not free from challenges (Holden, 2002; Edwards & Kidd, 2003), keeping in view the “sticky” nature of knowledge, which means that knowledge is rooted in the human mind (Von Hippel, 1994). Multiple individual, organizational and technological barriers impede the successful transfer and sharing of knowledge (Szulanski, 1996), and these barriers to knowledge sharing arise particularly when the knowledge is transferred across employees belonging to different cultures and backgrounds (Zander & Kogut, 1995; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000). Recent research studies on organizational learning and knowledge

management (Hambrick et al., 1998; Hofstede, 2001; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000; Hutchings & Michailova, 2004) indicate that learning, knowledge creation and sharing in organizations tend to be deeply affected by cultural standards, values and customs of individual employees. Moreover, the studies of cognitive strategies and methods of learning and knowledge creation suggest that the cognitive styles of individual employees differ by their respective national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Korac-Kakabadze & Kouzmin, 1999). According to research findings, different ethnic groups possess different preferences for symbolic versus semantic learning and cognition, and tend to show different forms of visual and verbal presentation of their learning and know how (Ginsburg et al., 1981).

That is why, according to Bertels and Savage (1999), “knowledge management is becoming increasingly the management of the transfer of knowledge generated by cross-cultural teams”. As Doz and Santos (1997) have correctly pointed out, this “involves the management of knowledge in a single administrative system, but residing in dispersed and differentiated locations”. The literature on knowledge management presents a common view that cultural characteristics influence the way knowledge is created and shared (King, 2006; De Long & Fahey, 2000; Simonin, 1999; Mowery et al., 1996; McDermott & O'Dell, 2001; Inkpen & Dinur, 1998). Numerous researchers have thrown light on how to create knowledge and share it across cultural barriers, whether between different companies or different national cultures (e.g., Ford & Chan, 2003; Chow et al., 2000; Hutchings & Michailova, 2004; Holden, 2001).

In discussing the influence of trust on knowledge sharing, researchers have identified multiple cultural factors that likely affect the process of knowledge sharing, but trust amongst all has gained the attention of the maximum number of researchers (Wang & Noe, 2010) and probably that is the reason that trust, in recent years, is the most often studied construct in the arena of

knowledge management (Chowdhury, 2005; Holste, 2003; Wu et al., 2009). Since there are certain perceived costs of sharing knowledge, a culture that signifies trust has been observed to help reduce the undesirable effects of those perceived costs (Kankanhalli, Tan & Wei, 2005). Based on the above mentioned fact, the readiness of members of an organization to contribute to and use shared knowledge may depend upon the extent to which members trust each other as recipients and sources of that knowledge (Adler, 2002; Gruber, 2000; Lucas, 2005; McAllister, 1995; Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998; Scott, 2000). For instance, Lucas (2005) found that interpersonal relationships of the organizational members based on mutual trust and reputation had drastic effects on the transfer and sharing of knowledge. In another study, Smedlund (2008) has established that the sharing and use of tacit knowledge is encouraged through an organizational culture characterized by long-standing interpersonal working relationships among the organizational members, wherein reciprocity is the norm.

On the other side, the development and maintenance of trust among the members of different cultures has been a big challenge for organizations (Moosmüller, Spier, & Podsiadlowski, 2001). Diversified beliefs, norms, values, behaviours and even incompatible motives of the members belonging to different cultures, mostly hinder fruitful interactions and successful collaborations (Farris et al., 1973; Thompson, 1996; Arino, de la Torre & Ring, 2001). It is not surprising to notice that cross-cultural interaction mostly remains under the shadow of confusions, misunderstandings, doubts, and even psychological distress (Molinsky, 2007). Based on the above discussion, it seems obvious that all three constructs of this study: trust, knowledge sharing and culture are interlinked and cannot be separated from each other. Without trust knowledge sharing remains under the shadows of doubt and apprehension; without sharing no knowledge can emerge and without knowledge no company can survive and consequently, in this world of globalization, no company can avoid the hiring of people

belonging to diversified backgrounds and finally trust cannot escape the influence of culture especially in a multi-cultural working environment.

## **1.2. Research Objectives, Questions and Underlying Rationale**

This research study has multiple objectives to achieve and research questions to answer. The prime objective of the study is to theoretically and empirically examine the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment and an analysis of other individual and organizational factors being significant for KS. The second objective of the study is to analyse the influence of culture on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment including the impact of language on knowledge sharing and other issues, biases, complications and positive and negative aspects of knowledge sharing. This also includes the knowledge sharing). The third objective is to analyse the influence of culture on trust development, which also includes the analysis of antecedents to trust development in a cross-cultural working environment. All the research objectives, research questions and their underlying rationale are discussed in detail in the following pages.

### **1.2.1. Research Objective # 1**

The first objective of this research is to analyse knowledge workers' understandings of the relationship between trust and knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment. Through this research objective, the researcher intends to explore the role of trust for knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment. The researcher also plans to examine the factors being important for knowledge sharing other than trust, in a cross-cultural working environment. Being a cross-cultural study, this research objective analyses the importance of trust for knowledge sharing; compared to similarity of culture or language.

### **1.2.1.1. Rationale behind the Study**

Although in many research studies, trust has been identified as a predominantly important factor for fostering knowledge sharing in organizations (e.g. Penley & Hawkins 1985; Srinivas, 2000; Carley, 1991; Zand, 1972; Lin, 2007; Chowdhury, 2005; Mooradian, Renzl, & Matzler, 2006; Jarvenpaa & Leidner 1999; Wu et al., 2007; Quigley et al. 2007; Rau 2005; Moreland & Myaskovsky 2000), it is yet to be fully investigated in a cross-cultural working environment and especially in the health care profession (Zolin et. al., 2004; Chai & Kim 2010; Goudge, L. Gilson, 2005; Bijlsma & van de Bunt, 2003). According to Mayer and Gavin (2005) and Adler and Kwon (2002), more research is needed to study and investigate the potential mechanisms of trust which may influence knowledge sharing. Numerous other researchers (e.g., Politis, 2003; Levin & Cross, 2004; Holste & Fields, 2010; Mooradian, Renzl, & Matzler, 2006; Alton Chua, 2002; Ho, Kuo, & Lin, 2012) have called for more research on trust and knowledge sharing since there are some research gaps in this area.

Firstly, although the extant literature has shown a positive linkage between trust and knowledge sharing, however, it is not that simple, as Sondergaard et al., (2007) have very intelligently noted, trust could emerge as a double-edged sword. Unjustified trust can convince a potential user to avoid verifying the authenticity and questioning the usefulness of shared knowledge and its applicability from a contextual point of view, leading to the ruining of the very purpose of knowledge sharing (Renzl, 2008; Mooradian et al., 2006).

Secondly, despite its overwhelming significance in organizational research, the research on trust has not been free of problems (Gill et al., 2005). There have been certain confusions and inconsistencies in the basic conceptualization and measurement of the construct of trust in

previous studies (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Bigley & Pearce, 1998). The most obvious criticism is the lack of convergence among researchers on the definition of trust and especially their inability to differentiate between the antecedents and components of trust itself (Bhattacharya et al., 1998; Mayer et al., 1995). For instance, Costa, Roe and Taillieu (2001) conceptualize trust as a multi-dimensional construct with three discrete but interrelated facets including propensity to trust, perceived trustworthiness and cooperative behaviours. This definition includes a dispositional variable i.e. propensity to trust, as well as cognitive i.e. perceived trustworthiness and behavioural dimensions i.e. cooperative behaviour (Gill et al., 2005). Whereas numerous researchers (e.g. Costa & McCrae, 1992; Jones et al., 1997; Rempel et al., 1985; Mayer & Davis, 1999) have discussed propensity to trust as an antecedent to trust development, others (e.g., Gabarro, 1978; Axelrod, 1984; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985; Zand, 1972) have discussed perceived trustworthiness as an antecedent to trust. Therefore, in order for the research on trust to move forward, it is essential that researchers should maintain clarity about the conceptualization of trust and its antecedents; for example, between propensity to trust (the general inclination to trust someone) and actual trusting behaviour (Mayer et al., 1995). Constructs like propensity to trust and perceived trustworthiness need to be more accurately defined as an antecedent rather than as a dimension or component of trust (Gill et al., 2005).

Thirdly, despite the above mentioned numerous calls for further research on investigating the role of trust on knowledge sharing, this topic still is very rarely investigated in a cross-cultural perspective; even some researchers who have integrated knowledge sharing, trust and culture have focused on organizational culture or trust culture instead of national culture (e.g. Singh, & Premarajan, 2007; Ling, 2011; Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 2003; Tan, Lim & Ng, 2009; Fairholm & Fairholm 2000; Faraj & Wasko 2001; Leana & van Buren 1999; Settoon &



Mossholderb 2002). That is why a considerable number of scholars (e.g.,Ling, 2011; Liu, & Phillips, 2011; Zolin, Hinds Fruchter & Levitt, 2004; Schoorman, Mayer & Davis, 2007; Wang & Noe, 2010; Zaheer, McEvily & Perrone, 1998) have recommended research on the influence of trust on cross-cultural knowledge sharing. For example, according to Zolin et al. (2004), creating opportunities to assess trustworthiness is especially critical in cross-functional and cross-cultural relationships where the accurate evaluation of trust building may be more challenging and time-consuming.

According to Schoorman, Mayer & Davis, (2007), “while a great deal of research has occurred in the area of trust over the past decade, the new research only suggests that there is a lot more to be done and many promising avenues to pursue. Another area seeing rapid growth in interest is the role that international and cross-cultural dimensions play in the model of trust. We see the greatest opportunities in the development of the concept of propensity to trust across cultures, as well as for the relative importance of ability, benevolence, and integrity across cultures” (Schoorman, Mayer & Davis, 2007, p.352). Zaheer, McEvily & Perrone (1998) view it in the same way by commenting:

*“Further we see an interesting extension of the research in cross-national settings where cultural differences may alter the outcomes of trust in relational exchange. Finally, our understanding of the phenomenon of inter-organizational trust and its consequences would be greatly enhanced by a study of contextual antecedents of trust—such as the extent to which exchange partners share similar organizational structures, policies, and mind-sets or cultures—and its immediate outcomes such as negotiating costs, conflict, and relationship performance” (Zaheer, McEvily & Perrone 1998, p.156).*

Fourthly, the topic of the interaction of trust and knowledge sharing has been an under-researched area in most Asian countries. This is based on the recommendation of Wang and

Noe (2010), who, after presenting a review of the available research on trust, recommended more research on the subject matter to explore further unveiled aspects of the influence of trust on knowledge sharing. Additionally, they emphasized that most of the studies on trust and knowledge sharing have been conducted in Western countries with very few being conducted in Eastern countries or African countries. Wang and Noe, (2010) endorse this idea while commenting:

*“The majority of studies that have examined non-Western cultural influences on knowledge sharing have been conducted in Chinese cultures. More studies on how cultural differences affect knowledge sharing in emerging economies in countries in Africa, the Middle East, and South America are needed” (Wang and Noe, 2010, p.7).*

Based on the above recommendation it is important to conduct research on the topic of impact of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country like Pakistan, wherein this topic has not been explored previously.

Finally, most of the existing research studies on trust and knowledge sharing, have been conducted in profit-based organizations with very few of them being conducted in not-for-profit or task-oriented organizations, as planned for the current research project. For example, Holste and Fields (2010) recommend research on the impact of trust on knowledge sharing in task-oriented environments (e.g. military, security and health services) to explore other aspects of the interaction of trust and knowledge sharing. It is also notable that the current study is focused on the medical profession and there is a very limited amount of research that has been conducted in the medical profession regarding the influence of trust on knowledge sharing. That is why Bijlsma and van de Bunt (2003) and Goudge and Gilson (2005) emphasise that more studies in medical institutes are needed to investigate the influence of trust on knowledge.

## 1.2.2. Research Objective #2

The second objective of this research is to analyse knowledge workers' understandings of the relationship between culture and knowledge sharing. Through this research objective, the researcher aims to explore how culture may influence knowledge sharing in knowledge workers' constructions by being either a facilitating or impeding factor, and the significance of cultural or language similarity for effective sharing of knowledge in a cross-cultural working environment. This also includes exploring and understanding the individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment.

### 1.2.2.1. Rationale behind the Study

Despite some noticeable contributions of some researchers (e.g. Bhagat et al., 2002; Ardichvili et al., 2006; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Holden, 2002; Edwards & Kidd, 2003; Von Hippel, 1994; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Zander & Kogut, 1995; Hambrick et al., 1998 & 2004; De Long & Fahey, 2000; Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000; Inkpen & Dinur, 1998; McDermott & O'Dell, 2001; Mowery et al., 1996; King, 2006; Simonin, 1999), it seems that research on the issue of cross-cultural effects on the influence of knowledge sharing is in its infancy and more empirical investigation is required on the subject matter. The following two quotes from renowned scholars in the field of cross-cultural effects on knowledge management justify this claim:

*“The strategic significance of organizational knowledge is covered in the popular press and in a growing body of academic literature; however, the researchers need to systematically study the role of cultural variations on the organizational knowledge management” (Bhagat et al., 2002).*

According to Holden (2002), almost all of the management authors and experts have problems in integrating the influence of ‘culture’ as a theoretical construct and as an empirical reality (Holden, 2001). It is no wonder that while throwing light on the need for the study of cross-cultural effects on knowledge management, Gupta and Govindarajan (2000) remark, “conceptual work in this area is still in the early stages and empirical work is almost literally at the stage of infancy”.

Ardichvili et al. (1995) note, “Despite growing recognition of the importance of cultural influences on knowledge management, there is a lack of related empirical research” (Ardichvili et al., 2006 p.95). They also argue that literature on knowledge management within different companies discusses various aspects of knowledge sharing (Kogut & Zander, 1993; Gupta & Govindarajan, 1994; Simonin, 1999; Mowery et al., 1996), however, very few recent studies have explicitly focused on the discussion of cultural factors, influencing knowledge management and transfer (Holden, 2001; Chow et al., 2000; Hutchings & Michailova, 2004).

Wang and Noe (2010), after thoroughly analyzing previous research conducted on cross-cultural effects on knowledge sharing, argue that most of the studies examining the cross-cultural effects on knowledge sharing conducted outside the West, have been researched in China; therefore, they call for more studies on cross-cultural effects on knowledge sharing in Africa, Asia and South America. Chai and Kim (2010) have also called for research on the influence of culture on trust and knowledge sharing.

One of the main objectives of this study is to find out whether cultural diversity can contribute positively or negatively to effective knowledge sharing, because there has been disagreement among scholars as to whether cultural diversity is a facilitating or impeding factor for

knowledge transfer. Previous research findings have established cultural diversity as a critical factor affecting knowledge sharing within corporations (Hartel & Fujimoto, 2000; Mitchell, Nicholas & Boyle, 2009). Some scholars (e.g., Palich & Gomez-Mejia, 1999) believe that a higher degree of cultural diversity within an organization can lead to worse organizational performance and less effective organizational knowledge sharing. In another empirical study conducted in 431 European and US companies by Ernst and Young (Ruggles, 1998), culture was determined to be the biggest impediment to knowledge transfer. In the findings of this research, in fact, culture stood as the number one impediment in the ranking. In the theoretical domain, ‘cultural barriers’ have been identified as one of the two major categories that “make it difficult to realize the full value of knowledge management” (McCann & Buckner, 2004, p.47). On the contrary, many others perceive cultural diversity to be better for superior organizational performance (Lockwood, 2005) and knowledge sharing (Zhu, 2004). Likewise, O’Reilly, Williams & Barsade (1997) argue that by having a diversified workforce, companies can capitalize on multiple and versatile skills, talents and insights of the organizational members to integrate the different work perspectives more effectively. Hence, many organizations consider cultural diversity of the workforce as an asset and a facilitating factor for knowledge sharing rather than a problem. This research aims to answer the question whether cultural diversity is a facilitator or barrier to effective knowledge transfer, because culture is both important to, as well as problematic for, knowledge sharing (King, 2007).

Understanding the individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing is one of the key objectives of this study. Despite a strong emphasis on knowledge management and knowledge sharing, a majority of the firms fail to capitalize on the advantages of knowledge management and knowledge sharing due to being unable to understand the antecedents to knowledge sharing (Witherspoon et al., 2013). Therefore, in order for firms to make knowledge

sharing productive and effective, researchers have increasingly focused on antecedents and consequences of knowledge sharing (Witherspoon et al., 2013). The extant literature on antecedents to knowledge sharing offers a range of antecedents as discussed in a number of research studies (Wijk et al., 2008). With regard to the study of antecedents to knowledge sharing, most of the previous studies have investigated too many antecedents to knowledge sharing in a fragmented and scattered manner. For example, some of the previous studies have examined the role of knowledge characteristics, such as ambiguity in understanding knowledge transfer (e.g., Simonin, 1999; Levin & Cross, 2004; Birkinshaw et al., 2002; Szulanski et al., 2004) and others have focused on organizational factors, such as decentralization and absorptive capacity (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000), or have primarily investigated network-level attributes such as trust and cultural distance (Lane et al., 2001). A final group of studies have centred on knowledge sharing outcomes, such as financial performance, innovation and new product development etc. (Katila & Ahuja, 2002). Keeping in view the nature and scope of the existing studies, it seems there is an obvious and serious need to conduct a comprehensive study of the antecedents to knowledge sharing.

Wijk et al. (2008) maintain that after two decades of research, however, a systematic overview of the underlying mechanisms and outcomes of knowledge transfer is still lacking. Moreover, with regard to the study of antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural environment, only a handful of studies have been conducted in cross-cultural environments (Ryan et al. 2010). Consequently, there is little comprehension about how firms belonging to different cultures consider and understand the relationships between organizational practices and knowledge sharing (Ryan et al., 2010). Moreover, some of these studies (Malhotra, Gosain & Sawy, 2005; Cho & Lee, 2004) have overlooked individual factors and others have missed the discussion of organizational factors influencing knowledge sharing (Ryan et al., 2010) and that

is why Alony, Whymark and Jones (2007) have called for additional research on organizational factors and knowledge sharing. On the other hand, most of the cross-cultural studies of antecedents to knowledge sharing (Chow, Deng & Ho, 2000; Griffith, Myers & Harvey, 2006; Zakaria, Amelinckx & Wilemon, 2004; Vance & Paik, 2005) have been conducted either in the USA and Europe or Japan and China, with no study of such kind being conducted in Pakistan, the homeland of the researcher. The literature does not even provide evidence of any study being conducted in South Asia, which consists of around one fourth of the world's population. Therefore, it seems quite logical and essential to conduct a systematic study on understanding the antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural setting in a South Asian context. Another researchable issue in the context of this research is to determine whether the language difference is a barrier to or facilitator of knowledge sharing.

### **1.2.3. Research Objective # 3**

The third objective of this study is to analyze knowledge workers' understandings of the relationship between culture and the development of individual trust. Through this research objective, the researcher plans to explore the knowledge workers' perspectives on the process of interpersonal trust development in a cross-cultural working environment; the relationship between culture as well as common language and trust building and the antecedents to interpersonal trust building in a cross-cultural working environment.

#### **1.2.3.1. Rationale behind the Study**

Despite rich existing literature on the topic of trust (Palmatier et al., 2006), many researchers, including Schoorman, Mayer and Davis (2007), have emphasized the need for study of cross-

cultural effects on organizational trust and the impact of different cultural identities on the various dimensions of trust (Dietz, Gillespie & Chao, 2010).

With regard to the nature of trust being etic (universal) or emic (specific) phenomenon, although there are certain research findings which prove trust development as an etic or universal (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006; Cummings & Bromiley, 1996), and others as an emic construct (Triandis, 1994; Noorderhaven, 1999), there is a need to investigate further to reach on convergence on this issue (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006). There is also a need to conduct a serious and systematic study to see which dimensions of trust are emic (specific) and which are etic (universal), keeping in view the way in which individuals perceive and explain the likely universal characteristics of trustworthiness: integrity, benevolence and ability (Saunders, Skinner & Lewicki, 2010). This is because despite the evidence of universal applicability of the characteristics of trustworthiness of ability, benevolence and integrity, there are still culturally different manifestations and interpretations of these components in some countries (Saunders, Skinner & Lewicki, 2010). Moreover, there are some other emic components of trustworthiness, for example thriftiness, organizational commitment and respect of authority, which are considered more important in some countries than others.

Moreover, a holistic view of the literature on trust development reveals that most of the trust models (Shapiro, Sheppard & Cheraskin, 1992; Lewicki & Bunker, 1995; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998; McAllister, 1995; Mayer et al., 1995; McEvily & Tortoriello, 2005) have been developed by Western scholars and so the research might not be completely applicable to the Eastern or Asian context. For example, according to Wasti et al. (2010), while the trust development models of Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) and McAllister (1995) have received vast recognition in academia, they largely reflect values and work ethics of the



individualistic dimension of North American culture (Ferrin & Gillespie, 2010), and consider the organizational context as an encompassing phenomenon that undermines the relevance of the social, emotional or relational elements of trust relations (Lewicki, McAllister & Bies, 1998). These trust models (Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995) mainly consider the calculative dimension of trust, whereas in collectivist or Asian cultures, in contrast, work values and styles are observed to draw a much greater emphasis on relational or affective components of trust (e.g., Triandis, 1995). In most Asian cultures, cultivating a highly personal connection is a kind of precondition for working with others (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 1993). In collectivist societies, while these personalized relationships may take longer to develop, they prevail in most facets of life and do not break easily. On the other hand, relationships in individualistic societies mostly tend to be built for a specific purpose and for a shorter period of time in a particular context (Wasti et al., 2010). This also includes the dimensions of in-group and out-group when it comes to trust development. In Asian cultures, the in-group phenomenon tends to be a more critical element for trust development compared to individualistic or Western societies (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006).

Doney et al. (1998) who have applied Hofstede's (1980) framework of individualistic and collectivist cultures, argue that in collectivist societies, which are characterized by a high degree of social binding (Hofstede, 2001), benevolence is a critical factor for trust development and the maintenance of harmony precedes in the trust building process. Further, unlike Western cultures, where the trustee's capability is seen to be a critical factor in trust development, the same might not be the case in collectivist societies, since such collectivist societies give more emphasis to cooperation and faithfulness (Wasti et al., 2010). Despite the usefulness of Doney et al.'s framework (1998), it was also criticized (e.g., Noorderhaven, 1999) for presuming trust and its antecedents as etic or universal. Most work on cross-cultural trust continues to

acknowledge and rely on models and scales developed in North America (Ferrin & Gillespie, 2010), an approach that is prone to limitations in terms of operationalization of some of the variables and constructs not being universally applicable across cultures and contexts (Wasti, Tan, Brower & Önder, 2007). Regardless of the rigor and sophistication of methodology, the former type of research on trust antecedents conducted in the North American context has been criticized due to being limited in terms of context, constructs, conceptualization and uncertain cross-cultural relevance (Wasti et al., 2010). Such research is not only undesirable because of potentially diminishing the possibility of the discovery of consequential emic (context driven) constructs (Katigbak et al., 2002), but also because it can yield biased outcomes resulting in finding cultural similarities instead of dissimilarities (Cheung & Leung, 1998). Due to these reasons, scholars are expressing increasing need for indigenous and context-specific research for the development of cross-cultural models of trust development beyond generalizability of North American theories of organization (e.g., Barney & Zhang, 2009; Wasti et al., 2010; Tsui, 2009; Whetten, 2009).

Moreover, the researcher has applied an inductive approach that allows in-depth analysis of the phenomenon of interest to put respondents at ease to discuss and share the contents and constructs they deem relevant for trust (see Kramer, 1996). As such, the researcher is attempting to respond to the calls of Lewicki, Tomlinson and Gillespie (2006) and Goudge and Gilson (2005) for greater application of qualitative research techniques in order to truly contribute towards literature on cross-cultural knowledge sharing (e.g., Meyer, 2006; Cheng, Wang & Huang, 2009) and to analyze the topic in detail. According to Morgan and Smircich (1980), the choice of the appropriateness of a research approach to be applied in any research project, depends on the aims of the study and the nature of the social phenomenon to be explored. Moreover, this study is based on the analysis of culture and Van Wijk et al. (2008)

suggest that there are relatively few studies that have investigated the relationship of culture and knowledge transfer. According to Easterby-Smith, “This may be because cultural aspects are rarely ‘visible’ within the quantitative methods that have dominated in published studies, which suggests that if progress is to be made, issues of culture will best be investigated using qualitative methods and case studies” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008, p.684). This study seeks to identify the issues, beliefs, attitudes and behavioural patterns regarding the sharing of knowledge as a result of the interaction between doctors and nurses and among nurses and doctors themselves. Thus, the study aims not only at capturing subjective data on the perceptions of the actors (research participants), but also to gain an integrated overview of the cross-cultural organizational context wherein the participants are performing their duties. Therefore, the qualitative approach is the ultimate and logical preference for this study.

### 1.3. Proposed Model of Research

Keeping in view the research objectives, questions and components of the research, the theoretical representation of this research is presented in the following conceptual research model. Since this study is aimed at studying the influence of trust on KS in a cross-cultural working environment; therefore, there are three main constructs of this research; knowledge sharing, trust and culture as those three components are shown in the oval shape in the following model. The first research objective of this study is to analyse the influence of trust on KS hence the model shows trust influencing KS. The existing literature denotes trust as a very strong factor affecting knowledge sharing (e.g., Andrews & Delahay 2000, Penley & Hawkins 1985, Tsai & Ghoshal 1998, Srinivas, 2000, Curral & Judge 1995, Carley 1991, Zand 1972; Butler, 1999; Lin, 2007; Abrams, Cross, Lesser & Levin, 2003; Chowdhury, 2005). The second research objective is to study the influence of culture on KS and the same is shown in the model. Previous research findings have established cultural diversity as a key factor influencing knowledge sharing and cooperation within the firm (Hartel & Fujimoto 2000; Hobman, Bordia & Gallois 2004; Mitchell, Nicholas & Boyle 2009). Understanding the individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing is one of the important objectives of this study. (Witherspoon et al., 2013). In the literature on the individual antecedents to knowledge sharing include: Organizational Commitment (Hwang & Kim, 2007); Self-Efficacy (Lu, Leung, & Koch 2006); Intention to Share (e.g., Kuo & Young, 2008; Lin and Fan, 2011); Reciprocity (Davenport & Prusak, 1998); Sense of Self Worth (Huang et al. 2008) and Helping Colleagues (Wasko and Faraj 2000, 2005). Organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing include Organizational Culture (e.g., Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001); Interpersonal Relationships (Castelfranchi, 1998; Castelfranchi & Falcone, 2002); Team Orientation (Park et al., 2004; Alavi et al., 2005; Jones et al., 1997; Chen & Huang, 2007); Organizational Support (Brand, 1998; Davenport et al., 1998); Decentralized

Organizational Structure (Michailova & Husted, 2003); Transformational Leadership (Brock, Zumd, Kim, & Lee, 2005); and Time orientation (Oliver & Kandadi, 2006; Wu et al., 2012). The third objective of this study is to investigate the influence of culture on knowledge sharing which also includes the analysis of the antecedents to trust development and impact of culture on trust development. A number of research studies have investigated the influence of culture on the development of interpersonal trust (e.g., Saunders et al. 2010; Brewer & Yuki, 2007; Gibson et al., 2009; Yamagishi et al., 1998; Wasti & Tan, 2007; Tan & Chee 2005; Farh, Tsui, Xin & Cheng's, 1998). In the existing literature, antecedents to interpersonal trust include Trustworthiness (e.g., Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Lewis & Weigert, 1985); Propensity to Trust (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998); Affect (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; 1985; McAllister, 1995) Social Group Membership (e.g., Brewer & Brown, 1998; Stephan et al., 1998; Tjosvold, 1988); Confidentiality (Crosby et al., 1990; Tan & Chee, 2005); Commitment (Butler 1991, Tan and Chee, 2005) and Loyalty (Jennings, 1971; Tan & Chee, 2005).

## Conceptual Model of Research

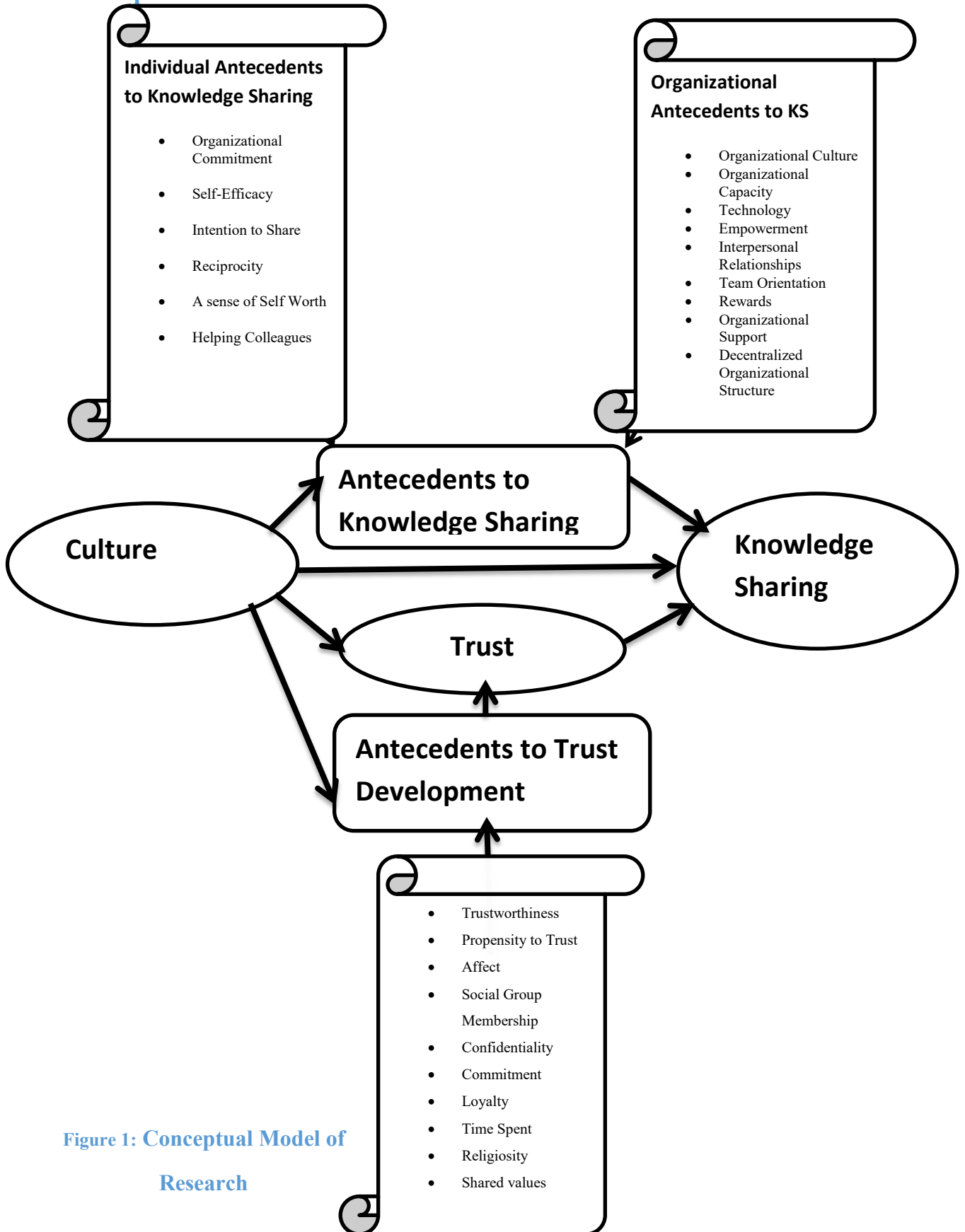


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Research

## 1.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter contains the introduction to the research title, research objectives, research questions and the rationale behind conducting research on the proposed research questions; the proposed conceptual model of research and possible contributions of the researcher as a result of this research. The chapter starts with the introduction of the importance of knowledge sharing for organizations and the influence of trust for knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment. The researcher then, while referring to existing literature, briefly throws light on the influence of culture on knowledge sharing. The chapter then presents the research objectives and research questions and explains the justification for conducting the research on the proposed research objectives, providing arguments and discussing the rationale for conducting research on each research objective separately in the light of the existing literature on the relevant subject matter. The research project has five research objectives. First, to investigate the impact of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment; second, to investigate the impact of cross-cultural working on knowledge sharing; third, to investigate the impact of culture on the development and maintenance of trust; fourth to study the antecedents to trust development; and fifth to study the antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment.

After discussing the research objectives, the researcher discussed the conceptual model of research and linked it with the research objectives, research questions and main components/constructs of this research.

## **1.5. The Scheme of the thesis**

After the current introductory chapter, the scheme of this thesis is as follows. The next four chapters discuss the theoretical foundations of this thesis. Chapter 2 introduces Pakistan and its cultural diversity. Chapter 3 introduces the basic concepts of knowledge, knowledge management, knowledge sharing. It also includes individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing. Chapter 4 discusses the conceptualization of trust and its influence on knowledge sharing. It also discusses the antecedents to trust development. Chapter 5 discusses the influence of culture on knowledge sharing and trust development and Chapter 6 presents details of the research methodology including research philosophy, research ontology, epistemology, research approach, research strategy, data collection methods, data analysis techniques and ethics of the research. Chapter 7 presents the data analyses and findings of the research in the light of the research objectives and research questions. Chapter 8, the final chapter, presents the discussions, conclusions and implications for managers, major theoretical, contextual and methodological contributions of this study, limitations of the study and directions for future researchers.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Theoretical Foundation**

#### **AN INTRODUCTION TO PAKISTAN AND ITS ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

##### **2.0. Introduction**

Previous chapter discussed the introduction to research title, research objectives, research questions, rationale behind conducting research on the proposed research questions and contribution of the researcher through this research. This chapter aims at discussing the cultural diversity of Pakistan. Since this research is focused on studying the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment in Pakistan, therefore it is very much logical to understand the cultural and ethnic diversification of the country; to justify the research on the suggested topic. Keeping in view the above mentioned argument, it needs to give an introduction of Pakistan while explaining the sub-cultural differences of the various regions and ethnic groups of the country in order to develop a judgment and justification about the suitability for the context of study of this research project.

This chapter starts with the introduction of Pakistan, which is the country of the context of this study. The chapter presents the key data about population, geographical location, regional significance of the country, provinces, main ethnic groups and their languages, cultural traditions and the foundations of their cultural diversification and the causes and bases of ethnic differences in Pakistan. The chapter then discusses the cultural analysis of Pakistan on Hofstede's cultural model and presents cross provincial analysis of the cultural differences among various sub-cultures of the country.

## 2.1. Fundamental Facts about Pakistan

Pakistan is a country of over 185 million people (WPR, 2014) with diverse social, cultural and linguistic circumstances (Shah, & Amjad, 2011). The country came into existence on the basis of Islamic ideology after division of British Indian colony in 1947. Pakistan shares borders on the East and Northeast with India, on West with Iran, on the Northeast with China, on Northwest by Afghanistan, and on the South by the Arabian Sea (Geology.com, 2015). An academician, Khan (1995) has highlighted the importance of the geographical location of Pakistan with “It occupies a strategic region that borders China, connects oil rich Middle East and serves as a gateway to the Central and South Asia through land and sea. This had made Pakistan a region of political and economic importance” (1995:391). Administratively, the country is divided into four provinces including Sind, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Baluchistan with Gilgit Baltistan nearly to be given the full official status of fifth province, after being allowed to have its separate provincial assembly and elected chief minister. Apart from four provinces, Pakistan also governs other regions including the FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas).

Islamabad is the capital of Pakistan. Pakistan has all kinds of terrain including plains, deserts and forests, rivers and mountains (Khalil et al., 2007). It has also two seaports. Sind and Punjab is mostly covered with plain land and at the same time, some large deserts especially Thar is in Sind and Cholistan in Punjab. Baluchistan is surrounded by dry mountains but, having rich reservoirs of many minerals including gold and diamonds. Khyber Pakhtoonkhaw (KPK) and Gilgit Baltistan are surrounded by very beautiful landscape with amazingly beautiful valleys, snow-capped mountains, mighty peaks, waterfalls, meadows and lakes (Geo, P. 2014; Ahmad & Ford, 1966; Kureshy & Ahmad, 1977) which are not less attractive than beautiful landscape of Switzerland even and have always dazzled the tourists from all over the globe (Khalil et al.,

2007). One of the largest mountain ranges of the world, Karakorum mountain range passes from Pakistan which has the second highest mountain peak of the world, K2 (Godwin Austin) and another 7 out of 20 highest peaks of the world are located in northern areas of Pakistan (Fact Monster, 2015). In summer, the temperature goes to 50 and even 52 in some areas and in winter, it goes up to minus 30 degree Celsius. Pakistan is basically an agricultural country with around 60% population residing in rural areas. Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world (WPR, 2014) and in terms of purchasing power parity, Pakistan's economy is the 26th largest economy in the world and 44th largest in terms of GDP with \$3,149 GDP per capita 140th in the world (Laghari, 2007). Pakistan is a developing country and after BIRC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) (Borthwick, 2006) Pakistan is one of the *Next Eleven*, countries that have the potential to emerge as one of the large economies of the world in the 21st century (Grant, 2011). However, after decades of war, social instability and terrorism, some serious deficiencies have developed in Pakistan especially in power generation and natural gas (Walsh, 2013).

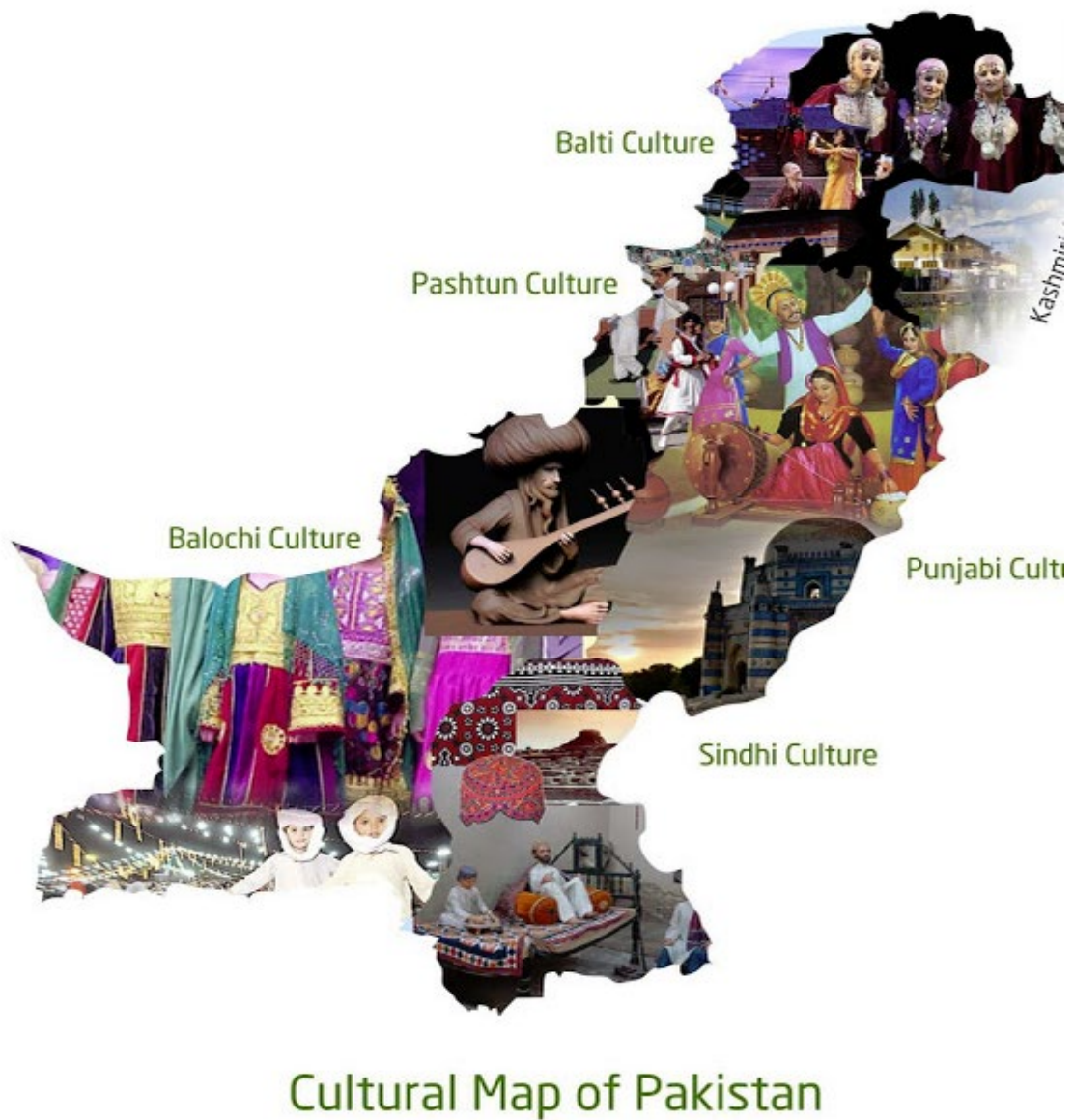


**Figure 2: Political Map of Pakistan**

## 2.2. Cultural Traditions of Pakistani Society

Islam being state religion plays vital role in the individual and collective affairs of the lives of the people of Pakistan. Most of the laws are made under the guidance of Islamic law and based on that; consumption of wine, unnecessary and open interaction between men and women, public display of love between wife and husband, sale of pornography, night clubs etc. is disallowed. Relationship among couples without marriage is strongly condemned (Shah and

Amjad, 2011). Pakistani society gives a huge emphasis upon family orientation and family integration. Keeping big families, living in joint families with other family members and especially with parents is an important aspect of the living of Pakistani people. Respect for elders and especially of parents is one of the prerequisites of the sensible living. Despite the fact that due to economic constraints and the influence of media, the joint family system has weakened in big cities, but still it is a big reality of Pakistani society (Shah and Amjad, 2011). Being an Islamic society, men and women tend to have different roles to play. Men tend to be responsible for external duties and economic struggle and women take care of the domestic affairs (Pak values, 2013). However, the situation has been changing over the last few decades amending the role of women and bringing them into mainstream to play active part in all walks of life, including education, sports, militancy, commerce, management, research and development and politics etc. Family and community based ceremonies and gatherings tend to be a common aspect of the living of people. Inviting large number of relatives and friends in the marriage and death ceremonies and then participating in them are among generally accepted norms of the society (Lyon, 2002). Likewise giving respect to guests and serving them up to fullest possible extent, visiting the patients at homes and going to relatives and friends' homes for condolence on deaths and miseries are also the generally expected behavioural patterns of the society (Hafeez, 19991).



**Figure 3: Cultural Map of Pakistan**

### **2.3. Ethnic and Cultural Differences in Pakistan**

Provincial populations in Pakistan tend to be characterised by the difference of languages and dialects; dresses and foods; traditions and customs; and literature and fiction. Every region's people ethnically, culturally and linguistically up to a large extent are different from the people of other regions. Even they look quite differently in their appearance and attire. The people of

Sind and Punjab look like Middle Eastern people; People of Karachi look like Indians, people of Baluchistan look like Iran, Baluch people of Makran look like Africans, people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa look like Afghans and Europeans and people of Gilgit resemble with China. As they tend to wear different dresses, so they eat different foods and keep different rituals and traditions for marriages, funerals and other cultural manifestations. Most provincial groups constitute a majority in their areas of origin and are indigenous to it, but, apart from provincial divisions, there are further ethnic divisions in every province; characterised by further difference of ethnicity, language and culture within each province (Ali and Rehman, 2001, p.3). Mostly language is the basis of ethnicity in Pakistan. Punjabi is the predominant ethnic group which comprises 48% of Pakistan's population, Pathans 17%, Siddhis form about 12%, Seraiki 10%, Urdu speaking (people who are also called Muhajir (migrators) since they migrated from India at the time of freedom of Pakistan) 8%, Balochi 3%, Gilgit and Balti 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, Chitrali 1% and others 2%. Historically, Pakistan has been the site of several successive ancient civilizations including the Neolithic Mehrgarh, and the Bronze Age Indus Valley Civilisation (2800–1800 BCE) at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro (Khalil et al., 2007).

The country has experimented with substantial forms of constitutional provisions within a federal framework, which have not been fully workable due to fractious political crisis (Javaid, & Hashmi, 2012). The inability to manage ethnic differences, mainly founded on language, has been a continuous problem for political system of Pakistan. Federal system of Pakistan is based on 1935 India Act of British rule, which initiated provincial autonomy in British India. However, the act was designed deliberately to provide partial autonomy to the provinces while holding maximum authority to the centre (Samad, 2010). Most of the provinces of Pakistan and other ethnic groups have complaints against the power and dominance of the largest populated province, Punjab. All three provinces, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and Sind

have a long history of anger with the central governments in terms of their complaints of lack of attention by central governments for the development of the provinces, unjust distribution of resources, disproportionate provincial and central jobs and harsh treatment especially with reference to army operations in the past regimes in Baluchistan (Behuria, 2005). The central governments accuse most of the tribal landlords for the worse conditions of the people of these provinces and make them responsible for the miseries of the people and also accuse them for playing in the hands of anti-Pakistan external forces. These kinds of factors have made ground for cross provincial and provinces vs central government disputes within the country. For example, resolve within Baluchistan's nationalist parties for national consciousness among "*Baluchi*" and recognition of Baluchi language as a medium of learning and official language of the province (Behuria, 2005). The killing of a famous Baluch feudal lord, Akbar Bugti further aggravated the problems. The "*Pathans*" or "*Pakhtoons*" or "*Pashtoons*" the inhabitants of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who contain the majority of religiously strong fellow citizens, despite being less angry at the centre, still tend to be very much conscious of their ethnic identity and mostly remain critic of the dominance of Punjab (Behuria, 2005). The "*Sindhies*" not only have been challenging the dominance of Punjab and army rule, but they have been in serious conflicts with "*Muhajirs*" (Urdu speaking people) also, who migrated from India and settled in Sind after the separation of Pakistan from India (Samad, 2010). The hate and tension of "*Sindhies*" towards the centre was reduced followed by two Sindhi prime ministers Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and her daughter Benazir Bhutto, but their anger towards Urdu speaking "*Mojajirs*" has not reduced, rather has increased followed by the demand of separation of "*Muhajirs*" from Sind province (Jaffrelot, 2002). The "*Seraikies*" who are relatively less developed and settled in the Sothern belt of Punjab and also in some parts of Sind and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have also grown as a self-identification searching group being against the rule of Punjab and demanding a separate province for them. The "*Hazara*"(Hindko-



speaking community) which comprises 18.1% population of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 2.8% population of the entire country, is not happy with the central government after the changing of the name of their province, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (which was formerly named NWFP North West Frontier Province) and now they demand separation from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and want their own separate province. “Gilgiti”, “*Kalash*” and “*Khowar-speaking people*” of Chitral in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the “*Kashmiri*”, “*Pahari*”, “*Makrani*” and “*Brahvi*” are the other ethnicities of Pakistan, who possess their distinct culture and traditions (Behuria, 2005). As mentioned earlier, Gilgit has been given the status of separate province of Pakistan.

## 2.4. Pakistan a Cradle of Languages

Social categorisation enumerates that individuals prefer to define and link themselves through a process of self-categorisation on any salient feature such as gender, age, territory and race/ethnicity and the same is then reflected in individual self-perceptions and personality dispositions (Tuner et al., 1987). Most of the diversity-based studies have applied social identity and self-categorisation theory (Tajfel, 1982) to explain the implications of diversity on individuals, groups and societies (Syed, 2008). However, with regard to regional identification, language has been the cardinal factor and the same has been case of Pakistan (Rahman, 2002) since language plays significant role in the formation of any ethnic identity. One of the most convincing definitions of an ethnic group has been ‘a community in communication with itself’. Indeed, without the difference of language, it is almost impossible to think of the creation of an ethnic identity. Dr G.A. Allama, an eminent scholar of Pakistan, calls Pakistan “a cradle of languages and cultures” (Gordon, 2005). The people of Pakistan, according to a survey of the existing linguistic communities, speak at least 69 dialects (Allana,

2003). These separate languages and dialects have given rise to a distinct nationalist cultural literature including poetry, stories and history. The major languages like Punjabi, Pushto, Sindhi, Balochi, Seraiki, Brahvi or Brohi, Gilgity, Khowar (Chitrali) and Hindko have sought to inject some separate identity consciousness and belongingness throughout the history. In the remote rural areas of Pakistan in Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, the Seraiki speaking belt in southern Punjab and Jhalawan and Sarawan regions of Baluchistan, children grow up learning the highly philosophical verses of local legendary poets like Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Sachal Sarmast, Rahman Baba, Khush Hal Khan Khattak, Baba Bulleh Shah, Baba Farid Ganj, Sultan Bahu, Sakhi Sarwar and Gul Khan Naseer (Behaira, 2005). The variety of languages being spoken in Pakistan indicates the diverse cultural and ethnic background of the people of Pakistan. Linguistic and ethnic identification in Pakistan, according to Jaffrelot (2002), is characterised by power politics, and social.

## **2.5. Foundations of Cultural Diversity in Pakistan**

Pakistani civilization has the influences of many cultures, but, mainly Indian civilization, Arabian civilization and British civilization. Throughout the history, the land of Pakistan has captivated the interest of foreigners from all over the world (Shahab, 1989). Almost all world super powers including, Aryans, Muslim Turks, Greeks, Mongols, Uzbeks, Kazaks, British and French at various times of history came here to trade or invade and left the traces of their cultural influence on the indigenous people of this area (Shahab, 1989). Defining history, location and geography of Pakistan is relatively easy, but it is difficult to define the culture of Pakistan, since it has no single perspective, rather multiple cultures and perspectives have influenced it. That is why, different people think about and define Pakistani culture in their own way since it is multi-dimensional and reflects diverse paradigms and hence no single

version of cultural description can encompass its variety, complexity and diversity. An eminent anthropologist Stephen M. Lyon (2002), who has deeply observed Pakistani society and culture has mentioned Pakistan's geographical location being one of the main reasons of its cultural diversity by arguing, "Pakistan lies at the cross roads to three major culture areas; India, the Middle East and Central Asia" (Lyon, 2002 p-14). Ahmed (1997), to some extent projects a similar view by noting "In certain important ways Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan share a regional identity underlined by a common religion and a similar historical progress. These three are medium sized countries with large rural and urban populations coming to terms with central and sometimes imperial authority" (1997, p.4).

Despite absorbing various components of the neighbouring countries' cultures, Pakistan has been able to keep its separate identity. Referring to this power of cultural absorption Lyon (2002) has labelled Pakistani culture as a 'hybridizing culture'; "The impact of these areas' culture on Pakistan has not simply created a 'multicultural' nation but forged a hybridizing (able to blend a bewildering variety of heterogeneous cultural practices together) culture" (2002 p-14). Shehab (1989) has strongly agreed with Lyon (2002)'s view about Pakistani culture as hybridisation of various neighbouring cultures by maintaining, "Pakistan inherited the cultural patterns that existed in the Sub-continent during the first half of twentieth century. These patterns were creative amalgamation of the Indian culture with the Western, brought about by the British rule in the country over at least a century. The previous one as they existed on the advent of the British power in India were themselves an organic combination of Mughal culture with the indigenous ones.... cultural patterns around the year 1947 were creation of different strands" (Shahab, 1989, p.225).

## **2.6. Analysis of Pakistani Culture on Hofstede's Cultural Model**

Hofstede (1980) suggested a framework to analyse or compare the cultures of different countries on five basis/parameters including; Power distance, Masculinity, Individualism or Collectivism, Uncertainty avoidance and Long term orientation.

### ***a. Power Distance***

Power distance as mentioned by Hofstede (1980) refers to the degree of the acceptance of disparity in the possession and use of power by the members of a society. In other words, it is the representation of the willingness of the members of a society to accept the differences of power and status in the society as a normal aspect of life. It also reflects the extent to which members of a society are likely to accept and respect rank, order or hierarchy in families, tribes or organizations. An authoritarian and autocratic style of leadership or mentorship tends to be compatible with high power distance societies as is seen in other high power distance societies including Arab, Far East Asian and Latin American countries. On Hofstede's cultural dimensions index, Pakistan falls on higher side of power distance with 18<sup>th</sup> out of 52 researched countries on the power distance index used by Hofstede in which Austria keeps lowest with the score of 14 and Panama and Guatemala highest position with 95 score (Geert, 2015). Based on this cultural characteristic, Pakistani society is observed to be under huge influence of power distance, which is manifested, in family structure, educational institutions, religious activities, jobs and organizations and almost in every walk of life (Islam, 2004).

## ***b. Individualism and collectivism***

Individualism relates to the extent to which members of a society respect and value the rights and independence of individuals as compared to family, group or community, based on kinship, lineage or tribe as remains the case in collectivism. Collectivism also refers to the extent of individuals' horizontal dependence upon the group (Islam, 2004). Individualism according to Hofstede is generally observed in societies wherein ties among individuals tend to be loose; whereas in collectivist societies, members tend to be strongly integrated into cohesive family, group, community or tribe which protect them throughout their lives in exchange for unquestionable loyalty (Islam, 2010). Pakistan, like many South American and Asian countries keeps low score on individualism in Hofstede's study. Pakistan ranked 38<sup>th</sup> on individualism index out of 52 countries with the score of 14 in the index in which most individualistic country Austria obtained the score of 91 and least individualistic country Guatemala obtained the score of 6 (Geert, 2015). Observers like Kochanek, Braibanti and Wiess (Kochanek, 1983) also endorse this trend. In Pakistan, especially in rural areas, Western individualistic trends are not observed generally (Ziring 1971). Family, tribe or clan demands loyalty from individuals almost in every walk of life. In most of the rural areas of Pakistan, tribal or community set up which is called '*biradery*' system is very strong. Clan based unity seems to be a dominant element of the social life and the honour of the tribe or clan tends to be the most superior and a symbol of the prestige of the members of that tribe or community. The clashes and killings on the name of the defence of tribal prestige are a known fact in almost all rural areas of Pakistan and especially in Sind and Baluchistan (Alwi, 1989). The most conspicuous aspect of Pakistani collectivism is the critical role played by kinship and family oriented structures. No section and department of the society can escape the influence of these social structures and the value systems. Although the structures, norms and values of the institutions may vary from area to area up to certain extent, the cardinal place of family, tribe and clan remains constant

(Jalal, 1995). In Sind and Punjab for example, the most dominant social institution tends to be '*biradery*' a kinship-oriented network that literally means 'brotherhoods'. The people of these regions trace and link their lineage with a common ancestor. In Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (previously called NWFP North West Frontier Province), tribal identity replaces the *biraderies*, namely communities (Kochanek, 1991).

### ***c. Uncertainty avoidance***

An important dimension of cross-cultural analysis of Hofstede (1980) is uncertainty avoidance, which refers to the extent to which the members of a society accept or tolerate ambiguity, lack of structure or uncertainty in everyday life. It also reflects the propensity to take risks and the attitude toward change and innovation. The people of the cultures scoring low on uncertainty avoidance tend to feel comfortable with uncertain, innovative, unstructured and risky situations, conditions and scenarios compared to people of the societies scoring high on uncertainty avoidance. It means in other words, nations with high scores on uncertainty avoidance prefer comfort, structure and formalization and avoid risks innovations and changes. Cultures scoring low on uncertainty avoidance feel more comfortable with lack of structure and with the unknown, whereas cultures scoring high on uncertainty avoidance prefer well-defined systems, sophisticated processes and structured rules equipped with all possible precautionary measures. The level of uncertainty avoidance will influence the preferences, decisions and general living patterns of the society. Pakistan is one of the countries keeping high score on uncertainty avoidance and Pakistan's rank is fairly high on Hofstede's (UAI) with a rank of 21<sup>st</sup> out of 52 countries, with the score of 70 wherein Greece tops the list with the score of 112 (Hofsted, 2001). It is probably because of high score of Pakistan on uncertainty

avoidance that Pakistani society, emphasizes formal rules and regulations which sometimes tend to be very bureaucratic in nature. However, collectivist orientation and propensity to avoiding uncertainty results in a paradoxical outcome. The more the rules are created to avoid uncertainty, the more the clever ways of escaping the rules are found and in many cases, rules are made and selectively enforced to favour the friends and relatives (Islam, 2004).

#### ***d. Masculinity and Femininity***

Another dimension of Hofstede's cultural model (1980) is masculinity and femininity. According to Hofstede (2001), "Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life' and 'Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life'" (Hofstede 2001, P-297). Based on Hofstede's definition, masculinity refers to a society, which tends to be relatively more oriented towards gender difference, religious affiliation, assertiveness, competition and career achievement and feminist society tends to be less concerned with gender differences and religion and more concerned with quality of life, care and solidarity (Hofstede, 1994). Pakistan has relatively higher score on masculinity (Geert, 2015) which suggests that majority of Pakistani society believes in different roles for men and women. Pakistani society as already mentioned, is a traditional society characterised by big gender based differences and social norms and '*parda*' (covering the body), early age marriages, and domestic duties of bringing up children etc. restrict up to certain extent women's access to education and employment. However, the situation is gradually changing over the last few

decades due to certain reforms in the society for general upbringing of women not only in education, but employment and politics also. The participation of women in the labour force has increased with a higher rate than that of men and currently Pakistan is on 115<sup>th</sup> ranked country out of the list of 173 countries of UNDP's Gender Development Index. Women possess 25.1% of professional and technical jobs and 8.05% managerial jobs in Pakistan. A large number of female workforce is employed in school teaching nursing and other para-professionals and government positions.

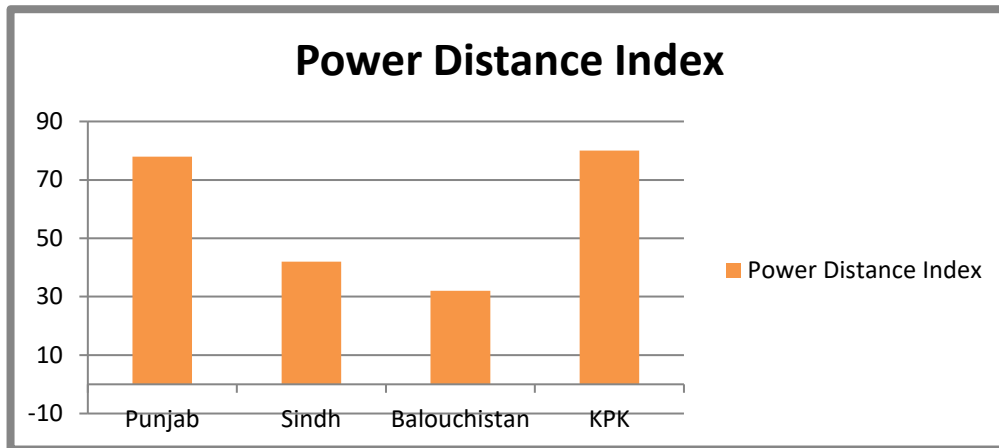


## **2.7. Analysis of Provincial Cross-cultural Differences**

One way of understanding the cross-cultural differences among Pakistani ethnic groups is to analyse them based on cultural variables suggested by Hofstede (1980). Shah and Amjad (2011) have conducted a research on the cross-cultural differences among the populations of the four provinces, based on the work of Hofstede, which is presented in the following pages. While reading the details of this analysis of Shah and Amjad (2010), this should be noted that the urban and rural populations of most of the provinces of Pakistan, except Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), tend to be highly variant in most of the cultural manifestations and based on that the results can confuse the readers at certain places.

### ***a. Power Distance***

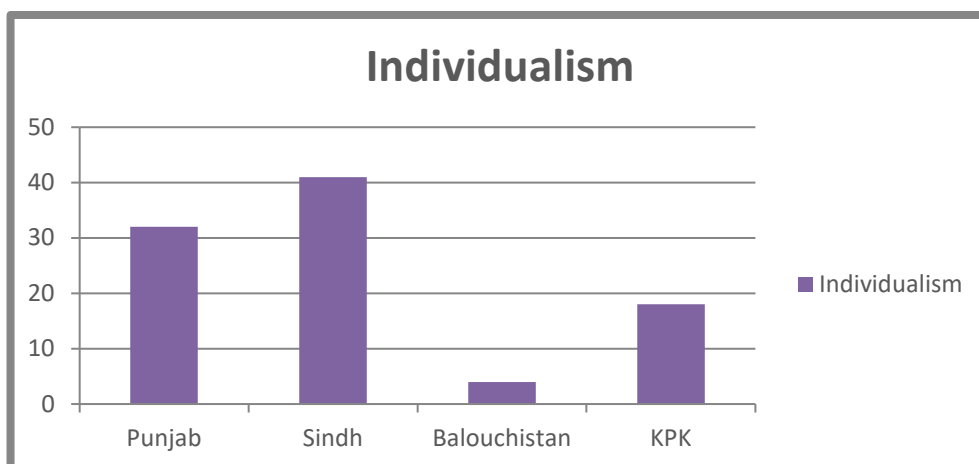
Due to strong tribal traditions, the population of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tends to be more power distanced. The respect for elders and obedience is observed at the highest level in the people of this province and the same are the findings of the research. On the power distance index (PDI), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) stood as a highly power distanced province with the score of 79.62 and Baluchistan with least score of 32.50. Punjab stood second on the rank with 76.13 and Sindh with 43.08. The findings unveil that the tendency of accepting unequal distribution of power by less powerful members is relatively high in KPK and Punjab as compared to Sindh and Baluchistan provinces.



**Figure:4** (Shah and Amjad, 2010)

***b. Individualism***

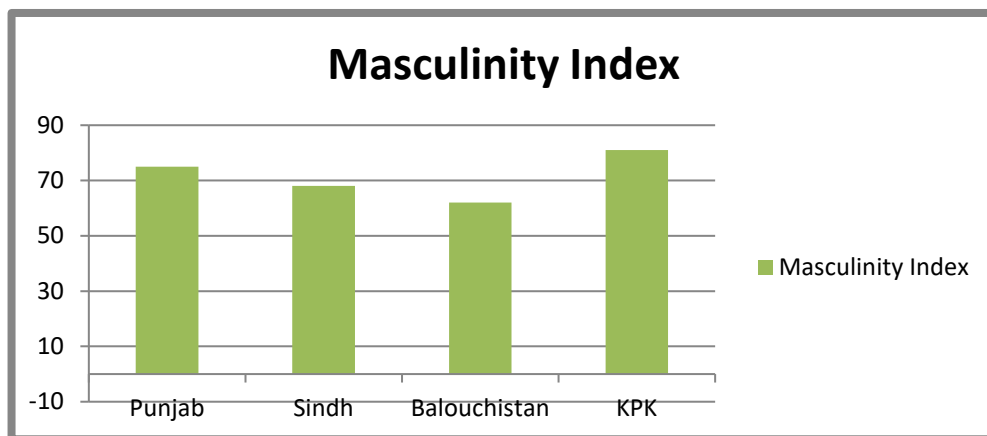
Although Pakistan is a collectivist society, but, the findings of Shah and Amjad (2011) show that there is still variation among the ethnic populations of Pakistan on this dimension also, with Sind province keeping the highest score of 40.77 and Baluchistan with the minimum score of 3.75 and this shows the extent of variation. KPK scored 18.08 and Punjab 31.94.



**Figure: 5** (Shah and Amjad, 2010)

### ***c. Masculinity***

On the dimension of masculinity, up to certain extent uniformity among the provinces is found in the study of Shah and Amjad (2011). The findings indicate a strong trend towards masculinity in all provinces of Pakistan with KPK having the highest score of 80.38 followed by Punjab with 74.84 and Sindh and Baluchistan provinces keeping relatively low tendency towards masculinity by scoring 67.69 and 62.50 respectively. In the other words, KPK and Punjab provinces are weak in femininity, as compared to Sindh and Baluchistan (Shah and Amjad, 2011).



**Figure:6** (Shah and Amjad, 2010)

### ***d. Uncertainty Avoidance***

The findings also show a considerable difference among the four provinces on the issue of uncertainty avoidance with KPK province keeping the highest score of 93, and Baluchistan with the lowest of 25, Sind 30 and Punjab 64 (Shah and Amjad, 2011).

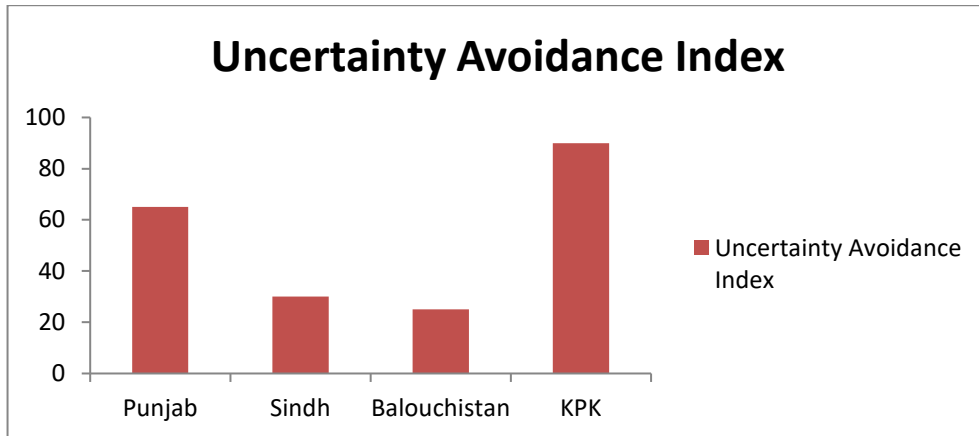


Figure:7 (Shah and Amjad, 2010)

**e. Long Term Orientation**

On long-term and short-term orientation index, KPK province tops with highest score on long-term orientation, while Punjab number two, and Sind and Baluchistan with equal score (Shah and Amjad, 2010). It can be inferred from these findings that the people of Punjab as compared to the people of KPK province seem to be less concerned about future happenings and focusing on their present life.

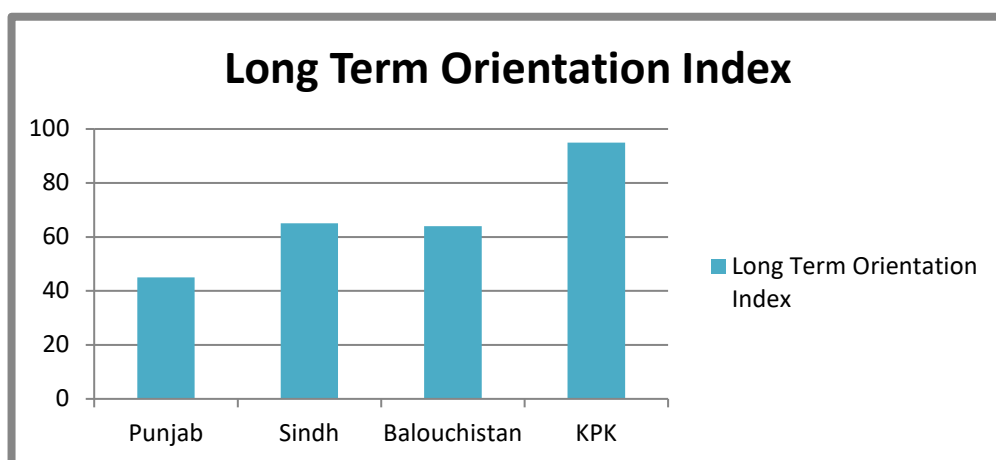
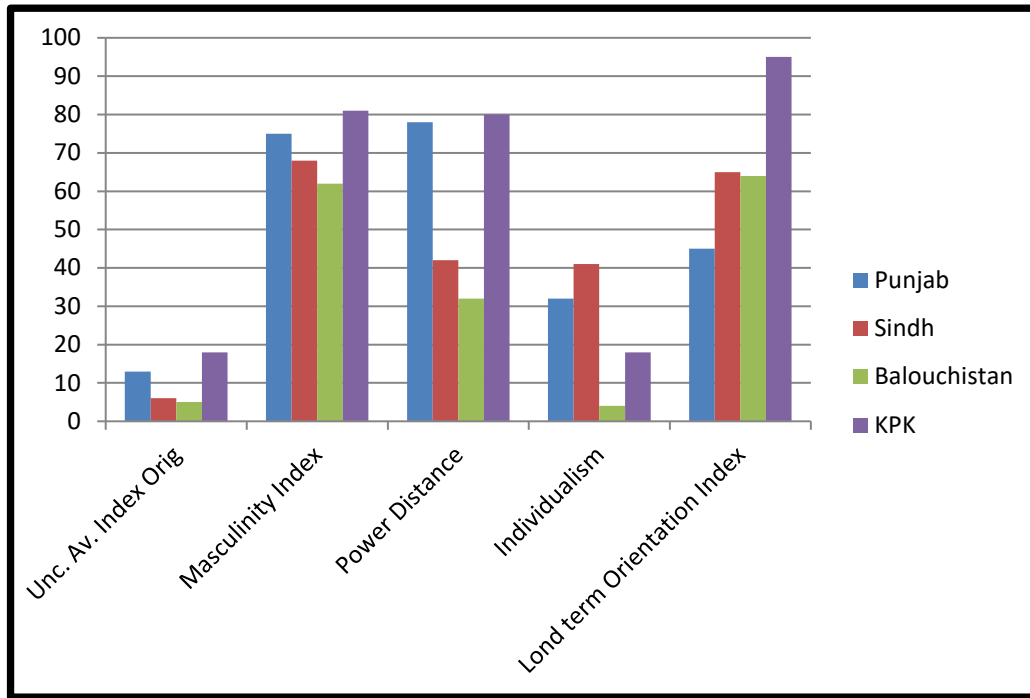


Figure:8 (Shah and Amjad, 2010)

## Consolidated Graph

Figure: 9 (Shah and Amjad, 2010)



## Consolidated Table

|                    | Unc. Av.<br>Index Orig | Masculinity<br>Index | Power<br>Distance | Individualism | Long term<br>Orientation<br>Index |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Punjab</b>      | 13                     | 75                   | 78                | 32            | 45                                |
| <b>Sindh</b>       | 6                      | 68                   | 42                | 41            | 65                                |
| <b>Baluchistan</b> | 5                      | 62                   | 32                | 4             | 64                                |
| <b>KPK</b>         | 18                     | 81                   | 80                | 18            | 95                                |

Figure:10

(Shah and Amjad, 2010)

The details mentioned in this chapter and the analysis of the major ethnic groups of Pakistan in the light of Hofstede's cultural model (1980), prove that Pakistan is a culturally diversified country. The substantial cultural variation and diversification of Pakistan provides a sound ground for a cross-cultural study on any social topic like knowledge sharing.

## 2.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter presents an introduction to Pakistan, the country of the context of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to present the details of the cultural diversity of Pakistan in order to justify its suitability for conducting a cross-cultural study. The chapter presents the key facts and figures about the population, geographical location, regional significance of the country, provinces and main ethnic groups: Sindhies, Punjabies, Pathans, Baloch, Urdu Speaking, Hindko, and Gilgit Biltistani and their respective languages, cultural traditions and the foundations of their cultural diversification and the causes and bases of ethnic differences in Pakistan. Provincial populations in Pakistan tend to be characterised by the difference of languages and dialects; dresses and foods; traditions and customs; and literature and fiction. Every region's people up to a large extent are ethnically, culturally and linguistically different from the people of the other regions. Even they look quite differently in their appearance and attire. The researcher has linked the cultural diversification of the country with geographic and historic background. Historically, Pakistan has been the site of several successive ancient civilizations including the Neolithic Mehrgarh, and the Bronze Age Indus Valley Civilisation (2800–1800 BCE) at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Pakistan is “a cradle of languages and cultures.” The people of Pakistan, according to a survey of the existing linguistic communities, speak in at least 69 dialects. These separate languages and dialects have given rise to distinct nationalist cultural literature including poetry, stories and history. The major languages like Punjabi, Pushto, Sindhi, Balochi, Seraiki, Brohi, Gilgity, Chitrali and Hindko have sought to inject some separate identity consciousness and belongingness throughout history. The chapter then discusses the cultural analysis of Pakistan on Hofstede's cultural model and presents cross provincial analysis of the cultural differences among various sub-cultures of Pakistan based on “Power Distance”, “Individualism and Collectivism”, “Msculinity Index”, “Risk Avoidance” and “Long Term Orientation” based on Hofstede's

model models of cross-cultural analysis. Next three chapters contain the theoretical foundations in the light of the literature review about the three major components of this research: Knowledge Sharing, Trust and Culture in the light of the research questions and research objectives.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Theoretical Foundation**

#### **KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING**

##### **3.0. Introduction**

This research has multiple research objectives; therefore, it is imperative to present the theoretical foundations regarding all the important constructs and variables of this research. The central theme of this study is to study the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment; therefore, this research has three main components/constructs, “Knowledge Sharing”, “Trust” and “Culture”. Since it could be difficult for the reader to understand the theoretical foundations about the various aspects of these three components altogether in one chapter; therefore, the researcher has split the theoretical foundations into three chapters keeping in view the three major constructs and objectives of this study; “Knowledge Sharing”, “Trust” and “Culture”. This chapter discusses the theoretical foundations about “Knowledge” and “Knowledge sharing”; next chapter discusses the conceptualization of trust and influence of trust on knowledge sharing and chapter 5 contains the theoretical foundations about culture and the influence of culture on KS and trust building.

This chapter presents the selective literature about knowledge, knowledge management and knowledge sharing. It looks essential to discuss the conceptualization of knowledge, knowledge management and knowledge sharing in the light of the existing literature. It also looks appropriate to differentiate between the terms like data, information and knowledge,

types of knowledge, knowledge management processes and the way knowledge sharing improves organizational functioning and performance; because without understanding these constructs properly, it might be difficult to understand the theoretical foundations of the current study and to imagine the possible value of it. On the other hand, this is also very important to understand various aspects of the antecedents or determinants of knowledge sharing. That is why; an important research objective of this study is to explore the individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing; since without understanding them, the benefits of knowledge sharing and knowledge management cannot be capitalized on. It is therefore logical to present a critical review of the existing literature on the above-mentioned constructs and components of this study. Trust and its impact on knowledge sharing will be discussed in chapter four.

Sections 1-5 of this chapter discuss the conceptualization of knowledge, knowledge management and knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing processes, strategic benefits of knowledge sharing and barriers to knowledge sharing. Section 5 discusses the critical perspectives on KS especially cognitive, socio-cognitive and social constructionist perspectives on KS.

Section 6 discusses the barriers to KS and section 7 elaborates knowledge sharing in medical profession. Section 3.8.1 discusses the individual factors (antecedents or determinants of knowledge sharing) as they play their role in facilitating sharing of knowledge in organizations. Individual antecedents to knowledge sharing include organizational commitment, self-efficacy, intention to share, reciprocity, a sense of self-worth or image and helping colleagues. Section 3.9 discusses organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing including organizational culture, interpersonal relationships and social networks, team orientation,

organizational support, decentralized organizational structure, transformational leadership, shared vision and goals and reward system.

### **3.1. Conceptualization of Knowledge**

Extant literature affirms that knowledge management is still one of the most pivotal topics in the field of management and organizational science research (Matzler et al., 2005; Serenko & Bontis, 2004). Although there are many factors that support the increasing interest of the researchers and academicians in the field of knowledge management, but two reasons are worth mentioning (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). Firstly, knowledge being an intangible asset can be seen as most valuable asset to the firms; keeping in view the intensification of globalization, exceeding volatility of business and advancement in the use and application of IT (Badaracco, 1991). Moreover, since knowledge tends to be scarce, unique, causally ambiguous, path dependent and hard to imitate (Nanda, 1996) therefore, it is can be a potential source for organizations to achieve competitive advantage (Grant, 1996; Teece 1998; Argote & Ingram 2000; Szulanski 1996). Secondly, revolutionary progress in the field of communication and information technologies have provided possibilities to collect, process and store information from a wide range of sources (Ferguson et al., 2005) and made it possible and feasible to connect individuals from various places, fields and disciplines to interact and share information (Anand et al., 1998). The emergence of firms' resource-based perspective (Barney, 199) and later on the development of knowledge-based perspective (Grant, 1996; Boisot, 1998; Spender, 1996) provided theoretical foundation of a completely new discipline, naming knowledge management (Matzler. et al., 2008).

The world economy is rapidly converting from a production-oriented to a knowledge-oriented economy (Powell & Snellman, 2004; Drucker, 1993). Resultantly, organizations are becoming more knowledge-oriented (Alvesson, 1995) and therefore the question of exploitation, generation and accumulation of knowledge has become very important for the organizations (Kim and Mauborgne, 1997; Anand, Gardner & Morris, 2007). Knowledge Management (KM) refers to the processes, practices, strategies and actions undertaken by an organization to locate, process, store, disseminate and facilitate the utilization of the experiences and insights either possessed by its members or gained through organizational processes or practices. These insights and experiences that comprise the knowledge of any organization need to be managed properly, since it adds value to the organization and can improve organizational performance and provide a strong base for competitive advantage (Grant, 1996; Adler, 2001; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Spender & Grant, 1996; Foss & Pedersen, 2002).

The knowledge based perspective is based upon and promotes the resource-based view of the firm, initially suggested by Penrose (1959) and later on extended by others (Grant, 1996; Barney 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984; Conner, 1991). In explaining the “Theory of the Firm’s Growth”, Penrose (1969) argued that organizational resources strongly affect the functioning of the organizations and are central for organizations to gain competitive advantage in an industry. Resources can be categorized as tangible or intangible. He further argues that it is not tangible resources (e.g., capital or physical facilities) that provide solid grounds for the firms to gain competitive advantage, but the intangible resources of the firms (Penrose, 1959). Furthering the idea of Penrose, Barney (1991) suggests that if the organizations want to achieve competitive advantage, they need to have acquire resources that can be valuable, unique, rare and inimitable or imperfectly imitable.

Distinctiveness and inimitability of the resources according to Barney (1991), can originate from multiple potential characteristics of a resource, for instance, social complexity (e.g., based on organizational culture of a firm), process complexity, causal ambiguity, and unique historical conditions. According to Miller and Shamsie (1996), resources can be categorized as asset-based resources and knowledge-based resources. Asset-based resources, which tend to be controlled by a firm and legally protected, can create competitive advantage until the market conditions remain favorable for the firm. As soon as the market changes, the asset loses its value. On the other hand, knowledge-based assets, tend to be secured from possible imitation, not legally, but because they often tend to be elusive or multifarious to be understood or copied by an outside observer (Miller and Shamsie, 1996). The Knowledge-based view takes even higher place than the resource-based view; by arguing that knowledge, being the most inimitable, is the most important resource for any organization (Kogut, 2000; Grant, 1996a; Grant, 1996b; Kogut et al., 1993; Spender & Nonaka, 1991). The knowledge-perspective also implies that the benefits of tangible resources can only be achieved through their combined application, which again poses challenges and depends upon a firm's knowledge. This knowledge tends to surround in and reside with various entities, including organizational systems and processes, policies and procedures, culture and values, manuals and documents as well as individual employees (Spender, 1996; Nelson and Winter 1982; Grant 1996a). Since knowledge resources being socially complex, tend to be difficult to imitate, therefore, knowledge-based perspective suggests that knowledge resources can provide opportunity to firms to achieve long-term sustainable competitive advantage. However, it depends on the ability of the firms to effectively locate, collect, store, process, distribute and apply the existing knowledge and to generate new knowledge from their existing knowledge-based resources (Alavi and Leidner, 1999).

Due to epistemological and ontological differences among the scholars (Dodgson, 1993a, b; Dougherty, 1992; Knights, et al., 1993; Kogut & Zander, 1992, 1993; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rappa & Debackere, 1992; Tsoukas, 1991, 1993) there is no single definition to cover all the dimensions of knowledge. However, it looks significant to mention some important definitions to explain the concept vividly. Awad and Ghaziri (2004) conceive it as “Understanding gained through experience or study” Plato as “an individual’s true, justified belief” (cited in Lehane et al., 2004) and Wiig as the combination of “insights, understandings, and practical know-how that we all possess which being the fundamental resource allows us to function intelligently” (Wiig cited in Sharma, 2004). According to Cepeda (2006), knowledge refers to familiarity with something or the understanding of a phenomenon. It can be contained in individuals, groups, organizations, systems, products, processes, and so forth. According to Devenport and Prusak (2000) “knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information”.

In the view of Swan & Scarborough (2001), knowledge includes “experience, concepts, facts and rules about (customers, markets, processes, regulations) that are crucial to the business.” Huang (1998) defines knowledge as “intellectual capital” which includes know how, best practices, business processes, production methods, accounting procedures, marketing techniques, management plans, work rules, software codes, project experiences, architectures, technology and tools etc. According to Im and Hars (1998), knowledge consists of “patterns”, “components” and “frameworks”. Patterns refer to best or worst policies, practices, and lessons applicable to broad areas. Components include the things that can be used in narrow trouble shooting for instance, document templates and engineering drawings and frameworks consist of market reports and manuals that are used for solving business problems.

### 3.1.1. Data, Information and Knowledge

Data, information and knowledge are sometimes used interchangeably leave confusion. Therefore, to understand the true meaning of knowledge, we need to distinguish among the concepts of “data”, “information”, and “knowledge”. Despite lack of consensus on the boundaries of the three terms, we can make our assumptions clear by viewing “data” as raw numbers, signs, facts, explanations without giving complete and concrete sense; “information” as processed form of data giving a proper sense and pattern that individuals try to find in data, but still lacking capability, experience and understanding. “Knowledge”, on the other hand, is not only information, but coupled with capability and understating, since it tends to be a product of human reflection and experience. According to Vance (1997), information is data presented into a meaningful but, untested or unauthenticated framework, whereas knowledge on the other hand is information that is tested, acknowledged and thought to be authenticated. Knowledge is created, processed, reprocessed or structured from scattered pieces of information, to the limit that it starts carrying right kinds of signals in the mind (Bhagat et al., 2002). Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) argue that knowledge is originated, processed and disseminated by the intention and belief system of its sharers under the influence of their cultural values and frames of reference and hence it depends upon the receivers to decide whether the shared information is knowledge.

### 3.1.2. Types of Knowledge

Knowledge basically, is of two types, *tacit and explicit* (Conner & Prahalad, 1996; Grant, 1997; Sanchez & Mahoney, 1996; Teece, Pisano, & Shuen, 1997). Tacit knowledge refers to the type of knowledge that remains hidden with individuals and so tends to be difficult to transfer to others in words, textual, pictorial or any other visible format. Running a machine, driving a car

and examining a patient are the examples of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). On the other end, explicit knowledge is one which can be found from books, CDs, documents, manuals and various written and audio-visual forms and because of this, it becomes easy to transfer to others in visible or explicit form (Polanyi, 1958, 1966). Moreover, tacit knowledge tends to reside in the brain of knower and explicit knowledge tends to be found in visible or concrete form.

Tacit and explicit versions of knowledge many a times are viewed as opposite concepts (Hall & Andriani, 2002, 2003; Hansen, Nohria, & Tierney, 1999; Hansen & von Oetinger, 2001). But, as Polanyi contended both should be viewed as complementary concepts to the extent that both are necessary for anyone to fully achieve skillful mastery of a task (Brown et al., 2001). However, it is realistic to think that tacit knowledge is more difficult to acquire as compared to explicit knowledge; firstly because of inherent problems of depicting tacit knowledge in words or textual form (Brown et al., 2001; Duguid, 2005a; Tsoukas & Vladimirou, 2001) and secondly because it requires extensive practice to claim mastery of any task. Furthermore, acquiring tacit knowledge is also difficult since it involves interaction and dependence on other people and largely depends on trust between the two parties involved in the knowledge sharing process (Szulanski, 1996). For instance, learning the rules of driving from any book is easy as compared to being actually a master driver which needs a lot of training from someone and extensive practice as well. Regardless of the inherent difficulties of acquiring tacit knowledge, it is often treated as a valuable resource for knowledge management practitioners; since it is considered unique and difficult to imitate (Conner et al., 1996; Grant, 1997; Sanchez et al., 1996; Teece et al., 1997).

De Long and Fahey (2000) note that a major reason of confusion regarding what is knowledge and KM is the failure to understand that there are at least three distinct types of knowledge



including “Human”, “Structured” and “Social knowledge”. What individuals know, constitutes *human knowledge*. Human knowledge combines both tacit and explicit forms of knowledge and tends to be manifested through skills (e.g., delivering a lecture or interviewing a candidate) or expertise (e.g., deep understanding of why customers prefer a particular brand to others). This can also have a (physical) e.g., operating a machine or cognitive (mental) form, e.g., conceiving an idea (De Long and Fahey, 2000). *Social knowledge* exists or emerges because of the interaction among individuals and groups and teams. For example, when a team of expert doctors or scientists discusses about some important issue, the collective discussion and sharing of knowledge of the participants gives birth to new knowledge, which tends to be obviously more than the sum of the individual knowledge. *Structured knowledge* tends to be explicit and rule-based in nature. This form of knowledge tends to be found in an organization's operations, systems, procedures, processes, tools and work patterns. A key difference between the previous two types of knowledge and structured knowledge is that the latter is assumed to exist independent of human knowing (De Long and Fahey, 2000). It is, perceived instead, an organizational resource. Some scholars argue that knowledge cannot be independent of humans, whereas others believe, from the practical standpoint of management that although created by humans, structured knowledge resides in processes, systems, and operations of an organization.

### 3.2. Why is it important to manage knowledge?

Although knowledge is perceived as a social good or an intellectual asset, yet, it possesses some paradoxical characteristics that are unique and profoundly different from those of other valuable possessions. Firstly, it does not consume if used; secondly, its transfer does not result in losing it; rather the more the sharing, the more the increasing in knowledge; thirdly, it is abundant, but the ability to use it is limited; and fourthly, if not used, it walks out of the doors of organization, at the end of the day (Dalkir, 2005). That is why, several scholars (e.g., Kogut & Zander, 1992; Inkpen, 1998; Shenkar & Li, 1999; Larsson et al, 1998) have emphasized on the collection, processing, storage, dissemination and utilization of organizational knowledge. In a study conducted by Schoenberg (1999) about 121 acquisitions of UK firms in EU countries, reveals that firms' ability to effectively transfer required functional knowledge, has been consistently dropping short of their projections. For example, the results showed that in the impotent area of marketing, only 63% could acquire the needed information. These results are consistent with the belief that a major cause of unsatisfactory performance of organizations and low morale of their employees relates to inefficient and poor structures and networks for facilitating and diffusing knowledge values and insights within organizations (Claes, 1999).

Based on the above facts, the ability to manage knowledge is becoming increasingly crucial and occupies central focus within organizations. Creation and sharing of knowledge has become ever more significant factor for organizational competitiveness (Dalkir, 2005). Internet and the World Wide Web have made abundant sources of knowledge available to organizations and individuals. Experts are heralding the dawn of the *Knowledge Age* super siding the *Industrial Era*. Fifty years ago, nearly half of all the work force of industrialized countries was engaged with manufacturing, today that proportion is dropped to 20% (Drucker, 1994). Increasing focus on competition, innovation, customer satisfaction and quality management

has paved way to knowledge-based organizations. The only sustainable edge that a firm can have these days comes from what it collectively knows and how quickly and efficiently it acquires and makes use of new knowledge (Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

### 3.3. What is knowledge management and how does it work in organizations?

Knowledge management (KM) is generally defined as the process of adopting a systematic and organized approach toward capturing, creating, structuring, storing and disseminating knowledge within an organization; in order to improve overall organizational efficiency and productivity; through making right decisions, using best practices, applying faster work cycles and reducing costly rework from project to project (Pfeiffer & Sutton, 1999; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Pasternack & Viscio, 1998).

Most of the initiatives of knowledge management tend to be aimed at capturing, codification, and dissemination of knowledge held by members in an organization. Despite lack of consensus over the definition of KM, there is a general convergence on the goals of KM within an organization. Nickols (2000) has summarized these goals: “the basic aim of knowledge management is to leverage knowledge to the organization’s advantage.” Some underlying objectives and motives behind the implementation of KM are obvious for example: the loss of knowledgeable employees because of turnover, pressures and challenges of innovation from outside firms, pressures for cutting costs, management of risk, and accelerating the rate of the creation of new knowledge. Some typical KM objectives are:

- Facilitating the smooth transfer of knowledge from retiring employees to their successors
- Identifying the critical areas and resources of knowledge so that the company “knows what it knows and does it well—and why.”
- Building up a mechanism that can be used with individuals, groups, and the organizations to stem the potential loss of intellectual capital and integrate it.

Historically, knowledge has always been managed, in one way or the other. However, efficient and effective management of knowledge demands new outlooks, paradigms, processes and approaches; since it touches almost every aspect of the functioning of organizations (Dalkir, 2005). For this, Wiig (in Grey, 1996), urge the organizations to develop a new approach, and prepare a squad of professionals with blend of knowledge and expertise that has not been seen previously.

In the KPMG survey of European companies, Peat Marwick discovered that almost half the companies reported considerable damage due to losing their key personnel with 43% others experienced inconsistent supplier-client relations and another 13% faced a loss of at least profits only because of losing a knowledge worker (KPMG, 1998a). Moreover, 49% firms reported that they failed to get the needed information regarding some best practices or processes in a specific area, when a key employee left that organization. In another survey, 61% organizations acknowledged that despite much of their knowledge being existed within the organization, they were unable to locate, store, process and make it accessible to their employees (Cranfield University, 1998).

It is interesting to note that many firms despite using knowledge management systems had no idea that they were possessing a knowledge management system. (Cranfield University, 1998), hence, there is little evidence of the firms' proper evaluation of the benefits/outcomes of their knowledge management system (Alavi and Leidner, 1999). Based on the findings KPMG survey, 86% of firms reported to have improved decision making after implementing KM systems, 70% mentioned reduced costs, 67% mentioned enhanced productivity and another 66% referred to faster production cycles etc. Benefits also included in areas like exploring new business opportunities and reduced employee turnover (KPMG, 1998a). However, a number

of firms stated that their primary purpose of the implementation of KM was long term i.e. gaining competitive advantage (Cranfield University, 1998).

### 3.3.1. Functions/Processes of a Knowledge Management System

Generally, any knowledge management system tends to have four key functions: “Identification”, “Creation”, “Storage” and “Utilization” of organizational knowledge. KPMG (1998b) has defined seven functions of any knowledge management system: encapsulation (capturing and recording knowledge), creation, and application within the organization, sharing and dissemination, exporting outside the organization e.g., selling of formulas, sourcing the means of knowledge and learning. The Cranfield University study (1998) has identified ten functions of KM: searching knowledge internally, locating knowledge externally, creating, processing new knowledge, applying the knowledge, re-using it, sharing it within organization, sharing outside the organization and updating knowledge. Although above-mentioned are some of the perspectives defining the functions/processes of KM, but all of these perspectives converge on four basic processes/functions of KM. These include knowledge creation, Storing and retrieval, transfer and sharing and applying the knowledge (Alavi and Leidner, 1999).

***Knowledge creation*** is the first and foremost function or process of KM and at the same time, it is one of the most important areas of research in the field of KM (Nonaka, 1991; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Knowledge creation can be defined as “the capability of a company as a whole to create knowledge, disseminate it throughout the organization, and embody it in products, services, and systems” (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 3) It involves identifying and incorporating new methods, processes, products and services through tacit and explicit knowledge of an organization (Pentland, 1995). It is believed that knowledge creation is a key

factor for improving or enhancing organizational performance. For example, Lam (2007) who examined the role of careers upon knowledge creation across universities and private sector organizations, found that mechanisms that supported individuals during their career at universities and private sector organizations were more likely to create knowledge. Consequently, such new knowledge was seen to be key factor for innovation process of private-sector organizations and at the same time the main source and triggering factor for attracting funding opportunities for future academic research (Lam, 2007).

**Knowledge storage** is the second function of knowledge management. One of the key characteristics of knowledge is that if not properly stored or used, it expires or drains out of the doors of an organization (Dalkir, 2005). Therefore, it is very much necessary to store the available knowledge of the organization for further use by individuals as well groups at the time of need or while solving the organizational problems or making important decisions. Empirical studies suggest that while creating new knowledge, organizations mostly forget, or loose the track of their existing knowledge (Argote, Beckman & Epple, 1990), Therefore, storage and retrieval of organizational knowledge also named, as “organizational memory” by Walsh and Ungson (1991), is very important. According to Stein and Zwass (1995) after creation, storage of the existing knowledge tends to be the most important function/process of any knowledge management system.

After knowledge creation and knowledge storage, **knowledge distribution** is the third generally accepted function of knowledge management system. This function typically implies the transfer and dissemination of knowledge and skills among individuals and organizational units. This process can be unidirectional with one employee of an organization sharing knowledge with another member or it can be multi-directional or mutual, with more than one members

learning from each other (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; Darr, Argote, & Epple, 1995; Lazarova & Tarique, 2005; Levin et al., 2004). Keeping in view the distributed nature of organizational cognition and memory, an essential function/process of a good knowledge management system should be to transfer the knowledge to the people or locations in the organization, where that knowledge is needed or can be used. However, this is not a simple process (Huber, 1991), since organizations do not know what they know and even if they know, they fail to locate that knowledge or properly retrieve and disseminate it to the needed individuals or groups due to lacking any knowledge management system or having a weak KMS and this undermines the study of knowledge distribution.

A critical discussion of knowledge-based perspective of the firm is that the underpinning of competitive advantage depends on the *application of the knowledge* instead of gathering and acquiring it. If the collected knowledge is not applied for performance improvement or problem solving, then, what is the fun of investing energies in knowledge creation, storage or distribution? Due to this, Pentland (1995) notes that it is difficult to acknowledge the worth or contribution of any knowledge that fails to bring any improvement in individuals' or firm's performance. Since knowledge, particularly tacit, is held within individuals, therefore an imminent challenge for the organizations relates to the absence of a collective mind or a central memory. Moreover, due to cognitive limitations, neither it is possible for any individual or organization to be aware of all of its knowledge nor it is possible to identify in advance as to what knowledge will be needed, by whom when and where. Hence, it is extremely required by the organizations to make use of their existing knowledge.



### 3.4. Conceptualization of Knowledge Sharing

The dawn of knowledge-based economy, the vast sizes of conglomerate global organizations, and cut throat competition have come together to compel the organizations to be as agile and vigilant as they can be, and one significant possibility for organizations to meet this requirement is to encourage and enable organizational members to share their knowledge efficiently and effectively (Nissen, 2007). On the other hand, if the organizations aim at gaining competitive advantage, it is not sufficient for them to rely on hiring competent and capable employees who possess relevant knowledge and skills or help them in acquiring those skills (Brown & Duguid, 1991). Hence, every organization being big or small needs to facilitate the transfer of knowledge from experts to those who need that expertise (Hinds et al., 2001). Knowledge sharing among organizational members and within and across teams opens the ways for the organizations to gain access to knowledge-based resources and capitalize on them (e.g., Damodaran & Olphert, 2000; Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Numerous research studies (e.g., Hansen, 2002; Cummings, 2004; Lin, 2007a; Collins & Smith, 2006; Mesmer-Magnus & DeChurch, 2009) have found positive relationship between KS and individual and teams' performance, innovation, faster production cycles, cost reductions, faster completion of new products, and increase in sales and revenues and market share of the organizations.

An interesting reality about knowledge is that, unlike other material resources, which lose their value after use, the value of knowledge increases after its use; simply because, ideas generate ideas and the shared knowledge does not consume, rather stays with the possessor, while educating the receiver (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). On the other hand, when knowledge is shared, it works like economies of scale both because more than one user can use that knowledge and shared knowledge can pave way for the cultivation of new ideas. Hence, with

an effective flow of organizational knowledge sharing, a firm can efficiently manage its knowledge base and improve its competitiveness (McEvily & Chakravarthy, 2002; Andrews & Deiahaye, 2000). The findings of Allen (1977) Pelz and Andrews (1966), and Mintzberg (1973), indicate that for information, people prefer to contact individuals instead of referring to documents or files. Nonaka, Von Krogh, and Voelpel (2006) suggest that individuals need to share their knowledge if they want to acquire new knowledge. In 2000, the IBM Institute conducted a survey of 40 managers of a large accounting firm, to know the sources individuals use for acquiring or locating the needed information (Bartlett, 2000). The results showed that in order to find information, people still first turned to people. Interestingly, among the five choices for preferred sources of information, 85% respondents voted in favor of the option “people”; 40% for “prior material”; 25% for “Web”; and the company knowledge base was ranked only fourth with 12% followed by another 12% in favor of “other sources”. People, for a number of reasons, are preferred source for required information. One obvious reason is that it is faster, but, of course, this is not the only reason, there are many other reasons also. When we contact someone for our needed information, we not only get the required information, but we also come to know where to locate and come to know about our strengths and weaknesses regarding a particular area or field and the knowledge sharer can correct our ideas. Lastly, and most importantly, we become confident that we are receiving information from a known, trusted and credible source. This will improve our capacity to define a problem situation and apply our knowledge to solve that problem. Therefore, knowledge sharing is a crucial issue for organizations (Sa’enz, J. et al., 2009).

Van and De Ridder (2004) conceptualize knowledge sharing as a process where individuals mutually exchange ideas, experiences and insights to create new knowledge. McDermott (1999) provided a suitable understanding of knowledge sharing by explaining that sharing

knowledge engages an individual to guide someone else through his knowledge to manage his or her situation better. Moreover, the sharer of the knowledge ideally needs to be aware of the purpose, need, uses or gaps of the knowledge he or she is going to share with others. Because, it is possible that the receiver may not be interested in receiving that knowledge or he or she might be needing the same knowledge, but, with some difference of the nature, purpose and use of that knowledge. This means that neither all employees always need to receive knowledge; nor need all of them always to share the knowledge.

### **3.4.1. Strategic Implications of Knowledge Sharing**

Knowledge sharing can result in countless strategic benefits for organizations. Some key strategic benefits of KS can be for example: transfer of valuable knowledge from one source and location to other; connecting professionals across platforms and disciplines; avoiding mistakes and failures; solving day to day business problems; creating new knowledge; standardizing managerial practices; reducing time to talent; leveraging best practices; taking on management of strategic capabilities and building reputation etc. Knowledge resides in communities in the form of social capital (Dalkir, 2005). Because of cutthroat competition in the business world, layoffs and downsizing is a common practice in business firms these days. Due to these conditions, employees also seem to be more sensitive to their profession resulting in low level of dedication toward their organizations. In this context, it seems very much essential to retain the employees and leverage their knowledge and expertise. For this reason, it is good to encourage communities of practice (formal and informal groups of experts and professionals to work in a collaborative manner by sharing of ideas and supporting each other). This is generally observed that if a knowledge worker while working in some organization is active member of a community of practice, this will be a kind of motivating factor for that

employee to stay in that organization. Because, psychologically it gives a sense of security, kinship, and it creates a friendly atmosphere among the employees, reducing the feelings of strangeness, loneliness and isolation from colleagues. Lesser and Storck (2001), having studied the nature, working and relationship patterns of these kinds of communities of practices, posited that the sense of identification, mutual trust, kinship, obligations and cooperation that the members of communities of practices gain, enhances their willingness and enthusiasm to share knowledge with their colleagues and learn from their participants (Dalkir, 2005).

In a knowledge economy, intangible assets of organizations, such as trademarks, brand equity, goodwill, reputation, copyrights and intellectual property etc. are gaining increasing significance as decisive and critical factors for organizations to gain competitive advantage, especially in service sector (Senge, 1990; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Teece, 1998). Whilst these organizations develop and accumulate these intangible assets over a long period of time and own them; however, organizations don't possess direct ownership over their employees' knowledge resources that can either become outdated if not used or mixed with new knowledge or can vanish away by the departure of employees from their organizations (Riege, 2005). Successful marketing of products and services for example, needs in-depth knowledge of markets, customers, dealers, competitors, environmental factors and so on, but, despite being so much significant part of company's total knowledge, this can change quickly. On the other hand, despite increasing emphasis on the strategic advantages of KS, the access to organizational knowledge is still limited, since, a bulk of knowledge, especially tacit knowledge resides in human minds (Riege, 2005). In effect, sharing of tacit knowledge among organizational members belonging to diverse fields, backgrounds, perspectives, cultures and motives becomes a pivotal factor the generation of new knowledge within organizations (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

### 3.4.2. Processes of Knowledge Sharing

There has been debate on the issue as to which knowledge sharing process should be applied in the organizations: technology driven or organizational culture driven. Although technology, especially information systems, play critical role in the sharing of knowledge, without which knowledge sharing might be less effective; however, many scholars of the field of management usually argue that rather than technology, organizational culture is important for knowledge sharing, since knowledge tends to be linked with people, contexts and cultures (Davenport, 1997; Cross & Baird, 2000). For example, many successful corporations like 3M, Boeing, BP Amoco, Hewlett Packard or Chevron, center their knowledge sharing activities to cultivate a culture of knowledge sharing (Sveiby, 2002). However, it is not that straight, since it depends on the type of knowledge under focus. For example, for the sharing of explicit knowledge, obviously technology seems to be very much important, whereas for the sharing of tacit knowledge, organizational culture, characterized by a conducive and cooperative interpersonal relationship based on the idea and spirit of teamwork among its members, definitely plays an important role. Dixon (2000) is of the opinion that the adoption of an appropriate process for knowledge sharing within an organization should be based on three factors: type of knowledge i.e. explicit or tacit, the frequency of sharing process, and the receiver of knowledge, i.e. an individual, group or the whole organization. Having referred to objectified and collective knowledge as mentioned in knowledge matrix of Spender (1996), Dixon (2000) has identified five different modes of effective knowledge sharing within organizations. These include:

- (1) “Serial transfer”, where a member of a team shares explicit or tacit knowledge within the same team.
- (2) “Near transfer” where one team shares “explicit” knowledge with another team working on the similar task.

- (3) “Far transfer’ where a team shares “tacit” knowledge with some other team performing similar task.
- (4) “Expert transfer” when a team seeks explicit knowledge from other members of the organization.
- (5) “Organizational know-how” which refers to organizational need of tacit or explicit knowledge to complete a strategic task.

### **3.4.3. Social Capital and Knowledge Sharing Communities**

The term social capital refers to the institutional norms, values, relationships, interactions and communication networks among employees that constitute the quantity and quality, breadth and depth of social interactions within organizations (Lesser & Prusak, 2001). Social capital is a kind of glue that connects the employees of an organization together. Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998) define social capital as “the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. It thus comprises both the network and the assets that may be mobilized through that network” (p. 243). Social capital tends to be a source of gaining competitive advantage by creating and sharing intellectual capital. That is why business firms are focusing on developing more and more social capital (Dalkir, 2005).

Knowledge sharing communities tend to be the basic cultivator of social capital, by providing opportunities to organizational members to develop a network with other colleagues who either possess similar skills or share similar professional interests. The communities of practice provide a “Who’s who” service in the shape of yellow pages to enable contacts among members. They also provide a mechanism of reference to organizational members to evaluate

the content, make the decision and solve the problem based on tested, validated, and updated knowledge. Social capital encourages coordination and cooperation also, but it has one “downside” also that sometimes, communities, networks and groups that are isolated can work together against the common interests of organizations (Portes & Landholt, 1996).

A knowledge sharing community or community of practice refers to “a group of people having common identity, professional interests and that undertake to share, participate and establish a fellowship” (American Heritage Dictionary, Pickett, 2000). Since KS predominantly is a social process (Cohen & Prusak, 2001), therefore, it looks very logical and essential for organizations to create social informal groups wherein the organizational members that may be able to contact each other either in person or through emails or videoconferencing etc. and share their knowledge, ideas, insights and experiences. These informal groups or teams are called communities of practice (Adams & Freeman, 2000; Seufert et al., 1999). Knowledge sharing communities not only share know how and expertise, but, also connect the social network of people who originated the knowledge. It should be the quality of good knowledge management system, not only to make the knowledge accessible, but also to show who created that knowledge and how to use it (Dalkir, 2005). Making the knowledge visible can facilitate knowledge sharing. By making the interactions online visible, knowledge sharing can be made more visible, in some way so that every member of the community can know who knows what. Visible interactions knit the group members more closely together and help create a mutual awareness, engagement and accountability in the process of knowledge sharing (Dalkir, 2005).

### 3.5. Critical Perspectives on Knowledge Management

Social constructionist orientation has become exceedingly popular over the last thirty years within organization studies and researchers have developed a range of methodologies to analyse the approaches through which identities, organizations, and knowledge are constructed socially (Weick, 1995; Watson, 1994). Whilst social constructionism generally discards essentialist clarifications of the world, the literature in this domain presents diverse orientations, as demonstrated in various research approaches, designs, methodologies and ways of theorizing social constructionism by scholars.

The roots of social constructionist approach can be found into certain intellectual traditions including “sociology”, “social philosophy” and the “sociology of knowledge”. The early work of scholars in this area drew attention towards the ways of thinking about “social reality” that offered a foundation for social constructionist paradigm. Some “sociological” work highlighted the “experiential nature” of reality, for instance, Garfinkel’s (1967) idea that a sense of the reality is an everyday accomplishment, gained through ongoing, embodied, contextual and interpretive work of the individuals. This approach often emphasizes the context in which interaction takes place. Within “social philosophy”, Schutz (1960) concentrated on the notion of life-world, suggesting that personal experiences of individuals tend to be fashioned by social interaction through the use of languages. Later on Schutz and Luckmann (1973) joined hands together to explore the effects of such interaction on the creation and sharing of knowledge. A third stream relates to the “sociology of knowledge”, as discussed in the Berger and Luckmann’s important book “The Social Construction of Reality” (1966). They noted that society exists both as an objective and subjective reality, arguing that the social world can be seen as a dialectical process of objectivation, externalization and internalization,



i.e. “Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product” (p. 61).

They (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) argued that social world is humanly composed of continuing activities and routines (externalization), yet being objective in the sense that it influences individuals’ lives on a continual basis, and the individuals have to come out and learn it (objectivation). They further argued that individuals socialize with the world as they interpret events and behaviours of others (subjectivities) and while doing so they take on the world, and understand their own and others’ place and identity in the world (internalization). Berger and Luckmann argue that when individuals become conscious of their identity as a “generalized other”, they become ‘an effective member of society and in subjective possession of a self and a world’ (p. 137). From this viewpoint, knowledge is a socially constructed product and facts are socially constructed phenomena.

The main focus of Berger and Luckmann (1966), that social identities and realities are composed of and maintained through interaction with others—rather than in structures—has been adopted by scholars in numerous disciplines, who furthered it and developed the concept that knowledge, social reality and identities tend to be influenced socially, culturally and linguistically. Berger and Luckmann’s discourse provided a foundation and contemporary scholars have compiled an increasingly large body of work, extending to a variety of theoretical perspectives and paradigms. Cunliff (2008) suggests that “if we wish to take a social constructionist approach to research and teaching, it is important to think about our underlying assumptions regarding the nature and processes of socially constructed reality, the impact of these assumptions on how we think about the knowledge and how these then play through our research and our approach to management learning” (P. 126).

Scholars promoting intersubjective view of social realities believe in the fact that our sense of social world continually evolves as a result of our interaction with others. In the light of this perspective, “I” is not possible without “you” (Shotter, 1989); since we always tend to be relating to others, regardless of they are present or not. A face-to-face or cognitive dialogue always integrates other individuals, conversations, times and spaces (Cunliffe et al., 2004). Hence, scholars (e.g., Hatch, 1997) focus on micro-processing of co-construction and maintenance of our understanding of social realities in daily life conversations. Here focus does not remain on what social reality is (since there is no universally fixed and shared understanding of reality) but on the way people give meaning to the responsive dialogue with others. From the intersubjective perspective of creating emerging social reality, both learning and research aim at offering insights into how individuals negotiate meanings regarding their experiences, and while doing so, they shape up those experiences between them and their conversations, with the objective to become more careful, thoughtful and reflexive about how they do so (Cunliff, 2008).

In order to properly understand the “social constructivism”, we need to understand “cognitive constructionism”, “socio-cognitivism” and “social constructivism” separately.

### **3.5.1 Cognitive constructivism**

Cognitive constructivism is a meta-theoretical concept which perceives creation of knowledge as the production of mental models. This is based on the “theory of cognitive development” of Piaget suggesting that human beings cannot be “given” knowledge that they instantly receive

understand and utilise; rather they must “create” their knowledge themselves. Individuals construct knowledge by virtue of their experiences that permit them to construct “mental models” of the world. The mental models tend to be consisting of images, scripts, schemas and knowledge structures. These mental models keep on changing and modifying, becoming more refined and detailed as individuals encounter novel situations or come across new sensory data. Yet, mental models tend to be relatively strong conceptual structures for the originating of knowledge.

Cognitive constructivist theories in information sciences assume that human mind is the fundamental factory of formation. These theories are about “the information man” (Talja, 1997), and throw light on the ways through which individuals interact with knowledge reservoirs and knowledge retrieval systems for some various specific states of knowledge. Cognitive constructivist theory emerged in 1970s and 1980s in reply to the then predominant “information transfer model” (Brier, 1996; Cornelius, 1996; Day, 2000). With “the user-oriented revolution” (Nahl, 1998), scholars like Dervin (1983) questioned the mundane and mechanistic understanding of knowledge as a direct transmission of messages among senders and receivers. The proponents of cognitive constructivist approach questioned the authoritative role of the sender of knowledge and passive that of the receiver of knowledge and viewing of knowledge as an entity or object. Constructivists discarded the idea that information is a pill that an individual can gulp in order to receive information, rather they viewed it as a plastic ingredient that take different shapes and forms. The receiver of information is not a passive receiver or user of knowledge but actually plays an active role and makes sense of the surrounding realities and attaches personal images while giving meanings to received information.

Cognitive constructivism describes how needed information, search behaviour and the processing of that information is directed and influenced by the cognitive and emotional states of minds of the individuals and other situational and work related factors. Hence, in the light of this information need, search behaviour and mental processing of the received information, cognitive constructivists have paved way for a background for studies of internet search behaviour, interactive and user-friendly information retrieval systems, and conceptualisation of information processing. Hence, from cognitive constructivist perspective, “uncertainty” is a vital concept, denoting to the cognitive and affective positions of the individual in various stages of problem-solving (Kuhlthau, 1993), and the degree and structure of available knowledge for decision making (Bystrořm and Jařvelin, 1995; Vakkari, 1999).

### **3.5.2. Socio-cognitive or collectivism**

Socio-cognitive perspective is influenced by the “social constructivist theory” of Vygotsky (1978). Unlike cognitive constructivist approach based on the work of Piaget who posited that people create knowledge through their actions in the world; Vygotsky believed that for formation of knowledge not only cognitive processes but social milieu are also important. Apparently there seems some overlapping between cognitive constructivism and socio-cognitivism, whereas there is difference between the two. From cognitive perspective, creation of knowledge is mainly a mind game, i.e. an individual observes something/information and then makes a model of that something/information in the form a concept, picture or schema and gives meaning to it and interprets it in his or her own words. Hence, mental processing has the dominant role in the creation of knowledge. On the other hand, collectivist or socio-cognitive perspective accepts and highlights the role of both mental modelling and social

world, but, assumes the role of social world to be more powerful and significant in the process of the formation of knowledge.

Vygotsky (1978) argued that understanding, predominantly is a social phenomenon in origin and the formation and development of knowledge takes place within a socio-cultural context. Development of individuals' thoughts and beliefs tends to be determined through social interaction with others where cultural meanings are formed by individuals and groups and ultimately adopted by the people. Socio-cognitive perspective assumes that individuals create knowledge through interacting with the external environment and this process changes both the individual and the external environment. Thus, this perspective acknowledges the dialectical link between the individual and the socio-cultural milieu for the formation of knowledge.

Socio-cognitive approach has been influenced by "action theory" suggested by Vygotsky (1978) and Leontiev (1981) in Hjørland and Albrechtsen's (1995) which proposes that "individuals live within a physically, socially and subjectively constructed world, and that living and acting in this world constitutes knowledge" (Jacob and Shaw, 1998, p. 142). Since information is constructed through and embedded within actions, therefore it offers an internal determinant for succeeding actions and as a result of that modifies individuals' internal knowledge. Through this process, individuals as actors construct internal knowledge about various facts, thoughts, concepts, values and events through an ongoing interaction between their internalised knowledge and their participation in the external world (Jacob and Shaw, 1998).

The socio-cognitive perspective in information sciences and collectivist paradigm were suggested as alternative to individualistic, behaviourist and user-psychological approaches to knowledge formation. The pivotal supposition of collectivism is that it is not a good idea to psychologise the factors like users of knowledge and needs of knowledge and the relevance of that knowledge to them since they are social and cultural entities (see Hjørland, 1998).

Collectivist approach aims at focusing on field or contextual differences and relevance criteria in information processing whereas cognitive approach tends to adopt a person-centred approach focusing on individual differences. Among collectivist approaches, “domain analysis”, particularly adopts a “sociological-epistemological” perspective of information processing, instead of a “user-subjective view”. The basic assumption of domain analysis (Hjørland and Albrechtsen, 1995) is that scientific domains have different languages, relevance criteria and ontological and epistemological commitments.

### **3.5.4. Social Constructionism**

Proponents of constructivism disagree with the objective stance towards knowledge and its formation and claim knowledge to be a socially constructed phenomenon (Gergen & Gergen, 1991). Instead of focusing on the cognitive processes, they highlight the social construction of knowledge through inter-subjectively shared meaning and language. The social constructivist approach is based on the idea that the terms through which the world is understood are social artefacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people (Gergen, 1985, p.276). Knowledge creation is a coordinated initiative of individuals and therefore subjects to similar mechanism that illustrate any human interaction (e.g., interaction, negotiation and rhetoric). As Gergen and Gergen (1991) explain: "Accounts of the world ... take place within shared systems of intelligibility-usually a spoken or written language. These accounts are not viewed

as the external expression of the speaker's internal processes (such as cognition, intention), but as an expression of relationships among persons" (p. 78). Opposing to cognitive or collectivist perspective, focus here is on making of meaning through collective generation of meaning as shaped by discourse through the use of language and other social processes (Schwandt, 1994).

Constructionism or social constructionism, in a broader sense is other name to “the linguistic turn” in social sciences. The fundamental postulation of constructionism is that the frontiers of social knowledge are determined by conversations that classify the world and give meaning to it (Hall, 1982). Discourses are producers of knowledge, entities that offer an effective and practical foundation for forming knowledge on a particular topic (Foucault, 1972). With regard to the formation of knowledge, in cognitive constructionism, the primary focus remains on mental processes; in socio-cognitive constructivism, the focus remains on external world and in social constructionism the primary focus remains on linguistic processes (Talja, et al., 2005). Being overtly a language-based theory, constructionism does not subscribe to the concepts like cognitive space, cognitive processes, mental representations or knowledge structures with regard to the formation of knowledge. Rather, constructionism perceives language as a cardinal factor for the construction of information and the formation of meanings and replaces the concept of “cognition” with “conversations” and speaks in terms of dialogues, words, vocabularies and articulation. From constructionist perspective, conversation is the necessary pre-condition for the composition of social world, information and identities. Social reality is formed and organized by the use of language in two way communication between individuals (Talja, et al., 2005).

Dialogic theories were presented in early 1920s and 1930s which criticised individualistic and cognitive assumptions of human knowledge formation (Bakhtin, 1981; Volosinov, 1986).

Later on, Wittgenstein's language philosophy highlighted the fundamentally and practically social nature of conversational practices. Wittgenstein emphasized that when individuals produce linguistic demonstrations of their ideas, beliefs and emotions, they actually involve in historically designed ways of the use of language. Subsequently, Harold Garfinkel (1976) pioneered an ethno-methodological research approach that focuses on the normal practices through which ordinary social life is inter-subjectively formed and on how the language is used to establish the neutrality, factuality and accountability of rationalizing and decision making. Harvey Sacks, based on the contribution of Garfinkel, suggested a methodology which was later called "conversation analysis". Raymond Williams (1983), Volosinov (1998) and Hall (1996) and Grossberg's (1996) succeeding work on "articulation theory" have been some significant influences on the linguistic-turn in human or social sciences. Famous seminal work of Foucault's (1972), "The Archaeology of Knowledge" delineated the "discourse analytic approach", a perspective that is often observed and perceived as a substitute to constructionism. Discourse analysis, has also a close connection with "genre analysis" and "rhetoric" which were the well-known forms of critical thinking from olden times till the eighteenth century. This does not mean that all "discourse analytic" approaches apply constructionist traditions of knowledge formation, rather what is common between constructionism and these approaches is convergence that discourse analysis studies make use of the units of language bigger than merely sentences and paragraphs (Talja, et al., 2005).

According to constructionism, knowledge is produced in "systems of dispersion" (Foucault, 1972). The formation of knowledge is always context driven, not based on a pure reflection of a single position, but with multiple impressions due to multiple positions and contexts (Bowker and Star, 1999). Thus, while cognitivism and collectivism believe that mental models of individuals or discourse communities have a comparatively stable system and existence,



constructionism believes that the words of any language do not carry constant or stable meanings “through the changing occasions of their use” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 40). Hence, constructionism promotes the context dependent and argumentative nature of the use of language in the production of knowledge; and embraces a “rhetorical-responsive” view of the language and disagrees with the approach that views language as a de-contextualised system in which words have relatively stable meanings (Shotter, 1993, pp. 13-14).

Social Constructivist approach in information science assumes that knowledge and knowledge needs are produced through existing dialogues, i.e. linguistic and conversational constructs (Tuominen and Savolainen, 1997). For instance, Frohmann (2001), argue that when information scientists consider knowledge needs, relevance criteria, and users’ sense-making or keywords, they mostly tend to be focusing on public practices of the use of language. Hence, both constructionist studies and “domain analysis” (Tuominen et al., 2003) believe that information seeking, formation and retrieval occurs within the frontiers of particular discourses, paradigms and contextual positions. Constructionism, however, involves a more direct focus on rhetoric, argumentation and use of language and takes on that knowledge is constructed from different viewpoints as a result of ongoing conversations and suggests organizations and research strategies for fostering conversations, mapping and visualising literatures and debates (Talja, et al., 2005).

Organizations generally tend to rely on languages and linguistic products for saving and retrieving the information, since documents and files consist of words. Therefore, information science has a direct relationship with the issues relating to vocabularies, discourse and language (Buckland, 1999). Constructionist approach can be applied as a guideline in taking on the issues of document representation. Constructionist theory can also be applied in designing of

databases, digital libraries, user interfaces and filtering systems (see Baker et al., 2002; Karasti et al., 2002; Tuominen et al., 2003). Constructionist approach and discourse analytic methods have also been used in improving user-friendly systems, preparation of manual and automatic indexing, designating of digital library thesaurus building, and applied in fields including sociology, language technology and computer science and IS (for exceptions, see Talja et al., 1997, 1998).

### 3.6. Barriers to Knowledge Sharing

Many organizations fail to either properly implement the process of knowledge sharing or remain deprived of the fruits of the same, mainly due to being unaware or ignorant of the potential barriers to knowledge sharing. Therefore, it is very much essential that these barriers which consist of a list of personal and organizational factors, should be thoroughly understood and taken into consideration by the organizations, if they are serious in leveraging the benefits of knowledge sharing and promoting an environment of knowledge sharing within their company premises (Reige, 2005).

Knowledge as power, perceived lack of job security and inequalities in job status power and position can be potential barriers to organizational knowledge sharing. In the classical school of thought, where profitability was dominant factor among the organizations' motives and objectives, knowledge hoarding instead of sharing was perceived to be benefitting one's career development. Knowledge sharing, on the other hand, was considered undermining an employee's job position, power or status within the company (e.g. Tiwana, 2002; Probst et al., 2000). Even in these days, an element of fear, many a times, is seen amongst the employees that knowledge sharing may create concerns of job security for them. Since, employees in many cases, tend to be uncertain about repercussions of sharing knowledge especially with respect to the moods and reactions of their management about sharing of a particular type of knowledge (Lelic, 2001). Furthermore, middle and lower level workers often intentionally don't share their knowledge, keeping in mind that if they appeared to be more knowledgeable than their superiors then they may not promote them. For example, Michailova and Husted (2003) noted that Russian managers were observed to be often dissatisfied and reluctant to work with people or learn from them who were lower than them in rank or position. Lack of good interpersonal relationship among the organizational members tends to be another reason

for not sharing the knowledge especially when the knowledge possessors and potential receivers may not be working in the same department or the team. Furthermore, some individuals try to keep proprietorship of their work with them in order to gain appreciation or recognition from their peers against their work (Rowley, 2002; Murray, 2002; Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2001); others seem to share their knowledge if they see some material benefit linked with sharing of knowledge or if they want to support some of their colleagues (Wheatley, 2000).

On the other side, inadequate or unjustifiable distribution of organizational resources such as skilled staff, funding, information and communication technology, can also affect the development of an effective and conducive environment for knowledge sharing. On the other hand, provision of an appropriate infrastructure, sufficient resources to support knowledge sharing practices among organizational members and within functional areas is the fundamental aspect of a successful KM program (Schlegelmilch & Chini, 2003). However, sharing practices according to Gold et al. (2001), usually fail before they begin, because of the absence of basic infrastructure and sharing capabilities. Davenport (1997) suggested the use of financial incentives to induce employees to share knowledge, but many scholars deem it expensive. Therefore, appropriate systems and resources to facilitate knowledge flows and collaborations need to be applied. Additionally, in order to become successful, the knowledge sharing strategy needs to be aligned with strategic aims and objectives of the organizations (Hansen et al., 1999; Doz & Schlegelmilch, 1999). In the light of this discussion, it should be the responsibility of the top leadership of the organizations to circulate the strategic goals to all organizational units and members to seek their support. However, it is generally observed that this circulation of goals and managerial instructions tend to be either too big or too vague, failing to provide needed guidance to employees (Matzler. et al., 2008).

### 3.7. Knowledge Sharing in Medical Profession

Although knowledge sharing is very critical for the success of any organization, but in medical profession, it has an especial place. Without sharing of knowledge, neither doctors can perform their duties well, nor nurses and other paramedical staff. In medical profession, especially in big hospitals, doctors, nurses and paramedical staff work like communities of practice and they constantly share their knowledge; rather their work tends to be completely dependent upon sharing of knowledge within the members of the teams, i.e. between doctors and nurses, nurses and paramedical staff and between doctors and nurses mutually. Nurses need to inform the doctors about the condition of patient time by time and junior doctors tend to inform the senior doctors regarding the condition of the patients and senior doctors are supposed to educate the junior doctors. Based on this, it is important to take the insights from the available literature on the importance of knowledge management and mechanisms of knowledge sharing in medical profession. That is why, within the context of service quality improvement, policy makers of the medical profession have promoted knowledge management as a fundamental source of improving service quality, particularly with respect to ‘patient safety’ (Currie and Suhomlinova 2006; Bate and Robert 2002). Research findings indicate that with respect to service delivery, as many as at least 10% of the hospital patients experience some form of error internationally (WHO, 2004). Therefore, patient safety and clinical risk have come to the forefront of international health policy, by introducing vigorous learning systems in the field of healthcare services around the world (Waring & Currie, 2009). Such systems in the health context are implemented in countries like USA, UK and Australia as a tool for facilitating learning (WHO, 2004). Clues regarding where to look for ways of enhancing the influence and effectiveness of knowledge network in the medical profession, lies in the creation of a network organisation of experience and good practice through the sharing of knowledge with knowledge network being the ‘lifeblood’ of the whole process (Bate & Robert, 2002). For example, sharing of knowledge

by doctors within hospitals can realize potential benefits and is crucial to survive and thrive in competitive environments (O'Dell & Grayson, 1998). Doctors and nurses tend to be the knowledge-intensive groups in hospitals and their theory as well as practice based knowledge is critical to the care of patients, and the determinant of quality of medical services being provided to public in the hospitals. Sharing of knowledge in this context among doctors and nurses becomes all-important in hospitals, because both doctors and nurses are supposed to be well informed, knowledgeable, creative and research-oriented in the medical profession (Ryu, et al., 2003). They need to be ready to capitalize on the availability of new knowledge opportunities through different organizational learning and development mechanisms (Lipshitz & Popper, 2000). This is very essential to achieve the high standards of service quality that tends to be ultimate goal of any hospital especially in public sector. To achieve this goal of high quality of patient care in medical institutions, academics and practitioners need to explore knowledge sharing behaviour of medical staff (Ryu, et al., 2003) and analyse the impact of cultural issues and other individual and organizational factors e.g. trust, affecting their knowledge sharing behaviours. Whereas despite such an overwhelming importance of sharing knowledge in the medical profession, no sufficient empirical studies regarding knowledge sharing have been conducted so far in this profession (Ryu, et al., 2003).

### 3.8. Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing

Despite a huge emphasis on organizational knowledge management, majority of the firms fail to exploit the benefits of knowledge management (KM) and knowledge sharing (KS), due to being unable to understand the antecedents to knowledge sharing (Witherspoon et al., 2013). Therefore, in order to enable the firms to capitalize on the benefits of knowledge management systems, and to make their knowledge sharing productive and effective, researchers have increasingly focused on antecedents or determinants of knowledge sharing (Witherspoon et al., 2013). The existing literature on determinants of knowledge sharing covers a wide range of factors mentioned in a number of research studies and research papers (Wijk et al., 2008). Most of the previous studies on antecedents to knowledge sharing have investigated too many factors in a fragmented manner. Some of these studies have investigated antecedents to knowledge sharing from inter-organizational perspective of knowledge sharing (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008), others have focused on intra-organizational knowledge sharing (Wijk et al., 2008) and still others investigated individual factors (Huang, 2003) and organizational factors, (Ryan et al. 2010). Likewise, some scholars have highlighted only one factor like organizational commitment (Hwang & Kim, 2007), transformational leadership (Liu & Phillips, 2011), knowledge-centred culture (Janz & Prasarnphanich, 2003), learning orientation (Matzler & Mueller, 2011) and social network-oriented ties in the organizations (Wijk et al., 2008). In the same way, some studies have discussed the influence of knowledge characteristics, like ambiguity on knowledge sharing (e.g. Simonin, 1999; Levin and Cross, 2004; Birkinshaw et al., 2002 & Szulanski et al., 2004) and others have examined organizational characteristics such as absorptive capacity and decentralization (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000), or attributes like trust and cultural distance (Lane et al., 2001). A final group of researchers have highlighted factors like innovativeness, new product development and financial performance etc. (e.g., Katila & Ahuja, 2002). However, after a continuous research of two decades, an organized

understanding of the fundamental processes and outcomes of knowledge transferability is still evasive (Wijk et al., 2008). Moreover, some of the studies on knowledge sharing antecedents have overlooked individual factors (Malhotra, Gosain, & Sawy, 2005) and others have missed the discussion of organizational factors influencing knowledge sharing (Ryan et al., 2010) and that is why there is still serious need for additional investigation of determinants of knowledge sharing (Alony, Whymark, & Jones, 2007). While maintaining consistency with the existing literature, the antecedents to knowledge sharing can be categorized as being individual and organizational (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Lu, et al., 2006). It is also notable that for efficient knowledge sharing, both individual and organizational factors are important and therefore understanding and comprehension of both streams of antecedents to knowledge sharing is necessary. In knowledge-intensive environment, firms cannot succeed and compete if they fail to make optimal use of the existing knowledge of their members by creating a culture of knowledge sharing (Teece, 1998). If firms want to succeed in a knowledge-based economy, they need to build appropriate mechanism (systems and processes) to collect, create and capitalize on the available knowledge (Kogut & Zander, 1992). However, the failure of organizations with regard to their endeavours to promote and facilitate knowledge sharing has been evidenced in many cases simply because sometimes organizations fail to create a knowledge promoting or learning culture and sometimes because of the reason that their employees tend to be reluctant in sharing knowledge with their colleagues (Lin, 2007), despite the presence of an encouraging culture of KS (Davenport et al., 1998). Based on the above discussion, it looks logical and necessary to discuss and study both individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing separately.



### 3.8.1. Individual Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing

#### a. Organizational Commitment

Numerous studies, including (e.g., Cullen et al., 2003; Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2001 & O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986) have reported organizational commitment as a very important variable affecting knowledge sharing. The extent to which an employee owns a particular organization and is identified with and involved in that organization is perceived as organizational commitment (Porter et al., 1974). It also includes a positive attitude towards fellow-workers working in that organization (Becker, 1992). Mowday et al. (1982; 1979) and Steers (1977) have provided solid grounds for a rich body of research on the topic of organizational commitment. According to Mowday et al. (1982), organizational commitment is “*the relative strength of an individual’s identification with, and involvement in a particular organization*” (1979, p. 226). Studies on organizational commitment have pinpointed a number of facets and forms of organizational commitment (Salancik, 1977; Reichers, 1985; Mowday et al., 1982). Meyer and Allen (1997) have combined various forms of organizational commitment into three kinds: “*Affective*”, “*Continuance*” and “*Normative*” commitment. Affective commitment relates to emotional attachment and involvement of an individual toward an organization; *Continuance commitment* refers to the feeling of continuous employment with one’s organization, keeping in view high costs of leaving and profits of being a part of it (Kanter, 1968), and *Normative commitment*; which refers to a feeling of being indebted and obligated towards the organization.

Being positively linked with organizational members’ willingness to make extra efforts to their work, organizational commitment is hence expected to be associated with their eagerness to share and receive their knowledge (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Individuals who keep a passionate feeling and ownership toward their organizations are more likely to share, whenever they feel

that their organization will benefit from their knowledge sharing (Hall, 2001, Van den Hooff & Van Weenen, 2004) since their commitment spurs their willingness to share their expertise with their co-workers so that their organization may benefit in long-run from their knowledge (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). For example, it was noted that organizational commitment is firmly linked with KS with fellow workers in sales force activities (MacKenzie et al., 1998), this epitomizes crucially a supportive context. This occurrence is further strengthened by Jarvenpaa and Staples (2001) who noted that strong commitment toward organization generates the idea among the individuals that their organizations have the right to the knowledge and expertise acquired by their employees. A number of researchers have studied the association between knowledge sharing and commitment (e.g., Smith & McKeen, 2002; Scarbrough, 1999; Hislop, 2002). Kelloway and Barling (2000) refer to numerous empirical research findings that endorse organizational commitment as forecaster of better individual outcome and based on their findings, they have suggested a model in which affective organizational commitment is positively linked with knowledge sharing.

### ***b. Self-Efficacy***

Individuals with higher perceptions of competency and sense of achievement are energized by internal motivation as a manifestation of self-efficacy, which is a kind of self-judgment of a person about his or her capabilities and talents (Bandura, 1977), that impacts the decisions about what behaviours to show, the amount of struggle to exert and the determination to apply while facing difficulties in the pursuit of achieving the desired goal or outcome (Lu, Leung, & Koch 2006). Self-efficacy is one of the foremost individual determinants of knowledge-sharing. Knowledge sharing self-efficacy which denotes an individual's attitude and stance

towards the importance and value of knowledge sharing comes out from theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982, 1977; Stone et al., 1996) which defines that an individual's acceptance to undertake, a task or challenge and gaining success partially derives from his or her beliefs about his or her capability and competence at a given task. As a common phenomenon, self-efficacy plays a critical role in affecting individuals' actions, endeavours and motivation toward the achievement of their goals (Igarria & Iivari, 1995; Bandura, 1982, 1986). This is a generally observed fact that people possessing high level of self-efficacy tend to show related behaviours for task achievement than others who possess lower level of self-efficacy (Schunk, 1990), since their intrinsic need of accomplishment coupled with a higher level of competency based traits, motivates them to perform higher and higher for a given task.

Logically, higher level of knowledge self-efficacy of an individual should result in more knowledge sharing because an individual's belief that his or her knowledge is valuable should enhance the likelihood of knowledge sharing (Witherspoon et al., 2013). The positive effect of self-efficacy has been recognized across a wide range of personality related aspects and behaviours (Lu, Leung & Koch, 2006). In the discussion of knowledge sharing, self-efficacy takes into account an individual's perception of his knowledge about any subject and his or her capability to positively contribute towards the existing body of knowledge about the subject or to guide someone by sharing of knowledge on that subject (Lu, Leung & Koch, 2006). Hence, knowledge self-efficacy can enhance inclination and enthusiasm to promote knowledge sharing (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). For instance, from a motivational perspective, research has provided evidence that self-efficacy positively influences the motivation and willingness to share knowledge with others (Hsu et al., 2007; Wasko & Faraj, 2005).

### ***c. Intention to Share***

Witherspoon et al., (2013) after the analysis of about over 8000 articles on knowledge management for their meta-analysis study about the antecedents to knowledge sharing, posit intention to knowledge sharing as a very strong individual antecedent to knowledge sharing. Witherspoon et al., (2013) define knowledge sharing intention as an individual's willingness to exchange his information, expertise or skills with others, with the expectation that the sharing will benefit either the receiver or the organization. Theory of planned behaviour (e.g. Lin & Fan, 2011; Kuo & Young, 2008) explains that actions and behaviours tend to be reliably based on intentions, meaning that knowledge sharing acts follow knowledge sharing intentions. On the other hand, theory based on self-presentation effects, can be applied to explain the contrary view that individuals can benefit from feigning i.e. deceptions which means that only pretending but practically not sharing the knowledge (Ridley, 1997). Based on the above two theories i.e. theory of planned behaviour and theory of self-presentation, a low correlation instead of strong one, may emerge between actual knowledge sharing and knowledge sharing intentions because, people generally fail to maintain consistency in their knowledge sharing intentions (Witherspoon et al., 2013).

### ***d. Reciprocity***

Anticipated reciprocal relationship has been perceived as a significant feature of benefit in social interaction (Chua, 2003) and is assumed to be a crucial factor for knowledge sharing; since individuals as a generally observed fact, give something to someone with the hope and expectation of getting something in return from the other party (Huang et al., 2008). The concept of reciprocity in the context of knowledge sharing refers to people's belief that their

knowledge sharing will result in the receiving of knowledge when they will need in their future knowledge related needs (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Hence the idea of reciprocity relates to mutual exchanges of knowledge that are perceived obligatory and fair among the two parties. This explanation recommends a positive link between knowledge sharing and reciprocity (Rheingold, 2000; Wellman & Gulia, 1999; Wasko & Faraj, 2000). The enthusiasm and inclination of members to share knowledge as a result of the norm of reciprocity could be underlined in the light of “Social Exchange Theory” (Hall, 2001; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). When this norm of reciprocity is strongly held among the individuals and groups, then the knowledge contributors may feel more obliged and enthusiastic for knowledge sharing (Wasko & Faraj, 2005). Previous research also indicates that anticipated reciprocity forms a positive stance towards knowledge sharing (Bock et al., 2005; Constant et al., 1994).

#### ***e. A Sense of Self Worth or Image***

It has been noted that positive feedback or appreciation from the receiver of the knowledge is a significant individual determinant of knowledge sharing, since the sharer wants the meaningful use of his or her shared knowledge and the same increases the self-worth of the sharer (Huang et al. 2008). Based on the idea of self-esteem, individuals prefer to increase perceived power and control while dealing within the environment of a given task (Constant et al., 1994). Individuals will be more inclined to share their knowledge when they feel that their shared knowledge is significant and meaningful for the people with whom they are sharing (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). Bock et al. (2005) have also endorsed a positive correlation between the attitude towards knowledge sharing and the sense of self-worth.

Based on the theory of Self-Determination, the feeling of self-worth includes the concept of intrinsic motivation toward knowledge sharing (Deci et al., 1989; Gagne & Deci, 2005; Deci & Ryan, 2002) establishes that individuals have natural needs of autonomy, achievement, competence, recognition, appreciation and satisfying relationship. Hence, intrinsic motivations for knowledge sharing relate to the degree to which participants enjoy recognition and appreciation by helping others through knowledge sharing and the Meta-analysis of Witherspoon et al. (2013) about antecedents to knowledge sharing has proved a positive correlation between individuals' level of intrinsic motivation and knowledge sharing. This has also been found that people generally prefer to draw their image as experts and respectable persons in their organizations. One way to develop this kind of image is to share professional knowledge with fellow workers (Ardichvili et al., 2006) When individuals share useful good knowledge, it can enhance their respect among their colleagues and can enhance the overall image of their personality in the organization (Constant et al., 1994).

#### ***f. A Sense of Helping Colleagues***

Inter-employee helping emanates from the notion of altruism (Organ, 1988), which refers to the discretionary behaviours that assist colleagues with job related problems and issues in the organization without any selfish intention (Lin & Joe, 2012). Extant literature suggests that inter-employee assistance and knowledge sharing are positively correlated (Siemsen et al., 2007). People generally looking after intellectual pursuits and having passion to help others, tend to be intrinsically driven to share knowledge with other fellow beings (Wasko & Faraj 2000, 2005). Where neither extrinsic rewards nor disciplinary measures can encourage employees for knowledge sharing (Gibbert & Krause, 2002), employees' passion to help others

is critical factor for knowledge sharing; since this helping attitude works as an intangible triggering factor for donating and sharing knowledge. Previous research provides the evidence that people who possess a spirit to help others are found enthusiastic in helping others within a professional network (Mergel et al., 2008), highlighting the positive link between knowledge sharing and inter-employee helping. Hence, professionals, who feel happy in assisting others, tend to be more likely to share their knowledge (e.g., Lin 2007; Lin & Joe, 2012).

### **3.8.2. Empirical Evidence**

Han (2018) has evidenced personality factors being important for KS and he has urged the managers and practitioners to identify the personal habits talents and tendencies of individual employees and integrate them with KS. For example regarding Consciousness he says, “The results for conscientiousness suggest that the individuals who are purposeful, strong-willed, hardworking and ambitious with regard to employment are more likely to share tacit and explicit knowledge with others” (Han 2018, P. 137). Openness is also very important factor Han (2018) in his Korean study evidenced employee openness being positively associated with KS as he noted “the results for openness suggest that the individuals with a willingness to accept and consider other opinions are more likely to share knowledge with others regardless of the knowledge type. Consistent with the findings of Zhao and Seibert’s (2006), the openness to experience is a significant positive predictor of knowledge sharing. They note, “this evidence confirms the idea that individuals who focus on intellectual curiosity are more likely to achieve positive work outcomes by sharing knowledge” (p. 137). Similarly, Zhao & Seibert (2006) evidenced the big five personality dimensions being directly linked with KS within organizations. Han (2018) also evidenced extraversion being an individual antecedent to KS.

Le et al. (2017) found employees' education being positively linked with their knowledge sharing behaviour.

Individual reputation has also been a significant factor in the discussion of the personality factors of individuals with regard to KS and this is empirically found by Zhang et al (2017) in a health-care sector-based study conducted in Chinese context and by Singh et al. (2017) in healthcare-based study conducted in India. Singh et al (2017) have also empirically found that a sense of confidence and competence among the employee has been positively co-related with KS within organizations.

A number of empirical research studies have evidenced self-efficacy being one of the strong individual antecedents to KS. For example, Zhang et al. (2017) have found self-efficacy being directly linked with knowledge sharing in a health-care based study conducted in Chinese context. Singh, Chandwani and Kumar (2017) have also found self-efficacy as a strong predictor of KS in their health-care based study conducted in Indian context. Similarly, Lekhawipat, Wei and Lin (2018) the cross-cultural study of Malaysians Indians and Chinese conducted by Mallasi and Ainin (2015) and also found positive link between self-efficacy and KS.

Literature on antecedents to KS suggest altruism and a passion to help others especially the colleagues as a very strong individual factor of KS. Studies of Zhang et al (2017), Singh, Chandwani and Kumar (2017) and Mallasi and Ainin (2015) have also found positive link between a passion to help others and knowledge sharing behaviours of employees.



Organizational commitment and KS go side by side and the same has been proved in multiple empirical studies. For instance, Li et al (2017) have found positive relationship between organizational commitment and KS as they note “The positive relationship between organizational commitment and knowledge sharing behavior is consistent with previous research (Lin, 2007a, b; Van den Hooff & De Ridder, 2004), indicating that people who are more committed to an organization are more likely to exchange knowledge with their co-workers/supervisors. And support was found for the mediating role of organization commitment in the relationship between interactional justice and knowledge sharing behaviour. This finding is consistent with Lin's view (Wang & Noe, 2010) that the perception of fairness affects the level of knowledge sharing through influencing employee's commitment to the firm”. (p.231). Similarly, in the In the empirical study of Hwang et al (2018) organizational commitment especially affective commitment and calculative were found to be positively correlated with the individuals' intention to knowledge sharing, whereas normative commitment was not found being positively correlated with Ks.

Rahman et al. (2015) evidenced attitude as a significant factor contributing towards KS as they note, “Workplace spirituality influences the attitudes of the employees to formalize a learning system where knowledge sharing plays a great role. In addition, learning organization is the result of the whole process of an organization where employees' intention or willingness to share their knowledge to optimize the organizational learning process which may convert the tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge” (p.325). Intention to share was proved having positive relationship with KS behaviour in the study of Razi et al. (2018). That is why Le and Lei (2018) after proving the impact of organizational leadership for KS emphasize, “Employees are the key factor in the KS process of an organisation, and thus changing

employee attitudes and behaviours towards KS is likely to be one of the most effective strategies for enhancing KS activities” (2018, p. 9).

The studies Caimo, A., & Lomi, A. (2015) Zhang et al (2017) and Guan, Wang, Jin and Song (2018) have found reciprocity as strong predictors of KS. For instance, Guan, Wang, Jin and Song (2018) note, “Knowledge exchange based on norms of reciprocity is an important factor affecting users’ continuous knowledge contribution behaviour. A user who frequently seeks for knowledge is more likely to contribute knowledge to others, indicating users contribute because they hold the expectation that they can get response to their own questions in the future, i.e. users contribute because of reciprocity. This conclusion is consistent with the study by Chiu et al. (2006), where they found that norms of reciprocity have a positive impact on quantity of knowledge sharing based on a survey of 310 members of a professional virtual community”(P.145). According to Barachini (2009) people share the knowledge for personal gains including recognition from colleagues and getting acknowledged by them and driving enjoyment from interacting with others.

Religiosity with regard to knowledge sharing behaviour was proved as a strong antecedent to KS in a cross-cultural study of Malaysians Indians and Chinese conducted by Mallasi, H., & Ainin, S. (2015). They note, “This study enriches the area of knowledge sharing behaviour and contributes to the literature by highlighting the significant role of religiosity as a moderator in the relationship between non-monetary factors and knowledge sharing behaviour, which has not been studied before in the context of knowledge sharing behaviour. Moreover, the interaction effects of religiosity with Malaysian ethnicities and different gender group on

knowledge sharing behaviour can be considered as an extension to the literature review in this field” (2015, p. 14).

Singh, Chandwani, and Kumar (2017) in their health-care related empirical study evidenced recognition and acknowledge being supremely important for effective KS within organizations. As they emphasize “the research provides insights on formulating incentive structures while designing and implementing knowledge management systems. Health care professionals are driven by the belief in the competence of their knowledge and pleasure in helping others when they share their knowledge on Web 2.0 rather than through extrinsic rewards like financial incentives and reciprocity. Hence, managers should design and implement systems such that they reinforce the self-efficacy and pleasure of sharing knowledge, for example, by recognizing and highlighting useful contributions and encouraging users to acknowledge the contributions of other members (p. 37).

## 3.9. Organizational Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing

### *a. Organizational Culture*

Organizational culture, according to many researchers (e.g., Oliver & Kandadi, 2006; Gold et al., 2001; Alavi & Leidner, 2001) is the most significant factor for effective organizational learning and knowledge sharing; since it determines beliefs, values, attitudes and processes that can facilitate or impede the process of learning and knowledge sharing within organizations (Schein, 1985). Extant literature on knowledge management supports the idea that organizational culture directly influences the process and pattern of organizational knowledge sharing. Knowledge culture within organizations supports knowledge systems and organizational members recognize KS as a normal and routine activity of their everyday working (McDermott & O'Dell, 2001).

Organizational or corporate culture according to Denison (1990) and Smircich (1983) helps in understanding the reasons of the success and failure of different initiatives since it unveils trends in organizational behaviour. In the light of the 'dynamic perspective' as suggested by (Sackmann) 1991, 1993, corporate culture is defined as "the basic beliefs commonly-held and learned by a group, that govern the group member's perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions and that are typical for the group as a whole" (Sackmann, 2003, p. 59). Thus, organizational culture includes manifestations of basic beliefs, norms and values that affect thoughts, perceptions and attitudes of employees (Sackmann, 1991) and are influenced and shared by all organizational members (Golden, 1992). Owing to shared corporate norms and values; common identification, motivation, cooperation and commitment can be attained, that can positively influence working of an organization (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Logically, knowledge sharing activities are only fruitful if they align with cultural norms and values of

organizations (Davenport et al., 1998). From this perspective, the terms “knowledge culture” (Oliver & Kandadi, 2006), “learning culture” (Schein, 1992), and “knowledge-friendly culture” (Davenport et al., 1998) are coined by different scholars. Learning culture is generally expected to have a drastic impact on individual, group, as well as overall organizational learning (Gold et al., 2001; Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Mikkelsen & Gronhaug, 1999).

An organization’s culture should promote knowledge sharing by giving full support and incentives as well as encouraging knowledge-sharing related activities and providing conducive environment for accessibility and exchange of knowledge. Some scholars of management, highlight technology for effective managing and sharing of knowledge, whereas; it is notable that KS is a business process and practice, which itself can’t make knowledge management successful. Based on this, DeTienne & Jackson, (2001) and Pitman (1994) suggest that the most efficient knowledge management systems should focus on developing and strengthening organizational cultures, especially knowledge-centred cultures or learning cultures to ensure effective knowledge sharing. Moreover, a learning organizational culture has been identified as indication of an organization’s efficiency and competitiveness and the same can be a strategic asset of organizations to achieve competitive advantage. Based on this, if organizations want to achieve competitive advantage, they need to create learning culture (Hult et al., 2002).

### ***b. Organizational Absorptive Capacity***

In the knowledge management literature, organizational absorptive capacity has been discussed as one of the prominent factors for creation and sharing of knowledge within organizations (Lane et al., 2001). Numerous previous studies posit that absorptive capacity plays a significant

role in organizational knowledge sharing and the ability of the firms to innovate new products and services (Knudsen & Roman, 2004; Cohen, & Levinthal, 1990). Absorptive capacity relates to an organization's ability to identify, gather, process and utilize new existing knowledge (Zahra & George, 2002). It also includes the willingness and motivation of the members of an organization to collect external knowledge and their ability to apply that knowledge for enhancing the organizational efficiency. In the view of Zahra and George (2002), organizational absorptive capacity tends to have four dimensions: first acquisition, second assimilation, third transformation, and fourth exploitation. Out of these four, acquisition and assimilation refer to potential absorptive capacity, and transformation, and exploitation refer to realized/achieved absorptive capacity. Minbaeva et al. (2003) have investigated the influence of absorption capacity on the ability of an organization to exploit and utilize the previously collected knowledge. They mentioned employees' capability and motivation being a critical factor of an organization's capacity of absorbing new knowledge. Numerous other empirical studies have tested that a firm's absorptive capacity positively contributes towards the generation and sharing of knowledge within and across units (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Szulanski, 1996). Zahra and George (2002) have documented the available empirical work on organizational knowledge absorptive capacity. Liao et al. (2007) and Knudsen and Roman (2004) have also empirically proved positive correlation between a firm's knowledge sharing capability and absorption capacity.

### ***c. Technology***

Technology and especially information technology plays crucial role in the creation, transfer and sharing of organizational knowledge (Kharabsheh, 2007; Neches et al., 1991). An organization's infrastructure of information technology encompasses the systems and tools,

supporting and facilitating the process of knowledge transfer within and outside the boundaries of an organization (Bechina & Bommen, 2006). In the presence of multiple search engines, websites and other internet sources of emailing, video conferencing and online messaging; it is not difficult to understand and estimate the impact of technology on the transfer and dissemination of information all around the globe. Technology tools facilitating knowledge sharing also include: databases, knowledge directories, discussion forums, electronic bulletin boards, groupware, intranets, personal web pages, electronic libraries and many more (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). For example, employees can be trained how to use systems of knowledge sharing and also to detect knowledge sharing traits through *E-learning* program (Wild et. al., 2002). Many organisations for example, develop knowledge maps whereby they facilitate their employees with regard to expertise in any area and mode of communication for access of knowledge. This helps employees in locating and accessing the people they need to resolve their daily routine work related problems (Desouza & Awazu, 2003). This is worth mentioning that information technology not only provides the infrastructure that provides connections that foster knowledge transfer, but it also inspires the organizational members to share knowledge (Kharabsheh, 2007).

#### ***d. Interpersonal Relationships and Social Networks***

Interpersonal relationship, social networks and social trust relate to employees' relations with their colleagues within the organizational set up (Chow & Chan, 2008). According to Witherspoon et al. (2013), social trust denotes the extent to which individuals think that other people are open, honest, sincere and reliable. Generally, higher degrees of mutual trust and stronger networks of social relationship, lead to higher amounts of knowledge sharing

(Witherspoon et al., 2013). Castelfranchi and Falcone, (2002), note that interpersonal relations and knowledge exchange tend to be positively correlated, since social network based ties tend to be crucial to knowledge exchange through the mediation of trust based relationship (Levin et al., 2002). For instance, this has been observed that organizational members tied with strong social ties, tend to donate knowledge with the understanding that they own a social network of mutual cooperation-based ties to support the individual who seeks help or shares knowledge in performing the job (Castelfranchi & Falcone, 2002). Researchers (e.g., Newell et al., 1999) have specifically argued that good interpersonal interactions based on mutual trust and cooperation can support knowledge sharing by endorsing a group identity, improving communication and accelerating the frequency of meetings (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). Such interactions probably can also help to eliminate the cultural differences, regardless of being national or corporate, existing in organizations.

Increasing number of empirical findings posit that strong and reliable ties among organizational members lead to better knowledge transfer (Reagans & McEvily, 2003; Rowley et al., 2000). It is assumed that strong social bonds lead the firms to magnify efforts confirming that knowledge donors and seekers sufficiently understand and capitalize on the acquired knowledge (Hansen et al. 1999). Additional to strong ties, existing research studies argue that interpersonal trust among the organizational members regulates organizational knowledge sharing (Szulanski et al., 2004); since it triggers partners' inclination to help access and understand new existing knowledge (Lane et al., 2001). Trust denotes the belief of trustor that the trustee is reliable and that he or she will fulfil his or her promise (Inkpen, 2007). Although preceding research has provided evidence that mutual trust facilitates knowledge sharing within organizations, some researchers argue that a higher degree of trust may cause collective



recklessness inhibiting the creation and utilization of new knowledge (Yli-Renko et al., 2001; Lane et al., 2001).

#### ***e. Team Orientation***

A predominant view about team orientation is that group working is more desirable than individual working because teams can be more fruitful, efficient and effective than separate individual working (Chen & Huang, 2007; Alavi et al., 2005). Cooperative learning theory (Gilles & Adrian, 2003) argues that the outcome of the group will be increased if the group members possess common goals, feel collective group responsibility for performance, assist or guide the fellow members regarding the required skills for performing duties and time by time keep on assessing overall group performance and contribution.

Teamwork and interpersonal trust tend to be best indicators of peer collegiality in the process of knowledge sharing, since these are crucial for meaningful interpersonal relationships (Lu, Leung & Koch, 2006). In knowledge-based organizations according to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), teams tend to be major performing units and healthy teamwork mostly contributes to knowledge sharing. Team-orientation creates a sense of mutual cooperation and provides possibilities for organizational members to learn from their fellow workers who are senior to them or willing to help other team members through working together, watching out for one another and sharing information (Janz, 1999). Teams also play a critical role in the creation of new knowledge through dialogue and exchange of ideas (Nonaka, 1991). Teamwork is also likely to discourage team members from the tendency of free-rider which refers to only receiving the knowledge from others and not contributing while deeming knowledge as a common asset (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). Furthermore, teams facilitate communication

channels for both knowledge sharers and seekers to share their thoughts and ideas and this exchange of knowledge results in superior organizational functioning (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). These kinds of behaviours actually provide foundation for learning and knowledge sharing activities. On the whole, it can be concluded that teamwork can promote strong social ties among team members characterized by mutual cooperation and trust and consequently promotes knowledge sharing trends and behaviours (Jones & George, 1998).

#### ***f. Organizational Support***

Organizational support means that an organization considers the welfare of its workers in a real sense and seriously appreciates their contributions (Lynch, 1997). To explain this construct, it can refer to three dimensions. First is the 'manager's attitude' which is based on the notion that supportive and encouraging attitude of a manager is crucial for the effective knowledge sharing (Davenport et al., 1998) and the second is that of 'training', which is also widely known as a significant element of effective knowledge sharing (Davenport et al., 1998), since it equips organizational members with the necessary aids and attitudes needed for acquiring and sharing of knowledge. 'Sanctions' is the third dimension of organizational support which refers to the cultivation and promotion of desirable behaviours that are effective in persuading collaboration in social interactions (Yamagishi & Sato, 1986). Sanctions includes both positive and negative actions and measures taken by organizations to the limit that sharing of knowledge may be appreciated and rewarded, and knowledge hoarding may be penalized, to make knowledge sharing both successful and effective (Brock and Kim, 2002). However, compared to coercive, positive measures are more productive and majority of the firms know the effects of positive side of sanctions on the process of knowledge exchange (Lu et al., 2006). Organizational support also includes participants' beliefs relating to the extent that the management promotes

conducive atmosphere for sharing of knowledge, and provides leadership for the same (Uday et al., 2006). The belief of the organizational members that management values knowledge sharing should facilitate knowledge transfer among employees (Witherspoon et al., 2013). Keeping in view self-efficacy (a very important individual determinant of knowledge sharing), organizational support can create self-efficacy for knowledge sharing by instilling confidence and infusing a sense of achievement among organizational members. Maurer, Pierce, and Shore (2002) have noted that the availability of developmental opportunities and supervisory support enhances self-efficacy of workers. Training has also been found to improve self-worth and the same affects knowledge sharing (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002). In short, presumed organizational support facilitates knowledge sharing through enhancing self-efficacy.

### ***g. Decentralized Organizational Structure***

A considerable number of research studies have discussed the pros and cons of diverse organizational structures and the way they impact knowledge sharing within organizations and according to Zhou and Fink (2003), organizational structure is more important than organizational culture and information technology for effective knowledge sharing. Researchers argue that a flexible and informal organizational structure supports KS (De Long & Fahey, 2000). On the contrary, a strict focus on internal regulations (punishing mistakes and failures) and hierarchies create a workplace environment where people are expected to comply organizational rules and regulations, formalities and procedures, thereby impeding effective knowledge sharing practices (Michailova & Husted, 2003).

According to knowledge perspective of organizations, a centralized organizational arrangement for coordination is unsuitable. This is mainly because tacit knowledge which according to many scholars, is sensitive and at the same time the actual treasure of knowledge for the companies, can best be shared directly through interpersonal interaction among the participants (Grant, 1997). Grant suggests that (1996), when firms are acknowledged as entities integrating knowledge, a major portion of which is tacit, which can be shared only by those who possess it, then hierarchical boundaries disturb it. Hence, a centralized hierarchical set-up impedes open communication within departments and units and hampers occurrence of the exchange of ideas (Woodman et al., 1993). A centralized structure may also cause distortion in the flow of ideas due to filtration or reduction of some of the contents of message (knowledge) based on the feeling or fear as to what would be desirable or acceptable to the higher-level officials. Therefore, centralization is adversely correlated with knowledge transfer within organizations (Tsai, 2002). A flatter, decentralized structure on the other hand offers firms the needed flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing business setting (Sanchez & Mahoney, 1996). Decentralized structure can also foster timely sharing of knowledge, since it promotes empowerment among organizational members, which means that the employees are encouraged to take initiatives at their own and the same results in enhanced knowledge transfer (Tsai, 2002). Due to elimination of hierarchical barriers, decentralized structures also allow more spontaneous knowledge sharing among employees (Hopper, 1990).

#### ***h. Employee Empowerment***

Employee empowerment or authority indicates the degree to which the employees of a firm, in the capacity of being an individual or group enjoy the independence, power and authority to

decide which actions are needed and how best they can be achieved (Manz & Sims, 1980). Extant literature suggests that knowledge workers signify the need of autonomy and authority more than any other aspect of their job (Goldstein & Rockart, 1984). Based on this, Nonaka (1991) notes that self-motivated individuals or teams tend to be critical success factor for creating a knowledge company. In the domain of organizational behaviour and learning, according to Janz (1999), empowerment includes organizational authority and responsibility for goal setting, task scheduling, work managing, process monitoring, and assigning the members' duties, as well as motivating them for upgrading their knowledge and delegating them authority to do experiments and allowing them reasonable amount of risks. Empowerment is perceived as a crucial variable of learning culture that promotes learning both at individual as well as group level (Slater & Narver, 1995). Moreover, it is also necessary that the employees should be upgraded in their skills to self-organize and update their knowledge while maintaining their communication networks to share their knowledge and suggest solutions to new or existing organizational problems (O'Dell & Grayson, 1998).

According to Hult et al. (2000), empowerment implies a critical cultural concept of "localness" which draws a drastic influence on organizational learning. *Localness* according to Burns & Stalker (1961), refers to a culture of an organization, characterized by decentralization, flexible job duties trouble free processes of communication. In a localized firm, employees are seen to be inclined to learn and share knowledge enthusiastically to enhance organizational productivity and effectiveness. Additionally, group autonomy infuses a strong sense of knowledge sharing which signifies the decentralized set up of organizations as an important feature of organizational knowledge transfer (Schulz, 2001).

### *i. Transformational Leadership*

Transformational leadership generally tends to have a positive impact on individual as well as group working (Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders tend to be capable of realigning employees' norms and values and inspiring them to achieve higher standards of performance through the use of their power of personal expertise, charisma and inspirational motivation (Liu & Phillips, 2011). The potential influence of efficient or transformational leadership on knowledge sharing is also enormous. Considering the impact of transformational leadership on organizational culture and working, this has mostly been noted that organizational knowledge sharing will be congruent with individual values and organizational culture (Brock et al., 2005). Quite reasonably, efficient leadership will encourage an organizational culture in which employees would feel motivation to share their knowledge, since KS does not emerge automatically in a team, and team-leader has to play a critical role in making it possible (Srivastava, et al., 2006). On the other hand, it is already empirically tested that extrinsically motivated knowledge sharing trends such as organizational rewards are less effective than intrinsic factors such as employee self-efficacy etc. (Lin, 2007).

A belief that transformational leadership may be an important antecedent to knowledge exchange is also conceptually aligned with the social capital paradigm on organizational efficiency. As Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), argue that social capital is crucial for sustaining competitive advantage since it develops the foundation for mutual trust and collaboration among the individuals and groups which is essential element of effective knowledge-sharing. Moreover, knowledge sharing research has endorsed psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) being an important concern in the discussion of knowledge sharing. For effective knowledge transfer, teammates must feel that the team's working is characterised by mutual trust and that interpersonal risk instead of being punished will be rewarded. Quite logically, transformational

leader plays a critical role in promoting high levels of psychological safety among organizational members and more significantly, in infusing a sense of trust (Liu &Phillips, 2011).

#### ***j. Shared Vision and Goals***

Shared vision relates to the processes within social ties that provide manifestations of collective systems of ideas, meanings, interpretations and representations (Nahapiet &Ghoshal, 1998). It fosters a sense of common shared thoughts and appropriate styles of performing in a social set up. Galer and van der Heijden (1992) referred to ‘congruence of goals among individuals’ while defining shared vision. If the organizational members have convergence on knowledge sharing as a crucial element for superior organizational performance; then it is expected that knowledge sharing will take place. On the other hand, conflicting or divergent assumptions and goals reduce the likelihood of the organizational members to agree upon the importance, acquisition and utilization of knowledge; which will discourage knowledge sharing in that organization reducing the organization’s capability to respond successfully to market trends, problems or challenges as a consequence (Kharabsheh, 2007). Previous studies argue that shared vision and goals are critical cognitive factors of social relationship that affect knowledge sharing (Inkpen &Tsang, 2005). Common goals and shared values facilitate mutual understanding integrating different actors of knowledge sharing by providing a crucial bonding mechanism. According to Mowery et al. (1996), knowledge sharing in organizations is presumed to be eased by congruence in organizational systems, processes, practices and judgments (Lane et al., 2001). Hence, shared vision and values are expected to positively contribute toward better knowledge sharing within organizations (Kharabsheh, 2007).

### ***k. Reward System***

Incentives, based on the competitive instinct of human psychology and research on motivation, are triggering factors to optimize employee performance. Whilst the motive of making a profit is ultimate driver of most companies, for staff, it is the compensation package and incentives coupled with appreciation and recognition. There has been a continual debate, over the years, on the application of intrinsic and extrinsic reward mechanism systems to encourage the employees to share knowledge. A number of research studies suggested that the application an incentive system is essential for an effectiveness and successful sharing of knowledge within organisations. Bartol and Srivastava (2002) have investigated the effect of monetary rewards for boosting KS in organisations and found a positive influence of monetary rewards on knowledge sharing. In the same way Seimens, Kugel and Schostek (2004) examined the impact of financial incentives on knowledge sharing in German giant company Siemens and suggested that financial rewards looked to draw an instant effect on employees' enthusiasm toward knowledge sharing. However, they warned that this could result in two thinkable issues. Firstly, the quality of that shared knowledge can be inferior and second it can strengthen the concept of the employees that knowledge is a privately-owned asset (Kugel &Schostek, 2004).

On the other side, several authors maintain that the implementation of incentives or a reward system can rarely have a long term impact on knowledge sharing; since it looks unnatural, whereas it should be natural (O'Dell &Grayson, 1999). Moreover, Michailova and Husted (2003) argue that the application of incentive system for KS is unsuitable particularly in a hostile and less trusting environments, since any kind of rewards may create insecurity and jealousy among the organizational members. Therefore, managers instead of depending on rewards should inspire and compel their employees, in order to transform their organizations into knowledge-embracing cultures. Some previous studies on reward incentives argued that it



could have a little or negligible effect on employees' knowledge sharing behaviours (Bock & Kim, 2002; Bock et al., 2005; Quigley et al., 2007). These studies typically, investigated the direct linkage between rewards and the intention to knowledge sharing and discovered it to be insignificant or even dysfunctional (Bock & Kim, 2002; Bock et al., 2005). As far as the disciplinary measures are concerned, the intention to knowledge sharing cannot be forcibly changed simply by castigatory actions (Gibbert & Krause, 2002). The stance of "punishment" attributed to knowledge sharing is mainly labelled as latent punishment which refers to the extent to which people perceive they will be disapproved or expelled from a team on the account of not sharing knowledge. However, regardless of its effectiveness reward and recognition system seems to be an important measure to highlight the importance of knowledge sharing.

### ***I. Time Allocation***

Time allocation has also been recognized as an essential element for organizational knowledge sharing (Oliver & Kandadi, 2006). Since employees mostly remain busy in performing their organizational duties, resulting in less time for sharing their knowledge with their colleagues, therefore, a simple way to spur employees' endeavours to knowledge sharing is to assure them that they have enough time to share their knowledge (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Szulanski, 1996). Researchers (e.g., Hew & Hara, 2007) have found that lack of time is generally perceived by the employees as a major hurdle in knowledge sharing. In the study of Oliver and Kandadi, (2006), almost every respondent stressed on the allocation of time for learning and sharing of ideas. The respondents suggested that the role of team leaders and especially middle level managers is very critical in this context. 'Time allocation' was also pointed out as a key determinant of the difference of habits, behaviours and attitudes of employees regarding

knowledge sharing, within various departments and teams within a given organization. They further reported that it is not uncommon that some managers who possess predominantly short-term goals and targets, do not facilitate subordinates to spend proper time on knowledge sharing activities. Therefore, they suggested that the managers need to possess a long-term vision to develop a knowledge culture (Oliver and Kandadi, 2006). Krogh et al. (2000) also emphasized the allocation of time by the organizations illustrating 3M and Sencorp, wherein employees are motivated to use 15-20% of their time on knowledge sharing and brainstorming about new products and innovative ideas.

### 3.9.1. Empirical Evidence

A number of researchers and scholars have identified organizational culture being one of the most salient organizational antecedents to KS in their empirical research studies (e.g., Liu, 2018; Dasí, et al., 2017; Wei, & Miraglia, 2017; Chang et al., 2017; Siakas, Georgiadou, & Balstrup, 2010). For instance, the overarching impact of organizational culture can be analysed from this note of Wei and Mraglia (2017, p. 582) “Furthermore, our empirical evidence suggests that organizational culture can play a far-reaching role in determining not only (1) which knowledge can be transferred, but also (2) the conditions under which either sharing or hoarding are to be preferred, and (3) the extent to which it is acceptable to share or hoard one's knowledge”. While discussing the findings of their research, (Chang et al. (2017) note “Why learning organization is the best solution to bridge the gap between culture and capability? Based on the concept of McGill and Slocum (1994), OC can be distinguished into four types, such as the knowing culture, the thinking culture, the understanding culture, and the learning culture. It is apparent that OC is a culture equipped with knowledge based and learning-oriented. In addition, Jo and Joo (2011) claimed that learning organization culture was significantly associated with KS intention. Suveatwatanakul (2013) strongly supported that KS has been identified as a key aspect in developing the learning organization” (Chang et al., 2017, P. 482). Veer & Rowley, (2017), p. 376) highlight the crucial role of organizational leadership in instilling a brilliant and conducive organizational culture for effective sharing of KS within the organizations.

(Appel-Meulenbroek e t al. (2018) evidenced sharing of goals and problems being highly significant for effective KS within organizations. They noted, It is not new that shared goals create a collaborative attitude to behaviour during unplanned work-related meetings (Coman,

Robillard, Sillitti, & Succi, 2014). The results of this study thus confirm Hau et al.'s (2016) findings that having shared problems relates to both people in the meeting being more involved in the problem at hand and sharing more tacit knowledge. However, the study adds to existing knowledge that shared problems also relate to an increase in joint evaluation, which is a valuable KS move. The other "network" variable studied here, having intentional meetings, related to more meetings with questioning and performing actions together, which are also important KS activities. Such KS activities relate to both participants in the meeting being more involved than when they describe things to each other" (p.12).

Han (2018) and Al-Husseini and Elbeltagi (2018) evidenced organizational support as a key antecedent for facilitating KS within organizations. For example, Han noted "This finding implies that a feeling of belonging to an organization can affect whether the individuals act in good faith. It also confirms that the perceived organizational support leads to intentions of the individual for knowledge sharing. Furthermore, this finding supports the results of Lin and Lee's (2006) study that an organizational support climate affects the level and quality of knowledge sharing. This is effectuated by influencing the employee commitment to a knowledge management system" (Han 2018, p. 136). Le and Lei (2018) also found organizational support being very important for encouraging KS within organizations.

In a Korean-based study, Kim & Park (2017) have found positive relationship between organizational justice and KS. As they note "organizational procedural justice has a stronger impact on work engagement and secondly, because the direct and indirect effects of work engagement on knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour are stronger than those of the other variables examined" (p.12). Based on their findings, Kim and Parker (2017) while highlighting the importance of organizational justice, urge the firms, "given the positive

influence of organizational procedural justice on work engagement, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behaviour, organizations should make significant efforts to improve and maintain the level of formal procedural justice within organizations by not only sharing relevant information and providing useful feedback about their decision-making processes in transparent and fair ways, but also by actively listening to employee opinions and involving employee groups that encompass various work positions and the job areas involved in the process of making decisions. In addition, the results of the study reveal that the effects of organizational procedural justice on employee innovative work behaviour and knowledge sharing are stronger when they are mediated by employee work engagement. It implies that if organizations set up and implement transparent and fair procedures in decision-making, employees are more likely to repay them not only by being more engaged in their work but also by facilitating and encouraging knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour. Thus, it is noteworthy that organizational efforts regarding organizational procedural justice would be more effective and efficient when aligned with supporting work engagement” (p.12).

Le, and Lei (2018) have investigated the role of transformational leadership for creating a trusting culture for sharing of knowledge and have found the role of leadership being crucial for the effective sharing of knowledge within organizations. Wu and Lee (2017) have also empirically found the role of leadership being very significant for the sharing of knowledge within organizations as they note “this study argues that empowering leadership (positive leadership) can help subordinates have a better level of psychological capital (positive self-development), which makes subordinates more capable of performing knowledge sharing (reciprocation) to return leaders’ benefits. The empirical results of this study show that empowering leadership can enhance knowledge sharing by increasing the positive impact of

psychological capital” (p. 486). After verifying its significance, Veer & Rowley (2017) also recommended strong leadership for the strengthening of KS within organizations.

A number of research studies ( e.g., Dasi et al, (2017; Cabrera et al., 2006; Wang & Noe, 2010; Wang et al., 2011) have identified rewards especially direct or financial rewards being a good motivational tool for promoting KS within organizations and at the same time many studies (Aboelmaged, 2018; Han (2018; Kim, & Park, 2017; Foss et al., 2009; Gooderham et al., 2011; Osterloh & Frey, 2000) have found them non-supportive for ensuring effective sharing of knowledge within organizations. For instance Al-Husseini, S., & Elbeltagi, I. (2018) found a positive relationship of reward system and organizational sharing. They suggest that “under reward systems, employees are not only more likely to exchange their knowledge and experiences but also they seek different approaches to work” (p.30). Having found evidenced the non-workability of direct rewards many scholars ( e.g., Kim & Park, 2017; Zhang et al. 2017) have suggested indirect rewards and have highlighted the idea of intrinsic motivation (Dasi et al, 2017 Cabrera et al., 2006; Foss et al., 2009; Gooderham et al., 2011) for facilitating knowledge sharing within organizations.

Kim and Park (2017) evidenced empowerment being very important for KS within organizations as they note “We observe that job autonomy is relatively more important for knowledge sharing within business units where individuals perceive higher controllability over the way in which the knowledge they share is used (Ajzen, 1991, 2002)” (P. 441). Chmielecki and Sułkowski (2018) also found empowerment being critical factor with respect to KS and noted “When control over workers is increased, their commitment to work is reduced; this weakens the acquisition of knowledge, the pursuit of creative solutions, and the willingness to

share existing or new knowledge(p.110). Empowerment includes the empowerment of leadership also as (Wu & Lee, 2017) posit “With this theoretical framework, this study argues that empowering leadership (positive leadership) can help subordinates have a better level of psychological capital (positive self-development), which makes subordinates more capable of performing knowledge sharing (reciprocation) to return leaders’ benefits. The empirical results of this study show that empowering leadership can enhance knowledge sharing by increasing the positive impact of psychological capital” (P. 486).

Extant literature on antecedents to KS discusses organizational justice as a significant factor for the sharing of knowledge within organizations. While shedding light on the importance of organizational justice Cui et al (2018) note “where, arguably, organizational climate is characterized by higher ethical standards (Kasper-Fuehrer & Ashkanasy, 2001), employees tend to develop a higher level of social trust ( $\beta = .114, p \leq .05$ ). These findings also echo the research on institutional trust (Zucker, 1986), showing that when an organization is perceived as being trustworthy in its treatment of its employees, a norm 400 *Business & Society* 57(2) of trust is formed within it, and therefore employees tend to trust others more ( $\beta = .175, p \leq .01$ )” (p. 399). In a Korean-based study, Kim & Park (2017) have found positive relationship between organizational justice and KS. As they note “organizational procedural justice has a stronger impact on work engagement and secondly, because the direct and indirect effects of work engagement on knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour are stronger than those of the other variables examined” (p.12). Li, Zhang, Zhou (2017) have proved interactional justice being significant for KS.

Le & Lei (2018) emphasize that organizations need to promote ethical leadership to promote KS, as they note “First, to stimulate employees’ willingness to share knowledge, directors/managers should emphasise ethical leadership style practices by focusing on fair and balanced decision-making; conducting their personal lives in an ethical manner; discussing business ethics or values with employees; disciplining employees who violate ethical standards; and making decisions based on valid criteria. The findings highlight the important role of ethical leadership in promoting knowledge donating behaviour compared with knowledge collecting. The honesty, integrity, and ethical behaviour of ethical leaders have strong impacts on employees’ beliefs and ethical behaviour. As a result, by focusing on ethics, leaders might encourage employees to voluntarily and actively share their personal intellectual capital with their colleagues for the benefit and common development of the organisation. This is a significant finding because employees often fear losing their unique intellectual capital or expert power (Wang & Noe, 2010)” (Le & Lei, 2018, p. 10). On the other side, Barachini (2009) has evidenced the issue of the huge difference of salaries among employees being a very important factor and has and linked it with KS.

Some research studies have evidenced organizational resources being significant for effective knowledge sharing. For instance, Veer and Rowley (2017) have evidenced organizational resources being highly significant for organizational KS and they have recommended knowledge management offices, knowledge repositories, interactive web portals access to databases collaborative, inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional research projects etc. Lekhawipat, Wei, and Lin, (2018) have also evidenced organizational resources and especially technological resources being very much important for improved organizational KS. They have identified lack of organizational resources being a big barrier in the smooth sharing of knowledge within organizations.



### 3.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided theoretical foundations regarding the first construct/component of this research i.e., “Knowledge Sharing”, highlighting the concepts of “Knowledge Management” and “Knowledge Sharing”. The chapter started with the conceptualization of “Knowledge”; difference between data, information and knowledge; types of knowledge i.e. tacit and explicit knowledge; conceptualization of knowledge management; importance of knowledge management and the processes of knowledge management in the light of the existing literature on KM and KS. Extant literature testifies that knowledge management is still one of the most pivotal topics in the field of management research (e.g., Matzler, Rier, Hinterhuber, Renzl, & Stadler, 2005; Serenko & Bontis, 2004). The fundamental reason for the recent enthusiasm towards knowledge management is the conception that sidelining capital and labor, knowledge has become the strategic source of sustainable competitive advantage, for firms, industries and nations (Bell, 1973; Drucker, 1993; Reich, 1991). The chapter then discussed the conceptualization of “Knowledge Sharing”, strategic implications of KS and the processes of KS and social capital and knowledge sharing communities. Knowledge sharing among organizational members, within, and across teams opens the ways for the organizations to gain access to knowledge-based resources and capitalize on them (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; Damodaran & Olphert, 2000; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). The chapter also discussed the critical perspectives on KS especially cognitive, socio-cognitive and social constructionist perspectives on KS.

The researcher then discussed the “Individual and Organizational Antecedents” (determinants) to KS and the way these antecedents facilitate or impede the process of KS in organizations. The researcher linked the discussion with the existing literature and the available empirical

findings from the extant literature. In the light of the existing literature: Organizational Commitment; Self–Efficacy; Intention to Share; A sense of Self Worth or Image; Reciprocity and Helping colleagues have been identified as Individual antecedents to KS. On the other side, Organizational culture; Interpersonal Relationships and Social Networks; Team Orientation; Organizational Support; Decentralized Organizational Structure; Employee Empowerment; Transformational Leadership Shared Vision and Goals; Reward System; Time Allocation have been identified as organizational antecedents to KS. Next chapter will discuss the theoretical foundations regarding the second component of this research i.e. “Trust”. This will include the conceptualization of “Trust”, the way trust influences KS and the factors that are critical for building up “Interpersonal Trust” (antecedents to trust development).

## **Chapter Four**

### **Theoretical Foundation**

#### **TRUST AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING**

##### **4.0. Introduction**

Keeping in view the title of this research, “Influence of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment”, this research has three main components/constructs: “Knowledge Sharing”, “Trust” and “Culture”. Previous chapter discussed theoretical foundations about “Knowledge Management and “Knowledge Sharing” and determinants of KS; this chapter is focused on discussing the theoretical foundations of “Trust” and the way it influences “Knowledge Sharing”. Next chapter will discuss the third component of this research i.e., “Culture” and the way it influences KS and trust building.

An important research objective of this study is to explore the influence of trust on knowledge sharing, therefore it is very much essential to understand the conceptualization of trust and the way it affects knowledge sharing. Another important research objective of this study is to explore the antecedents (determinants) to interpersonal trust development. In the light of the above explanation, this chapter presents the key concepts, theories, contributions and findings in the light of the existing literature on trust and the way it influences knowledge sharing and discusses the antecedents to the development of interpersonal trust in a cross-cultural work setting. First section of this chapter throws light on the conceptualization of trust, explaining the salient features of the same. Second section discusses the interaction of trust and knowledge sharing and explains with the help of examples how trust influences knowledge sharing while giving details of the existing empirical work done in the field of trust and knowledge sharing.

Third section discusses the antecedents to interpersonal trust development including: trustworthiness, propensity to trust, affect, social group membership, confidentiality, commitment, loyalty, time spent, religiosity, shared values and organizational justice. Section four contains empirical evidence on influence of trust on KS and antecedents to interpersonal trust development.

## **4.1. Conceptualization of Trust**

Trust is one of the constructs that have achieved wide recognition from scholars and academicians from all over the world across fields and disciplines ranging from sociology (e.g. Lewis & Weigert, 1985), social psychology (e.g. Lewicki & Bunker, 1996) to, organizational behavior (e.g. Zaheer et al., 1998), strategic management (e.g. Barney & Hansen, 1994), economics (e.g. Williamson, 1993) and international business (e.g. Inkpen & Currall, 1997). This is perhaps because trust provides the foundation for any productive and successful interpersonal and professional relationship among individuals and organizations (Mayer et al., 1995). Many scholars (Fukuyama, 1995; Inglehart, 1999; Zak & Knack, 2001) believe that a nation's economic progress and global business growth is highly influenced by the extent of trust in any particular society. Moreover, trust provides the basis for all human systems of ethics and morality (Buchan, Croson & Dawes, 2002) and according to Putnam (2000) it is the very foundation of society and civilization and key to human progress in almost every walk of life (Haidt, 2006; Layard, 2005).

Researchers on trust, have highlighted the importance of trust in a number of ways: it can improve the satisfaction level of employees, performance and problem-solving capability

(Butler et al., 1999; Zand, 1972), can improve communication and enhance job commitment (Mayer & Gavin, 2005; Korsgaard et al., 2002) and can create citizenship behaviour (Akbar et al., 2010). It can also improve team performance (Dirks, 2000), knowledge sharing (Levin and Cross, 2004), manager subordinate working relationships and the firm's ability to adapt to complexity and change (Kramer, 1999). To achieve competitive advantage, organizations need to have resources that are rare, valuable and inimitable; so is the case of trust, which is a very important source for organizations to achieve competitive advantage (Bashyakar, & Mohandas, 2010) since it is rare, valuable and cannot be imitated by other organizations. From an inter-organizational perspective, trust plays the role of cost reducing and value enhancing factor through more productive and effective collaboration and sharing of information within the organizations (Madhok, 1995) and paving way for expanding a number of potential business associates (Zaheer et al., 1998; Gulati, 1995). From intra-organizational perspective, the extant literature posits a positive association between trust and collaborative working, within various organizational units, departments and divisions. While investigating the antecedents of organizational cooperation, Smith et al. (1995) found trust as a cardinal factor for ensuring cooperation within various units of organizations. Subsequently, Dirks and Ferrin (2001) after analyzing the role of trust in organizational settings, in the light of existing literature, conceptualized trust as directly or indirectly influencing factor on a number of organizational performance and behavior oriented outcomes. They argue that trust facilitates and moderates the impact of other variables on employee-performance or organizational behavior; since trust builds up the grounds over which the foundation of certain expected outcomes and results can be laid on. In another effort to elaborate the impact of trust on organizational working, McEvily et al. (2003) portray trust as a fundamental element for ensuring coordination to perform various organizational activities.

In their study, Paul and McDaniel (2004) have examined the relationship link between collaborative performance and interpersonal trust. Their research findings have proved positive relationship of all four dimensions of trust: calculative interpersonal trust, competence based trust, relational, interpersonal and integrated trust with virtual collaborative relationship performance. Ring and Van de Ven (1994) identified that trust can construct group norms of better performance by enhancing the level of commitment through a cooperative relationship among the group members. Trust building reduces the implementation and enforcement of formal rules due to enhanced level of commitment and compliance (Parkhe, 1993) and fosters a cooperative and conducive working environment for building relationship-specific assets, which might be seen in the form of getting new ideas, learning personal skills, developing new methods of production or learning of new technologies (Buckley & Casson, 1988). This cooperative working evolving through mutual trust, according to Axelrod, (1984), provides sufficient possibility for overt intra-employee behavior and reduces the possibility for covert behavior. For example, Japanese electronics manufacturers receive better quality and higher degree of employee performance in UK, USA and Germany etc. than their indigenous counterparts (Sako, 1994). An important factor behind this enhanced performance of Japanese firms is that Japanese employers tend to be more committed towards developing, maintaining and re-energizing trust with local suppliers and business partners (Hagen & Choe, 1998). In the same way, investors of Singapore in China succeed in developing and maintaining longer mutual cooperation based ties with Chinese partners than those of Western countries, simply due to perceiving trust based relationship as a reciprocal, continuous and invigorating process (Luo, 2000).

Trust can be defined as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another” (Rousseau, et al.,

1998). In other words, it can be said that trust is the willingness of a person to be vulnerable to others, based on the assumption that others are trustworthy (Sitkin & Roth, 1993; Mishra, 1996; Mayer et al., 2007). Reliance and risk tend to be interlinked with trust. Reliance shows one party's willingness to let its fate be determined by the other party. Risk involves that one party can potentially experience negative outcomes due to untrustworthiness of the other party. Trust is irrelevant without risk, since there is no vulnerability without reliance and trust cannot exist without willingness of being vulnerable (Luo, 2002). Trust has two dimensions: calculative and relational (Inkpen & Currall, 1997; Buckley & Casson, 1988). Calculative trust which is also named as cognitive trust tends to be short-run oriented trust, based on the hope or belief of one party that the other party will act in a beneficial and positive way. On the contrary, relational or affective trust builds as a result of recurrent connections between two parties over a period of time. Affect-based or relational trust tends to be a long-run oriented trust, based on a feeling of emotional attachment, which develops after frequent interactions among the two parties; since repeated interactions lead to the cultivation of passionate bond based on reciprocal care and concern (McAllister, 1995).

Generally, individuals base their trust in others on their observations of certain features/qualities of the individuals. Researchers have identified a number of variables to be used for the evaluation of trustworthiness e.g. integrity, competence, openness, discreetness and receptivity etc. (Butler, 1991), but, they can be precisely grouped into three categories: perceptions of the trustor in the "ability or competence", "benevolence", and "integrity" of the trustee (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995).

## 4.2. Influence of Trust on Knowledge Sharing

Trust is one of the fundamental factors in the development of relationship that can foster effective creation and sharing of knowledge between within organizational members and units (Abrams et al., 2003). Extant literature on trust and knowledge sharing has acknowledged a number of cultural factors that may affect knowledge sharing, but trust amongst all, has received the maximum attention of the researchers (Wang & Noe, 2010). Numerous researchers (e.g. Tsai & Ghoshal 1998, Srinivas, 2000, Curral & Judge 1995, Carley 1991, and Zand, 1972) have found a positive relationship of trust and knowledge sharing at multiple settings and organizational levels (Levin & Cross, 2004).

This is because trust constructs and determines the very nature and level, depth and breadth of one-to-one relations and interactions (Blau, 1964; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998). Since knowledge sharing takes place through mutual understanding, interest and interaction of the two parties, therefore it cannot occur without trust. People are observed to be more motivated to assist others and to seek others' assistance in a trusting environment; on the contrary individuals tend to avoid helping others or requesting for help in a relatively less trusting environment (Luhmann, 1979; Blau, 1964). In the presence of trust, individuals seem to be more inclined to engage in a collective activity (Gambetta, 1988; Fukuyama, 1995). Trust implies the belief of one party that the other party will not take advantage of the situation and abstain from opportunistic behavior (Hosmer, 1995; Gefen, 2002b; Moorman et al., 1992). In a situation, where rules fail to provide guaranty of others' positive and fair treatment, trust works as an alternative to such guaranty, by creating the desired environment that motivates the individuals to engage with others with the hope, confidence and openness of mind (Butler and Cantrell, 1994). In this way, trust wipes out fears and doubts of unprincipled behavior from others (Luhmann, 1979).



After reviewing the literature on the role of trust in knowledge sharing, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) note that knowledge sharing is facilitated by trust, highlighting the relational facet of social capital. They argue that trust facilitates knowledge sharing by forming or improving a number of settings and circumstances, essential for promoting knowledge sharing. Building on Nahapiet and Ghoshal's (1998) framework, from an intra-organizational perspective, Tsai and Ghoshal (1998) have empirically tested the significance of trust in creating value and knowledge sharing within different units and departments of organizations (Li, 2005). In another study conducted by Fong et al. (2013) in Vietnam regarding the antecedents of knowledge transfer in a multi-cultural work setting, trust emerged as the most significant factor for the successful transfer of knowledge among subsidiaries and parent organizations. This is aligned with the findings from previous literature of trust (Simonin 1999; Tsai & Ghoshal 1998). Trust factor facilitates the sharing of organizational knowledge; since it encourages the organizational members and increases their willingness to help their partners and understand new external knowledge (Lane et al., 2001). The most prominent figure of the field of knowledge management Nonaka, has also highlighted the importance of the role of interpersonal trust in building up an environment conducive for knowledge sharing in the organizations (Nonaka, 1994). "Trust leads to increased overall knowledge exchange, makes knowledge exchanges less costly and increases the likelihood that knowledge acquired from a colleague is sufficiently understood and absorbed that a person can put it to use". (Abrams et al., 2003, p.65; see Levin & Cross, 2004).

The sharing of knowledge becomes specially challenging when employees belonging to different cultural and ethnic backgrounds work together. Bresman et al. (1999) have argued that absence of trust, lack of personal relationships and 'cultural distance' all conspire to create

resistance, misunderstandings and frictions and consequently impede the effective sharing of knowledge. However, findings of Boh et al. (2012) show that regardless of the differences of culture and context, effective knowledge transfer and sharing can occur between two very different entities if the trust exists between them, therefore, they urge the organizations to create interpersonal trust among employees to facilitate the transfer of knowledge. According to Gallie & Guichard (2005) lack of trust would negatively impact the degree to which knowledge can be effectively transferred, especially in the cases where there is lack of clarity about the source of the knowledge being transferred and recipient of that knowledge. Trust of receiver in the competence of the sharer of knowledge/source should also enhance the perceived effectiveness of knowledge received, because knowledge sharers who possess the trust of knowledge seekers are more likely to be listened and taken decisions based on their knowledge (Levin & Cross, 2004).

In many professional organizations, a significant portion of their most useful knowledge might be in the form of tacit knowledge, which tends to be exceptionally personal and if not impossible, very difficult, to convert into written or textual form. While expressing, tacit knowledge may take the form of individual employees' insights, personal approaches, experiences, stories and explanations toward problem solving and task fulfillment (Zack, 1999; Blackler, 1995; Choo, 1998; Collins, 1993; Narasimha, 2000). Transfer of tacit knowledge can be both formal, and informal. Formal transfer takes place through lectures, seminars, conferences or other training events; whereas, informal transfer takes place through employee interactions while working together in groups or on project teams performing certain tasks that need interdependence (Marquardt, 1996). Regardless of being formal and informal transfer of tacit knowledge, the fundamental thing is the willingness, desire and capacity of the individual employees to exchange their knowledge and desire to use it (Szulanski, 1995; O'Dell et al.,

1998; Foos et al., 2006). While technology may facilitate the storage of explicit knowledge, in the form of files, documents, presentations, books, catalogues, formulas and patents etc. tacit knowledge resides in human mind and access to it depends only upon individualized decisions and relations (Lucas, 2005; Cross & Baird, 2000; Hinds & Pfeffer, 2001). The sharing of tacit knowledge, therefore, tends to be dependent on organizational members' willingness to share or receive it and on the extent to which they perceive their colleagues trustworthy both with respect to sharing or receiving of knowledge (Lucas, 2005; Adler, 2002; Scott, 2000; Locke, 1999; Gruber, 2000; McAllister, 1995;).

Moreover, there are certain barriers and limitations that can limit the transfer of knowledge (Lucas, 2005). The most commonly observed barrier is the general unwillingness of the employees to share knowledge. It is common observation that people show reluctance for sharing information with others and there are many reasons behind this. Firstly, retention of knowledge is perceived to be a source of competitive advantage over other colleagues or as cited in the words of Francis Bacon that '*knowledge is power*' so, nobody wants to lose his or her power. Secondly, there can be lack of awareness regarding the location of knowledge, thirdly there can be the element of difficulty in expressing the knowledge specially if it is embedded in mind or tied with performing of some physical action and fourthly the possible challenge of applying the knowledge of one context to dissimilar context (Nidumolu et al., 2001; Argote, 1999; Stenmark, 2000).

Apart from the associated difficulties, challenges and limitations, the process of knowledge sharing involves some risks also. The most visible risk as mentioned above, is that sharer may lose the competitive advantage over peers as a result of sharing knowledge (Stenmark, 2000, 2002; Leonard & Sensiper, 1998). Similarly, the receiving of knowledge may result in risk to

an individual, such as receiving incomplete, unauthentic or unauthorized information, bearing a question mark on the sharer of the knowledge or the source of the shared knowledge. When the sharer of knowledge is not perceived being trustworthy, his or her information or advice may be more resisted or openly challenged. An expert and credible source as studies suggest, is more likely to influence a receiver of knowledge (Szulanski, 1995; Perloff, 1993;). Other studies have found that before using tacit knowledge, the reputation and credibility of the sharer should be verified within the organization (Lucas, 2005; Foos et al., 2006). Moreover, the fear also remains that the information might be used against the sharer even (Patrick, Rourke & Phillips, 2000). That is why, while sharing information with others, people generally remain sceptical whether or not the recipient of the information will show the same reciprocity of trust and confidence regarding the fair use of the information. Therefore, they will only share information if they feel that sharing will result in positive outcome or at least not at their personal expense. In short, people must trust others that they will not misuse their information (Kramer et al., 1996).

There are certain risks linked with the sharing and use of explicit knowledge as well. Although use of technology has revolutionized the dissemination of knowledge, but, at the same time, it has raised serious concerns regarding the trust and confidentiality issues for the sharing of knowledge like ‘capturing’ of one’s knowledge. This can be revealed in the anxiety in the minds of owners or producers of information, who remain afraid of losing the control of their material, once it is made publicly accessible after being published (Patrick, Rourke & Phillips, 2000). Digitized information always remains at the risk of being misappropriated by someone and used for the purposes, the original author may not agree with. Apart from the concerns of the sharers of knowledge, there are the concerns of the receivers of explicit knowledge too. Anonymity is one of the issues that impacts receivers of information, regarding the matters of

credibility, validity and reliability of the information received and the identification of the source of that material. According to practitioners of KM, people find it difficult to trust the information if they don't know its source as the use of incorrect or anonymous information might ruin the reputation of the user.

In the light of the above mentioned problems and issues, Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) have suggested a theoretical model while linking the two types of trust: affect-based and cognition-based trust with knowledge sharing. Affect-based trust tends to be based on long term reciprocal relationship cultivated through the seed of love, affection, care, concern and emotional attachment (McAllister, 1995; Pennings & Woiceshyn, 1987). Cognitive trust on the other side, tends to be based on an individual's feelings of competence and reliability for another person (McAllister, 1995). Lucas (2005) examined the relationship of both types of trust with knowledge sharing without distinguishing between tacit and explicit knowledge, the measure which he used for interpersonal trust was similar in nature to one which was used in affect-based trust, whereas, reputation was parallel to cognitive trust. The empirical evidence of McAllister (1995) revealed that both cognition-based and affect-based trust were distinct forms of interpersonal trust and at the same time, both were directly related to organizational citizenship behaviors. Thus both cognition-based and affection cognition-based trust may contribute to explanation of employee inclination toward sharing and use of knowledge (Holste & Fields, 2010).

Previous studies (e.g., Epstein, 2000; Organ, 1990; Fukuyama, 1995;) have established that the more the individuals grow closer in their personal ties, the more they get motivated to perform in ways that may benefit others. Other studies have emphasized on close personal relationship for the development of trust. Hansen (1999) for example, found that trust based ties were

essential for transferring the knowledge between organizational units and in new product development teams, Epstein (2000) on the other hand found that individuals having friendly ties were observed to be more inclined to share the knowledge with their colleagues. Foos et al. (2006) also compiled the similar results highlighting that mutual trust among the members of project teams was a crucial factor for knowledge sharing. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) also found in their study that in Japanese companies, most of the knowledge creation takes place as a result of sharing tacit knowledge with colleagues characterized by a network of strong interpersonal ties among them. The findings of these studies throw light on the fact that the willingness of organizational members to share tacit knowledge with their colleagues tends to be deeply affected by affect-based ties between the two parties.

It is therefore essential for the organizations to play active part in creating and maintaining an environment conducive for sharing of knowledge and cultivation of trust among the organizational members seems to be the most important element in this connection (Patrick, Rourke and Phillips, 2000). In order to encourage sharing of knowledge, Ardichvili et al. (2003) emphasize institution-based trust to ensure trustworthy behavior of individual members, and protect the members from negative consequences of administrative and procedural mistakes emanating from knowledge sharing. Sanctions, policies and organizational regulations are necessary to encourage individuals to engage in knowledge transfer (Li, 2005). If the safety measures are placed to protect the self-interests of employees, they feel safer to share knowledge because, they remain assured if the knowledge was misused, the knowledge seeker will be reprimanded for such behavior (Ford, 2003).

### 4.3. Antecedents to Interpersonal Trust Development

Despite growing focus of researchers on the study of antecedents to trust development, a lot of work needs to be done (Koopman, 2003) in this field, keeping in view the increasing benefits of interpersonal and organizational trust. Because, the study of trust in the existing literature is not free of problems and issues due to some inconsistencies and variations in the way trust has been defined and conceptualized by the researchers (Bigley & Pearce, 1998; Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). A notable criticism from some scholars in this connection refers to the absence of convergence on the nature and structure of trust, particularly with respect to the inability of the academicians and researchers to differentiate between the constructs and antecedents of trust itself (Bhattacharya, Devinney, & Pillutla, 1998; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). The researchers seem to overlap the basic constructs/facets or underlying assumptions of trust with antecedents to trust. For instance, Costa, Roe, and Taillieu (2001) define trust as a multi-dimensional construct consisting of three interrelated facets including propensity to trust, perceived trustworthiness, and cooperative and monitoring behaviours, whereas propensity to trust, according to Gill et al. (2005) more accurately, might be conceptualized as an antecedent to trust instead of a dimension of the same. On the other side, trustworthiness has also been discussed as an antecedent to trust development instead of a dimension (e.g., Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Mayer et al., 1995).

Most of the studies in the domain of antecedents to trust are focused on different dimensions of organizational trust. For example, antecedents to organizational trust (Gulati, 2008), antecedents and consequences of trust within manager-subordinate relationships (Connell et al., 2003), trust in managers (Koopman, 2003; Bijlsma and van de Bunt, 2003), antecedents to trust in virtual communities (Ridings, et al., 2002) and (Wu et al., 2010), antecedents to inter-organizational trust (Gill et al., 2005) just to mention a few. However, there are limited number

of studies focusing on antecedents to interpersonal trust. Especially there are very few studies on the topic of antecedents to trust development in a cross-cultural setting (e.g., Cheng, Wang, & Huang, 2009; Meyer, 2006; Doney et al., 1998; Wasti et al., 2010 and Tan and Chee 2005). Since this study is aimed at investigating the antecedents to interpersonal trust in organizational set up, therefore an analysis of the literature about antecedents to interpersonal trust is very much essential to present in the following pages.

Literature about the antecedents to interpersonal trust covers a big list of antecedents including for example: commitment (Butler 1991, Tan &Chee, 2005) loyalty (Jennings, 1971; Tan &Chee, 2005), confidentiality (Blau, 1964; Crosby et al., 1990; Gabarro 1978; Butler, 1991; Tan &Chee, 2005), dependability (Rempel et al., 1985) reliability (Tan &Chee, 2005; Zucker, 1986;), responsibility (Butler, 1991), affect (Jones & George, 1998; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; McAllister, 1995), group similarity (Tjosvold, 198; Brewer & Brown, 1998; Stephan et al., 1998), propensity to trust (Jones et al. 1997; Rempel et al., 1985), reciprocity (Zand, 1972; Schoorman, Mayer, & Davis, 1996; Wasti et al., 2010), shared values (Cazier et al., 2006). However, it is more appropriate to discuss the antecedents that are more relevant to the current study which focuses on the development of interpersonal organizational trust.

#### ***4.3.1. Trustworthiness***

Trust development refers to individuals' experiential process of knowing about others' level of trustworthiness based on the interaction with them over a period of time (Mayer et al., 1995; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Shapiro, Sheppard, & Cheraskin, 1992). Numerous researchers have



proposed trustworthiness as a strong factor influencing trust development (e.g., McAllister, 1995; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Mayer et al., 1995). Mayer et al. (1995), posits perceived trustworthiness as an important cognitive antecedent of trust. Researchers from multiple disciplines concur that people develop trust on the basis of repeated social interactions which helps them in updating their information about the level of trustworthiness of others (e.g., Zand, 1972; Axelrod, 1984; Gabarro, 1978; Mayer et al., 1995; Sheppard & Sherman, 1998). Previous research on trust from organizational perspective, suggests competency and responsibility as fundamental elements for trustworthiness (Cook & Wall, 1980; Butler, 1991). Dependability and reliability have also been included in the list of the antecedents of interpersonal trust (Rempel et al., 1985). Expectations of dependability and Reliability need to be met for cultivating and prospering trust based relationships (Zucker, 1986) and lacking of the same provides a rational ground for ending up trust based relationship (Luhmann, 1979). Researchers have identified as many as ten facets of perceived trustworthiness; including dependability, reliability, responsibility and predictability etc. (Mishra, 1996; Gabarro, 1978; Butler, 1991). However, three antecedents to trust development have received the attention of maximum number of scholars and researchers in the literature of trust development: “benevolence”, “ability” and “integrity” (Butler, 1991; McAllister 1995; Hardin, 2000; Mayer et al., 1995; Sitkin & Roth, 1993).

***Benevolence***, includes feelings of kindness, goodwill, magnanimity and compassion of trustor towards trustee (Mayer et al, 1995). According to Hardin (2000) and Das & Teng (1998), benevolence can be referred to as the product of goal congruence or common objectives, or the confidence achieved from the commonality of interests. Others have linked benevolence to the extent to which one party is sincere in safeguarding the welfare and wellbeing of the other party to achieve maximum collective benefits (Rempel et al., 1985). Benevolence is akin to

McAllister's (1995) conceptualization of affect-based trust, which results from the feelings of deep care and concern of one party toward other. **Ability** refers to the faith of trustor in the trustee that he or she has the capability and resources to undertake a particular duty or perform a certain task (Butler, 1991; Sitkin & Roth, 1993). Regardless of the spirit and hardworking of a person, the possibility of success is little and trust is not guaranteed, if that person is not capable of accomplishing that task or duty. Ability is parallel to McAllister's (1995) conceptualization of peer dependability and reliability, which refers to the capability of trustee to commit, deliver and perform as per the expectation and promise. **Integrity** means the perceived honesty and moral strength of trustee. Trustees having integrity are perceived to be more likely to dispose in fair and honourable manner with respect to their fulfilment of commitments and promises without cheating or manipulating. Thus, individuals are likely to build trust on those who possess integrity and commitment (Zolin et al., 2004).

#### **4.3.2. Propensity to Trust**

Propensity to trust indicates individuals' tendency of being optimistic or pessimistic towards people's actions and behaviours (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998). People with high propensity to trust, possess positive intentions about other fellow beings and think that others are good, fair, sincere and trustworthy, whereas people keeping low propensity to trust possess negative feelings about others and feel that others are unfair, selfish and untrustworthy. (Shaw et al., 2005). Mayer et al. (1995) note that propensity to trust is very important indicator of one's trustworthiness since different people tend to exhibit different levels of propensity to trust due to various, environmental and cultural influences on their personalities. Propensity to trust, beyond interpersonal relationship, has been a significant factor in a variety of collectively desirable social activities such as car-pooling, commuting and public transportation (van Lange

et al., 1998). Propensity to trust is also influenced by individuals' approach to trust someone or not. Knowing the characteristics of both trustor and trustee helps understand the relationship between the two and the underlying reasons or logic to trust.

### **4.3.3. Affect**

Numerous researchers from the fields of organizational theory, psychology and sociology, have emphasized affect as one of the crucial factors influencing trust (e.g., McAllister, 1995; Jones & George, 1998; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Rempel et al., 1985). They argue that affective attachments take the shape of care, sincerity and benevolence that cultivate trust (Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995), whereas emotional responses of individuals (e.g., happiness, fury, silence or frustration), gauge their feelings and levels of trust for others (e.g., Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Jones & George, 1998). Researchers, conceptualizing trust development as a “discrete process” composed of multiple stages, posit affect as a very powerful factor for cultivating higher and deeper levels of trust (e.g., Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; McAllister, 1995; Sheppard & Sherman, 1998). Usually, trust built on affect, tends to be stronger and unshakeable over time, across favourable or unfavourable situations and even after small misunderstandings and violations (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; McAllister, 1995). For example, Rempel et al. (1985) suggest that ‘faith’ which tends to be the deepest level of trust, needs a truthful relationship, emotional attachment or affective investment of care and concern. Similarly, trust based on ‘care and concern’ tends to be deeper and long lasting and the one built on cognitive feelings of reliability, predictability and dependability (McAllister, 1995).

#### **4.3.4. Social Group Membership**

Social group affiliation is an important antecedent of trust development. People generally possess positive perceptions and feelings for the group, they tend to be associated with (Brewer, 1979), regardless of their positive or negative beliefs and feelings about other groups (Brewer & Brown, 1998). Two aspects affect trust-related views of individuals for other groups: first, people's own group memberships (Turner, 1987) and second, the interdependence that exists between groups (e.g., Brewer & Brown, 1998; Stephan et al., 1998; Tjosvold, 1988). Group interdependence is suggested as an important factor of feelings and beliefs for other groups. Self-categorization and social categorization (Turner, 1987) are the fundamental psychological processes which influences trust development with respect to group membership. Social categorization refers to the process of grouping or ungrouping of individuals on the basis of age, gender, profession, community or ethnicity (Turner, 1987). Trust development tends to be heavily influenced by social categorization through category-driven mechanism, a cognitive process that provides a shortcut to individuals to decide which group to trust and which not; which people to rely on and which not (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). Categorization or grouping is a kind of default mechanism that can help an individual to decide about building up trust when he or she feels confused whether to trust or not due to pressure of time or judgment issue (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). For instance, "when an individual is distracted or attending to cues in the situation other than group membership, behaviours reflecting aversion or fear of out-group members are more likely to appear" (Brewer & Brown, 1998, p. 575).

In-group and outgroup phenomenon is also important in the current discussion. The group to which people belong is called an in-group and the group which is viewed in comparison to that group is called out-group. Individuals usually try to keep positive image of their group by

making contrasts with and making judgments about other groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) which actually contributes toward upholding their self-esteem (Turner, 1987). Extant literature on social identity suggests that individuals' positive feelings about their group or group members, influence trust building and cooperation (Kramer, 1991; Kramer & Brewer, 1984). For instance, a sense of assistance increases in social dilemma experiments when an employee or example, comes to know about common identity of a person he works with (Kramer & Brewer, 1984). Moreover, in-group and outgroup phenomenon leads the individuals to prefer members belonging to their group and to think of them as relatively more cooperative, fair and trustworthy than those who are external to their group (Brewer, 1979). Moreover, group identity develops a sense of keeping group goals ahead of individual goals or aspirations and infuses a sense of similarity between individual and group goals (Kramer et al., 1996; Kramer & Brewer, 1984). When group members feel commonality of goals and aspirations, they start believing that other members will be enthusiastic in pursuing the group goals and will act in accordance with group values to achieve the goals and this will pave foundation for the cultivation of trust (William, 2001).

#### ***4.3.5. Confidentiality***

Trust defines and regulates the nature of relationships among individuals and groups (Gefen, 2000; Blau, 1964). This is commonly observed that trust increases with sharing of information and specially specified personal information, because by sharing sensitive personal information people make themselves more vulnerable (Blau, 1964) and this increased level of vulnerability can lead to increased level of confidence and trust towards them (Ridings, et al., 2002). Additionally, as McAllister suggests that decision to trust someone or not should also be based on information of the other people provided as their personal or confided information

(McAllister, 1995). By sharing personal confided information people reduce the extent of strange feelings towards them and create an atmosphere of acquaintance or friendliness (Ridings, et al., 2002). Likewise, confidentiality and keeping secrets helps in understanding the level of integrity and benevolence and both integrity and benevolence are two of the three fundamental components of trustworthiness (Ridings, et al., 2002). Knowing about others makes easy to decide whether to trust someone or not. Sharing of personal information and secrets helps in understanding and judgment process and that helps in trust building (Blau, 1964; Luhmann, 1979). Confidentiality from trustee is also reported by Gabarro (1978) and Butler (1991) as an important factor that facilitates the building of interpersonal trust. Tan and Chee (2005) have also empirically found confidentiality as an important antecedent to trust development in a study conducted in Singapore.

#### **4.3.6. Commitment**

Commitment denotes dedication and devotion of trustee towards trustor in working relationship. (Tan and Chee 2005) have found commitment as an important antecedent to trust building. Commitment gives the connotation of fulfilment of promise in Butler's (1991) work. Commitment promotes perseverance in interpersonal relationship (Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992; Bui et al. 1996). Literature suggests that commitment fosters a variety of maintenance behaviours including: willingness to sacrifice (Van Lange et al., 1997); and accommodative behaviour, (Rusbult et al., 1991) and disparagement of alternatives, i.e. tendencies that drive away or derogate tempting alternative partners (Miller, 1997). In the study of Tan and Chee (2005), respondents shared that a trusted person is not the one who only fulfils the promise but, it is one who shows a strong perseverance in honouring his or her words. In this context, a trusted person is expected to commit his or her words, despite unfavourable and adverse

conditions. Hence, strong sense of commitment is a key factor in the building of trust among the two parties (Tan & Chee, 2005). Wieselquist et al. (1991) have also empirically tested the positive relationship of trust building and commitment. Their findings from two longitudinal studies evidenced that commitment stimulated acts like willingness to sacrifice.

#### **4.3.7. Loyalty**

Loyalty has also been discussed in trust literature (Jennings 1971; Butler & Cantrell, 1984) as an antecedent to trust building. Tan and Chee (2005) also found loyalty as a very strong element of trust development in a study conducted in Singapore. In their study a large number of respondents mentioned loyalty as a very important trustworthiness attribute, especially with respect to boss-subordinate relationship (Tan & Chee, 2005). Butler and Cantrell (1984) described loyalty as a feeling of compassion, kindness and altruism towards someone or an individual's willingness to support someone and safeguard his or her rights and interests. Jennings (1971) defines loyalty as an implied assurance from one party to remain faithful and not to cause harm to other party. From an organizational perspective, loyalty according to Tan and Chee (2005) as explained by their respondents in their research, is a single-minded faithfulness towards the organization and the management.

#### **4.3.8. Time Spent**

Research provides evidence that the proper rhythm of face-to-face interaction is important factor for team effectiveness (Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000) and therefore, trust building between previously unacquainted members takes longer (Wilson et al., 2006). The importance

of time factor is recognized in the discussion of trust building process of Mayer et al. (1995, p. 722): “as the relationship develops interactions with the trustee allow the trustor to gain insights about the trustee’s benevolence and the relative impact of benevolence on trust will grow”. Also, integrity is assessed through the consistency of actions over time: “The extent to which the party’s actions are congruent with his or her words all affect the degree to which the party is judged to have integrity” (Mayer et al., 1995, p.719).

#### **4.3.9. Religiosity**

Strong religiosity according to many scholars is also one of the antecedents to trust. Previous studies have proposed that religious beliefs are linked with trust in people (Begue, 2002). Keeping in view the relationship between religiosity and interpersonal trust, Schonfeld (1978) observed attendance in churches fosters a more trusting stance to others. A study of Maddock and Kenny (1972) noted that intrinsically religious individuals generally score higher on the subscale of trustworthiness in connection to Wrightsman's (1964) philosophies of human nature scale. Lupfer and Wald (1985) have also suggested that religiously committed people perceive others to be altruistic and truthful. In a study conducted in a French context, Begue (2002) has empirically proved a positive relationship between religiosity and trustworthiness. In an experimental study by Tan and Vogel (2008) it is empirically tested that religious people generally tend to be more trustworthy and they generally trust others. In another study conducted by Tarn et al. (2005) among Japanese and Japanese Americans; religiosity, acculturation and autonomy preference, were strongly related to trust in one’s physician.



#### **4.3.10. Shared values**

Shared values are one of the important antecedents of trust building. Shared values can be described as common set of social principles, standards, norms and convictions that channelize behaviours and attitudes of a given society or group. Shared values unite dissociated people to a collective platform and allow them to communicate with each other and promote their feelings and ideas in a combined manner (Wu, et al., 2010). Indeed, shared values guide to the development of homogenous communication channels and behavioural manifestations that infuse a sense of attachment and belonging among the individuals (Fukuyama, 1995; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Formulation and reinforcement of shared goals is critical for gaining common understanding and discouraging opportunism which is very important for building trust. Numerous research studies identified shared values being important antecedent of social trust (e.g., Cazier et al., 2006). Morgan and Hunt (1994), for instance, found that shared values foster mutual trust through simplifying communication and cooperation among group members. Cazier et al. (2006) also established that shared goals considerably influence individuals' degree of trust towards their colleagues.

#### **4.3.11. Organizational Justice**

Perceived impartiality of organizational reward systems, simply, the organizational justice may facilitate trust-building among employees of an organization (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). Organizational justice is a term used to delineate the presence and influence of fairness at work place (Greenberg, 2005) and it includes both procedural and distributive dimensions. Procedural justice relates to the perception of employees regarding the application of fairness in their job duties and other aspects of their work like work-place tools and work environment

(Yusof & Shamsuri, 2006) and distributive justice according to Price and Mueller (1986), addresses the issues of fairness in compensation and rewarding of employees in return to their performance and contribution. Bartol and Srivastava (2002) suggest that both types of justice will affect the degree of trust among workers and at workplaces; and that subsequently will affect their behaviour and willingness of knowledge sharing. Many research studies empirically evidenced positive relationship between organizational justice and trust at workplaces (e.g., Frazier et al., 2010). This is natural that employees always compare their workload and compensation with their colleagues and if they feel any unfairness, it disturbs their relationship, creating personal grudges and conflicts which are detrimental for trust building. That is why, Leventhal (1976) emphasized that managers while allocating organizational incentives and rewards need to be fair and trustworthy and ensure impartiality because, it will be a critical element of building trusting atmosphere within organizations (Kuo, 2013).

## 4.4. Empirical Evidence: Influence of Trust on KS

The positive relationship between trust and KS has been empirically tested in numerous research studies all over the globe at various companies, contexts, cultures and countries. For instance, Haque and Haque, (2018) found trust as the most significant factor with regard to sharing of knowledge in their study conducted in Pakistani universities. Based on the findings of the study of Guan et al. (2018) conducted on Chinese online community of practice, identity-based trust proved to be an important indicator of knowledge sharing. Kucharska, et al. (2017) also found trust being a crucial factor for the sharing of tacit knowledge in their study conducted in Poland, as they comment, “Tacit knowledge sharing on project performance points to the key role of trust in the process of Tacit Knowledge Sharing which is indispensable for Team Creativity. Trust affects tacit knowledge sharing in a direct manner, but it is also an indispensable element which helps build collaborative culture which directly affects tacit knowledge sharing. From the point of view of effectiveness of knowledge management, soft skills, in light of the presented studies, constitute key managerial skills because of the development through innovations” (Kucharska, et al., 2017, p. 532). The study of Alsharo, et al (2017) also found positive relationship between trust and KS among the members of virtual teams despite they could not find the similar kind of positive relationship between trust and collaborative work. In a study conducted in Japanese context, Higuchi and Yamanaka (2017) found trust being the most significant factor with regard to sharing of knowledge between university scientists and tourist companies, wherein the university scientists tried to develop trustworthy relationship with the tourist companies to gain their cooperation. They noted “just as successful cultural anthropologists strive to build a rapport with their subject, faculty members earned the trust of tourist companies’ staff through competence and genuine intentions. More specifically, by frequently repeating close interaction with HRT staff members over time, GSES researchers succeeded in developing an iterative feedback process

that allowed for relatively smooth knowledge transfer/absorption, gap-filling through monitoring and training, and responsive knowledge needs analysis.” (p. 1468). In another study conducted in Russian context, Khvatova and Block (2017) found a positive relationship between task-related trust and knowledge sharing in a global financial company, however they challenged the notion of straight-away or boundless positive relationship between trust and KS. They note for instance, “With regard to the latter aspect, our findings support the argument that trust, as a necessary constraint for successful knowledge sharing, has a positive impact on knowledge sharing. On the other hand, this study shows that the positive effect of trust on knowledge sharing performance is limited to a certain point. This finding challenges the often-cited assumption of a boundless positive correlation between trust and knowledge sharing” (Khvatova & Block, 2017, p. 348). In a Taiwanese study, Liag et al (2017) found trust and better communication being directly linked with KS. In a US based study, Neeley and Leonardi (2018) examined “passable trust” being positively co-related with knowledge sharing within companies and social media. According to them, “the emergent concept of passable trust from our study serves as a new threshold for understanding the level of interpersonal trust that might represent a sufficient level of confidence for people to share knowledge effectively in organizations, thereby contributing to firm-level knowledge-based strategies. Passable trust speaks to an incomplete or imperfect degree of trust that is still satisfactory within a domain. The primary emphasis on trust and its consequences has been on people feeling confident that others will be reliable and dependable in a global sense” (Neeley & Leonardi, 2018, p. 942). They further note, “In contrast to swift trust that posits a temporary system of trust of in-group members who have a priori trusting context based on functional ties (Meyerson et al., 1996), passable trust can be a permanent state such that those who are recipients of passable trust have sufficiently exposed themselves through social and work information disclosures. In the case of our study, individuals developed passable trust by observing people’s public behaviours,

and therefore, their transparency provides the impetus for others to grant them passable trust for the purpose of knowledge sharing” (Neeley & Leonardi, 2018, p.942). In another US based study, Pinjani & Palvia, (2013) evidenced task-interdependence and inter-personal trust as significant factors for fostering knowledge transfer within culturally heterogeneous groups.

In a Norwegian study, Nerstad et al. (2017) proved a positive relationship between trust and knowledge sharing especially the perceived trust of employees gained from their supervisors and bosses; emphasizing that when the organizational members tend to show much better knowledge sharing trends when they feel that their leadership trust them. As they emphasise, “Our findings identify that feeling trusted by your supervisor is an important mechanism for knowledge sharing at the individual level of analysis. Thus, the perceived supervisor's efforts in modelling being vulnerable to others seems to be as important for subsequent sharing by subordinates of their knowledge” (Nerstad et al. 2017, p. 12). With regard to inter-employee aspect they emphasised the concept of mastery climate (characterised by the aspects like cooperation, sharing, helping, learning, guiding and growing) being an important pre-requisite for the development of trust and then translating the same for the promotion of knowledge sharing (Nerstad et al. 2017, p. 12). In another study in Chinese context, Le and Lei (2018), found trust being directly linked with knowledge sharing with the mediation of transformational leadership within organizations. They also highlighted two dimensions of trust: reliance-based trust and disclosure-based trust and linked with knowledge sharing processes within organizations. According to them, disclosure-based trust has more significant impact on knowledge creation and reliance-based trust has more significant impact on knowledge development; but, in both cases organizational leadership plays vital role. Hence they urge the organizations to strive for and ensure transformational leadership in order to

create a trusting environment among the organizational members which will translate into better sharing of knowledge (Le & Lei, 2018).

#### **4.4.1. Empirical Evidence: Antecedents to Trust Development**

Houjeir, R., & Brennan, R. (2017) in their Gulf-based cross-cultural study between Arabs and Non-Arabs evidenced culture as a strong antecedent to interpersonal trust. As they note “Emiratis and non-Emiratis have very different perceptions of the antecedents of trust in banker-client relationships. The antecedents have different salience for Emiratis and non-Emiratis. One of the strongest factors is culture, which has been forged through centuries of desert survival into social culture, tradition and lifestyle. This is characterized by patriotism, a strong love of the nation, sheikdom and the ruling tribes” (p.506). They further argue that “Emirati bankers deal with other Emiratis on the basis of trust as a means of demonstrating mutual support for both the individual and the society: patriotism is one of the antecedents of this trust relationship, tribal traditions form another. Trust is contextually determined by the high-context culture in which Emiratis have, historically, come to trust only other Emiratis. They predict the behaviour of others not by experience but in the belief that they will follow the same rules and values that they follow themselves. A non-Emirati banker or client finds it difficult to establish trust with an Emirati counterpart. Emiratis therefore have a very different perception of relationships, affective approaches and behaviours, temporality, risk aversion and trust-building behaviours, to name but a few variables, when compared to their non-Emirati business counterparts. Emirati perceptions are so bounded by these variables that they may find it difficult and uncomfortable to try to understand or modify their perceptions to accommodate non-Emirati or western business practices. In developing banker-client relationships, it is

therefore expected that non-Emiratis will adapt to Emirati cultural practices” (Houjeir, & Brennan, 2017, p.506). They observed “Wasta” prior reference or relationship as a very strong factor of interpersonal trust among Arabs like Gaunchi has been identified as a strong factor with similar meaning in Chinese culture. Dilmaghani (2017), in his Canadian study found culture and ethnicity as a strong predictor of interpersonal trust development.

Taormina, R. J., & Sun, R. (2015, p. 184). For Agreeableness, if agreeable people are helpful and friendly, other people will display fondness for them (Carducci, 2009), such that agreeable people would be more likely to perceive others as friendly and trustworthy. The results supported the hypothesis that higher Agreeableness leads to more trust. Also, Interpersonal Trust was lower with high levels of Neuroticism, i.e., neurotic people worry excessively, which includes the worry that other people will harm them, making them disinclined to trust other people. The results imply that, to increase trust among people, it may help to increase people’s agreeableness and openness, perhaps (as noted previously) by creating educational courses. Likewise, interpersonal trust might also be increased by reducing neuroticism. For example, as neuroticism is characterized by excessive worry, it might help to increase interpersonal trust if people in social relationships are more emotionally supportive with each other, and if people (in general) can be encouraged to be more emotionally honest.

Taormina and Sun (2015) identified co-worker as an important antecedent to interpersonal trust. As they note “On the other hand, Interpersonal Trust was positively correlated with and a significant predictor of Co-worker Support. Indeed, one should at least be able to trust that one’s colleagues or teammates will complete their assigned tasks. Thus, when people trust their

co-workers those co-workers are more likely to reciprocate, and work teams are more likely to succeed (p. 184).

In a US based study Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) found professionalism as a significant predictor of faculty trust towards college principals and in another US based study on nurses Brown, Lindell, Dolansky, and Garber (2015) evidenced professionalism as a significant predictor of interpersonal trust between nurses and doctors.

Lai, Singh, Alshwer and Shaffer (2014) empirically tested reciprocal support and sincerity as important predictors for trust building in their cross-cultural study conducted in Chinese MNEs, as they noted, “According to this model, a range of social exchange characteristics provide a foundation for the development of both affective and cognitive forms of interpersonal trust. Frequency of exchange, even long distance exchange between cross-border employees, is important in establishing affective trust. support offered to fellow colleagues is representative of genuine care and facilitates the establishment of affective interpersonal trust amongst co-located employees. In addition, we found that depth of relationships (among co-located and cross-border employees) also generates affective trust by enhancing employee confidence and by erecting a constraint on opportunistic tendencies of exchange partners” (p. 321). Another Chinese study of Caza, Zhang, Wang and Bai (2015) has found leader sincerity towards the subordinates being positively correlated with trust.

In comparative study based on the analysis of US and Latin American study focused on donors trust towards charity organizations, evidenced trust and commitment being positively linked



with regard to trust development. As they note “A principal contribution of this paper is that it offers important practical insights related to the development of efficient strategies to enhance donor loyalty. As posited, the influence of trust on commitment and the influence of these two variables on loyalty were supported. Of importance in this study are indirect effects that are responsible for up to 70% of the influence of trust to behavioural loyalty and up to 61% of the effect of commitment to behavioural loyalty. This finding is consistent with studies in other contexts, which have found trust effects loyalty through affective variables, including affective commitment” (p.371). Vanhala, Heilmann and Salminen (2016) in their cross-cultural study conducted in Finland also found organizational commitment as one of the significant determinants of interpersonal trust.

Keshtegar (2018) found organizational justice as a significant factor contributing towards interpersonal trust development and Yeo et al. (2017) evidenced interpersonal justice as a significant factor for the development of interpersonal trust. Cui, Vertinsky, Robinson & Branzei (2018) identified organizational justice being significant factor for cultivating interpersonal trust within organizations.

Lai, Singh, Alshwer and Shaffer (2014) found social exchange as a strong predictor of interpersonal trust development in cross-cultural setting. As they note “Second, for the social exchange–cognitive trust relationships, we found that MNE employees also rely on social exchange to look for a “good reason” to trust their colleagues. In the development of cognitive trust, co-located employees, who enjoy closer and more visible connections, can more accurately assess the trustworthiness of their fellow employees. Based on frequent interactions, co-located employees are able to seek validation of trustworthiness before deciding to put their

trust in fellow colleagues. Reciprocal support also provides a reliable mechanism through which both co-located and cross-border employees can validate trustworthiness before putting their cognitive trust in their colleagues. Therefore, in support of social exchange theory, we found that among cross-border and co-located employees, social exchange variables are highly instrumental in generating interpersonal trust. These findings further strengthen the claims of SET in both co-located and cross-border settings. According to SET, healthy social exchange knows no boundaries, and as long as employees have healthy exchange relationships with their fellow colleagues, care for each other, exchange resources and favors, trust gets established, irrespective of geographical location” (p.322).

In a Cross-cultural study conducted on Chinese, Malaysian and UK students conducted by Chuah, Gächter and Hoffmann (2016) found trust religion as a significant factor of interpersonal factor of trust development, whereas Dilmaghani (2017), in his Canadian study could not find religiosity as a strong predictor of interpersonal trust however language and ethnicity was evidenced as a much stronger factor for interpersonal trust.

## 4.5. Chapter Summary

The previous chapter discussed theoretical foundations about “Knowledge Management” and “Knowledge Sharing” and this chapter contains the discussion of the theoretical foundations of “Trust” and the way it influences knowledge sharing. The chapter starts with the conceptualization of trust followed by the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in the light of the existing literature and available empirical evidence. The researcher has examined the relationship between interpersonal trust and collaborative performance and the relationship of all the four dimensions of trust: calculative, interpersonal trust, competence-based trust, relational and interpersonal and integrated trust with virtual collaborative relationship performance. According to existing literature, trust is one of the constructs that have achieved a great deal of recognition from researchers and scholars across various fields and disciplines. This for example, ranges from sociology (e.g. Lewis & Weigert, 1985), social psychology (e.g. Lewicki & Bunker, 1996) to organizational behavior (e.g. Zaheer et al., 1998), strategic management (e.g. Barney & Hansen, 1994), economics (e.g. Williamson, 1993) and international business (e.g. Inkpen & Currall, 1997). This is perhaps because trust provides the foundation for any productive and successful interpersonal and professional relationship among individuals and organizations (Mayer et al., 1995).

The researcher has discussed three main attributes that have been identified to be used for the evaluation of “Trustworthiness” (e.g. integrity, competence, openness and discreetness etc.). The chapter then discusses the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in the light of the existing research findings. A number of researchers (e.g. Andrews & Delahay 2000, Penley & Hawkins 1985, Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998) have proved positive relationship between trust and knowledge sharing. This positive relationship of trust and knowledge sharing has been found in a variety of settings both at individual as well as organizational levels (Levin & Cross 2004).

The researcher has then discussed in detail, the need of trust for knowledge sharing with respect to both tacit and explicit knowledge. The researcher has also identified the risks being associated with the application of trust in the process of KS. The chapter at the end, discusses the “Antecedents (determinants) to Interpersonal Trust Building” including: “Trustworthiness”, “Propensity to Trust”, “Affect”, “Social Group Membership”, “Confidentiality”, “Commitment”, “Loyalty”, “Time Spent”, “Religiosity”, “Shared Values” and “Organizational Justice”. Next chapter is going to discuss the theoretical foundations about the third main component of this research i.e. “Culture” and its influence on KS and “Interpersonal Trust Building”. Section four contains empirical evidence on influence of culture on trust development and antecedents to interpersonal trust development.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Theoretical Foundation**

## **CULTURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON TRUST AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING**

### **5.0. Introduction**

The previous two chapters have thoroughly discussed the critical analysis of existing literature on the conceptualization of “Knowledge Sharing”, “Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing”, “Trust”, “and Influence of Trust on Knowledge Sharing” and the “Antecedents to Interpersonal Trust Development”. This chapter is designed to discuss the “Influence of Culture on Knowledge Sharing” and on the development of interpersonal trust in the light of the existing theories and contributions of the researchers, giving details of the empirical findings in the said field. This is already mentioned in the introduction chapter of this thesis that all the three constructs of this study: Trust, knowledge sharing and culture are interlinked and cannot be separated from each other. Without trust, knowledge sharing remains under the shadow of doubts and apprehensions; without sharing no knowledge can emerge and that trust cannot escape the influence of culture especially in a multi-cultural working environment. That is why, along with studying the impact of trust on knowledge sharing, an important objective of this research is to study the impact of culture on both knowledge sharing and on interpersonal trust development.

This chapter covers the existing literature on the themes like impact of culture on knowledge sharing and trust development. Section 1 of the chapter discuss the conceptualization of culture and the way it affects our lives. Section 2 discusses impact of culture on knowledge sharing

and section 3 discusses cross-cultural differences of knowledge sharing with the help of examples in the light of Hofstede's model of cross-cultural analysis and GLOBE project of the cultural analysis. Section 4 discusses whether cultural difference is a facilitating or impeding factor for knowledge sharing. Section 5 discusses the impact of culture on trust development in the light of the existing theories and research findings and section 6 discusses the impact of language on trust development.

## 5.1. Culture and its Impact on Thinking and Behavior

Major contributors in the field of culture are e.g. Hofstede (1994), Hall (1990), Hampden-Turner (1997), Trompenaars and House et al. (2004). According to Hofstede "*culture is the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another*" (Hofstede, 1994, p. 5). In this sense, culture is a set of collectively possessed values. It is believed that people acquire and learn different patterns and ways of thinking, feeling, and acting from their early childhood and continue it throughout the life. These sources of cognitive programming tend to be embedded within the social environments wherein people grow up and collect their experiences (Hofstede, 1991). This mental programming begins at home with parents, family members and tends to be affected by the neighbours, school mates, and community members. Values develop under the impact of the institutions like family, school, religion, media and society at large (Laurent, 1983).

The GLOBE study (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Programme) describes culture as "*shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and*

*interpretations of meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations'' (House et al., 2004, p.57).*

Schein (1997) has identified three levels/components of culture. First level consists of 'artefacts' which refer to physical, visible or observable component of culture, including: buildings, furniture, furnishings, symbols, dresses, languages, jargons and styles of meeting and interacting etc. (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). Second, consists of 'values' which includes ideas, beliefs and understandings of the majority of a nation, about different phenomena of life (Rokeach, 1973). Values shape up the behavioural patterns of any society and help in understanding the culture of any group (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003). The third component is 'basic assumptions', which refers to unconscious beliefs that are learned from the childhood and are reinforced throughout life as one interacts with society. They are the ultimate source of cultural values and behaviours (Schein, 1997) since they define correctness and incorrectness, value and worth of different ideas and actions (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003).

According to Smircich (1983), culture shapes up the ideas, values, beliefs, customs, and rituals of any group of people which separate them from other groups. It conveys a sense of identity enhances social system stability and serves as a sense-making device that guides and shapes behaviour (Smircich, 1983). Culture teaches individuals how to behave as a human being, how to interact with others, what makes a good life, what is right and what is wrong, what should be emphasized and what should be avoided etc. (Gibson et al., 2009).

To conclude, culture determines in part, how people think and what do they do (Tinsley, 1998), including their understanding of the fundamentals of trust and trustworthy behaviour (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006). Based on the above idea, it can be inferred that culture's effect on individual

and group behaviour is not so simple, since its influence comes from more fundamental outcomes, such as beliefs and values (Gibson et al., 2009). Additionally, the impact of culture, which is highly indirect, is likely moderated by a variety of other variables operating at various levels. These may include individual level (preferences, propensities, and capabilities); group features (such as history and homogeneity); dynamics (the development stage of the culture, its internal strength identity and cohesion) and situational factors (including the degree of complexity, uncertainty, novelty and volatility) (Gibson et al., 2009). As explained by numerous scholars (Berry et al., 2002; Chao & Moon, 2005; Kirkman & Shapiro, 1997), aspects of culture work in combined, rather than isolated fashion, therefore it is important to understand the multiplicity of cultural identities.

### **5.1.1. The Multiplicity of Cultural Identities**

Recent studies of culture, conceptualize it as a multi-level and multi-layer construct (Tung, 2008; Leung et al., 2005). Based on the idea of interacting cultural spheres (Schneider and Barsoux, 2003) and meta-theory of culture (Chao & Moon, 2005), it can be rightly argued that individuals and the organizations consist of multiple cultural memberships that emerge from different social identities. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) explains how an individual's self-concept can be understood with reference to his or her group memberships. Based on this theory, we categorize people into different groups. Although social identity theory identifies only two groups, being an in-group and an out-group, however, Tajfel (1981) exhorted that various group identities shape up the social identity of an individual. Significant groups or the group to which individuals are emotionally attached, generally draw most significant impact on an individual's social identity and also help guide the self-image of an individual and his relationships with others (Diez, Gillespie, & Chao, 2010).



## 5.2. Cross-Cultural Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge transfer across cultural boundaries, regardless of being intra- or inter-organizational, might be more complicated, since it involves different cultures which influence how people receive, process, interpret, and utilize the knowledge (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Despite growing emphasis on knowledge management and knowledge sharing, it is noted by the experts that effective sharing and transfer of knowledge among the employees of any organization, is not free from challenges (Holden, 2002; Edwards & Kidd, 2003), keeping in view the sticky nature of knowledge, which means that knowledge is rooted human mind (Von Hippel 1994). Multiple individual, organizational and technological barriers impede the successful transfer and sharing of knowledge (Szulanski 1996), and these obstacles to KS arise emerge when the knowledge is exchanged among the employees belonging to different cultures and contexts (Zander & Kogut 1995; Gupta & Govindarajan 2000). Recent research studies on organizational learning and knowledge management (Hambrick et al., Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000; and Hutchings & Michailova, 2004) signpost that organizational knowledge creation and sharing is deeply affected by cultural differences and individual employees' norms and values.

That is why according to Bertels and Savage (1999) *“knowledge management is becoming increasingly the management of the transfer of knowledge generated by cross-cultural teams”*. As Doz and Santos (1997) have correctly pointed out, this *“involves the management of knowledge in a single administrative system, but residing in a dispersed and differentiated locations”*. The literature on knowledge management presents a common view that cultural characteristics influence the way the knowledge is created and shared (McDermott & O'Dell, 2001; De Long & Fahey, 2000; Inkpen & Dinur, 1998). Numerous researchers (e.g., Holden, 2001; Ford & Chan, 2003; Chow et al., 2000; Hutchings & Michailova, 2004) have thrown light on how to create knowledge and share knowledge amid cultural barriers, whether between

different companies or different national cultures. This is worth mentioning here that knowledge creation and sharing across different cultures is not free from challenges and the organizations need to properly address these issues if they want to facilitate the process of knowledge sharing among their employees (Ardichvili et al., 2006). A work environment consisting of the mixture of people belonging to various cultural and ethnic backgrounds can lead to significant misunderstandings among the fellow workers and this dimension is expected to impact the knowledge sharing behaviors of those individuals (Ardichvili et al., 2006). This is endorsed by Bhagat et al. (2002) and Simonin (1999) when they emphasize that dissimilarities between social environment and the mindset of employees in the organizations may influence the employees' abilities to acquire new knowledge, which can create additional challenges for the transfer and sharing of knowledge. Although many organizations perceive diversity to be essential element of improved performance (Lockwood, 2005), yet researchers (e.g., Palich & Gomez-Mejia 1999; Puck, Rygl & Kittler 2006) have argued that the higher the degree of cultural diversity in the organization, the lower the organizational performance and extent of knowledge sharing in that organization.

Moreover, studies on cognitive issues regarding learning and knowledge creation acclaim that individual employees' cognitive styles are also influenced by their respective cultural backgrounds (Korac-Kakabadze & Kouzmin, 1999). According to research findings different ethnic groups possess different preferences for symbolic versus semantic learning and cognition, and also tend to show different forms of visual and verbal presentation of their learning and know how (Ginsburg et al., 1981). Keeping in view the fact that knowledge is codified produced and reproduced, learning can take place only if both sharer and receiver possess the same meaning of the words and possess a common mental level. Based on this idea, Liu and Vince (1999) as well as Bedward, Jankowicz and Rexworthy (2003) emphasise

upon mutual collaboration of the sharer and receiver of the knowledge with respect to examination, creation or exchange of the knowledge in order to make the knowledge sharing a success. Supporting this idea, Holsapple (2003, p.201) suggests “that the learning processes are intrinsically social and collective and occur not only through the imitation and emulation of individuals, as with teacher-student or master and apprentice, but also because of joint contributions to the understanding of complex problems”.

Therefore, analyzing and understanding the knowledge sharing strategies, trends and styles of the organizational members belonging to different cultural backgrounds is and should be as one of the fundamental assumptions of successful designing of effective and flexible KM systems. This may include being adaptable to varying learning and sharing styles, needs and preferences of the employees belonging to different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Ardichvili et al., 2006, p.95).

### **5.2.1. Dearth of Research and Literature Gap**

Numerous writers (e.g., Davenport & Prusak & Bresmann in Holden (2002); Holden, (2002), Woodrow’s & Tamulionyte-Lentz, 2000; Gill & Butler, 1996; Shaw, 2001; Lang & Steger, 2002; Cornuel & Kletz, 2001) firmly believe that experts of the field of knowledge management so far, have not been successful in providing reasonable resolutions for the unproductive and erroneous transferability and management of knowledge. On the other side, Ardichvili et al. (2006) argue that despite increasing recognition and emphasis on the influence of culture on knowledge sharing, still there is a lack of needed evidence in the said field. Even the available research studies on the subject matter are missing an appropriate approach and rigor with respect to constructs and methodologies of the analysis of cross-cultural knowledge

sharing. This is why, Apfelthaler (1998), Holden, (2002) and Gupta and Govindarajan (2002), argue that conceptual work as well as empirical evidence regarding cross-cultural KS is in the embryonic stage. Referring to the literature gap about knowledge transferability, Easterby-Smith (1997) and Holden (2002) endorse that in the light of cross-cultural perspective, organisational learning has been an under researched area. Ford and Chan (2003) also argue that research in the areas of knowledge sharing and cross-cultural issues have been conducted separately, resulting in the nonappearance of a literature combining the two fields together. Confirming this statement, Zhu (2004, p.75) underlines the need for empirical research focusing on “comparative panoramas on the root, internal logic, functioning, effect and problematic in and cross diverse cultural-institutional settings”. Jaeger (in Bolton, 1999) and Bradley and Darrel (2001) emphasise upon the development of a synergistic approach combining cultural measurements into future representations of trans-national knowledge sharing. Moreover, Apfelthaler (1998) criticizes that the literature on cross-cultural training provides a list of related variables, but, reflecting very little improvement within solid content and methods over the years and lacking proper understanding of the factors of cross-cultural efficiency.

Another important issue in this context is that the most of the research studies and available literature comes from Western world, and the application of those concepts in Eastern parts of the world is not risk free. As Lang & Steger (2002) while focussing on Central Eastern European countries identified serious pitfalls in applying Western social scientific research on knowledge transferability in EEC, and therefore recommended a new approach. This supports the idea that management models of West cannot simply be transferred to East or from one continent to other, due to the difference of cultural factors. This declaration is reinforced by Mironshnik (2002) and Woodrow and Tamulionyte-Lentz (2000, p.1), stressing that “we heard

repeatedly that what Western consultancies offered was often rejected outright because there are too few antecedents on the Central and Eastern European experience for people to find Western management techniques credible or culturally congruent". Shaw (2001) has also questioned the applicability and validity of the western models to be applied in East. Blind application of knowledge emerging from an idiosyncratic cultural environment, on other cultures can cause distress on the other cultures; since organizational culture cannot escape the influence national culture (Hofstede, 1980). Consequently, Geppert & Clark (2003, p.3) suggest, "Knowledge transfer and institution building are therefore moderated and mediated by local ideas, rather than unidirectionally copied". Based on the above discussion, in order to make knowledge sharing productive, organizations have no option than to understand the very concept of culture and its impact on knowledge sharing.

### 5.2.2. Cross-cultural Differences in Knowledge Sharing Patterns

In the discussion of cultural influences on KM, Cohen (1998) has schematically summarized the East-West KM contrasts. While comparing the two, he argues that in the East for example, focus remains on the creation of tacit knowledge-by-knowledge communities through the knowledge cultures, under the umbrella of nurturing and love for the long-term use of that knowledge. Whereas in the West; focus remains on the reuse of explicit knowledge by knowledge projects, through the knowledge markets under the umbrella of management and measurement for the short term use of that knowledge. This can be seen in the light of table given below:

| <b>WEST</b>                   | <b>EAST</b>              |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| * Focus on Explicit Knowledge | Focus on Tacit Knowledge |
| * Re-Use                      | Creation                 |
| * Knowledge Projects          | Knowledge Cultures       |
| * Knowledge Markets           | Knowledge communities    |
| * Management and Measurement  | Nurturing and Love       |
| * Near-Term Gains             | Long-Term Advantage      |

Following Cohen's notion, Zhu (2004) has attempted to explore a cross-cultural, cross-institutional context to examine whether KM is a universal concept or not. Zhu's findings provide handsome amount of various KM styles and approaches developed in different cultures and backgrounds. Zhu (2004) with the help of many examples has made a contrast and comparison among the American, the Japanese, the European and the Chinese approaches to KS.

In order to understand the impact of culture on knowledge sharing we can seek guidance from the studies of Hofstede (2001), Trompenaars (1994) and Triandis (1995). In the context of intercultural interaction, the work of Hofstede undoubtedly counts to be one of the most popular ones (Wilkesmann et al., 2009). In 1980s he analysed thousands of the employees of IBM, and based on that developed five dimensions for the study and comparison of various cultures including: individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation. With little difference, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997) also follow Hofstede's tradition in focusing on culturally shared values of business executives (Adler, 2002). 69). Many scholars criticised the work of Hofstede (Hanges & Marcus, 2004, Wilkesmann et al., 2009), and others have questioned its use due to being presented about 35 years ago and based on only one organization i.e. IBM. However, despite being aware of the criticism on Hofstede, the researcher considers Hofstede's suggested dimensions as relevant for the analysis of the influence of culture on knowledge sharing.

GLOBE is another widely used model for cultural analysis. Conducted in 1990, GLOBE is based on the cultural study/analysis of 62 countries and unlike Hofstede's model, which is based on a single company analysis, GLOBE is based on the analysis/study of 951 organizations (House et al., 2004). Like Trompenaar's and Hampden-Turner's some parameters of GLOBE model are almost similar to those of Hofstede's suggested dimensions/parameters. Some scholars prefer GLOBE model for cross-cultural analysis due to being relatively latest than those of Hofstede, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaar (Wilkesmann et al., 2009). The researcher has selected four dimensions of the GLOBE study which can be relevant to the sharing of knowledge including: in group collectivism, power distance; performance orientation, and uncertainty avoidance and interestingly these dimensions are discussed by Hofstede and other researchers also. GLOBE developed another

five dimensions including: assertiveness, future orientation, institutional collectivism human orientation, and gender Egalitarianism, which are excluded from this study (House et al., 2004).

Below is the analysis of the impact of culture on knowledge sharing:

### ***a. Individualism and Collectivism***

No doubt, individualism and collectivism has been one of the most significant criterion being applied in cross-cultural studies and comparisons. The individualism vs collectivism dimension has gained popularity in organizational sciences studies after the well-known ground-breaking work of Hofstede (1980, 1991). A large number of researchers (e.g., Erez & Earley, 1993; Earley & Gibson. 1998; Hofstede, 1980, 1991, 1994; Triandis, 1989, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2000) have noted that the individualism-collectivism dimension of cultural comparison is one of most significant item to be used for analyzing and comparing the different cultures and societies of the world to understand the behavioral trends of their people and patterns of information processing (Bhagat et al., 2002). Individualism refers to the tendency of the members of a society to perceive their personal goals and wellbeing being ahead of the goals and benefits of a larger social group, e.g. an organization, family or community. Collectivism on the other side, places more emphasis on the goals, expectations of larger group of the society e.g., e.g. a family, community or organization ahead of individuals' benefits or expectations. In other words, in individualism, individuals' rights are perceived to be more important and in collectivism, society is perceived to be more important than the rights of individuals (Hofstede, 2001). This often directs the actions of individuals towards the service and wellbeing of the larger community or society overall (Trompenaars, 1994). Triandis (1995) has also given a definition which further clarifies the distinction between individualism and



collectivism. According to him, members of individualistic cultures perceive themselves as independent of others, whereas collectivists treat themselves as interdependent with other members of society, in many cases with members of a specific in-group.

With regard to knowledge sharing behaviours in the context on individualism and collectivism, Fong et al. (2013) note that a society keeping a higher score on individualism, might be less favorable to stimulate knowledge sharing; since individualists mostly tend to believe in self being and depend on themselves instead of others, hence, they usually do not feel inclined to receive or share knowledge with others. Bhagat et al. (2002) note that both individualistic or collectivist strongly impact the patterns of thinking; particularly, with regard to processing, interpreting and making use of the body of knowledge. This carries evidence that with regard to processing information, individualists generally adopt an “objective” approach by treating “themselves” as “independent” to immediate surroundings and perceiving each piece of information being separate from its context (Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). On the other hand, people in collectivist societies try to adopt “subjective” stance when they receive the information. They try to look for contextual cues in each piece of information and see “themselves” as “interdependent” with others within their immediate social atmosphere (Triandis, 1995, 1998; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kagitcibasi, 1997). Secondly, when the knowledge relates to organizational history, norms and values, work rules, patterns of obligations, in-group out-group issues, collectivists tend to be very much interested and pay attention to it. They tend to be sensitive for attaining, comprehending, disseminating and applying this type of knowledge. On the contrary, individualists tend to be more likely to be attentive and enthusiastic in attaining and retaining such type of knowledge, which relates to individual personality characteristics, such as feelings, attitudes actions and reactions toward an event, person or object (Bhagat, Kedia, Haiveston & Tiiandis, 2002). Individualists tend to

show rationality in receiving and sharing knowledge compared to collectivists (Bhawuk, 2001; Triandis, 1998). Thirdly, in making sense to events, collectivists as compared to individualists, signify the contextual and historical information. With regard to being written or codified of information, people in collectivist societies tend to be less concerned than individualists to emphasize the codified or written form of information and less likely than individualists to disregard that information. In contrast individualists don't look for information in its contextual form, and signify the written or codified form of information (Kagitcibasi, 1997; Triandis, 1990, 1995, 1998).

### ***b. Sharing of knowledge within and outside the group***

Another interesting dimension of cultural difference of knowledge sharing relates to in-group and out-group orientation. Members of collectivist societies like India, China and Russia generally tend to be very much conscious about the presence of in-group and out-group membership while sharing of information. For example, while analysing and comparing the factors influencing knowledge sharing behaviours between American and Chinese managers, Chow et al. (2000), found that Chinese managers were seen to be very reluctant to share the information with someone out of their group as compared to their counterpart American managers. Likewise, while explaining the group orientation, Hutchings and Michailova (2004), maintain that in China one's association and affiliation with some group tends to be so much important that it reflects in all daily activities of that individual and becomes the source of loyalty, identity and protection and works as a reference in all agreements and job hunting etc. According to Ashwin (1996) as cited by Hutchings and Michailova (2004), the same phenomenon is observed in Russia, with the name "obshina" whose roots are linked with the communal traditions of hundreds of years in Russian society. The implication of the in-group versus out-group difference demonstrates the fact that collectivists tend to be more likely to

share information with their in-group members, thus attempting to serve the interests of their group instead of pursuing their self-interest or other groups' interests. On the other side, individualists, who lack such strong group affiliation, may not be willing to share information even within their immediate colleagues. This group orientation can be detrimental to overall organizational learning and knowledge sharing, (Hutchings and Michailova, 2004), since strong in-group orientation is often accompanied by negative feelings towards out-groups (Ashwin, 1996).

### ***c. Power Distance***

An important dimension of culture according to GLOBE and Hofstede (1980) is power distance (House et al., 2004). People in power distant societies perceive their own “being” to be distinctive or superior to others in terms of social class, social status and social identity, whereas in low power distant cultures people perceive their own "being" to be almost the same like others (Bhawuk, 2001; Chen, Meindl, & Hunt, 1997; Triandis, 1995, 1998; Triandis & Bhawuk, 1997). In power distant cultures, the flow of information follows top to bottom pattern within the firms, in a way that seniors or people on the top tend to have first right or access to any significant pieces of information being coming from within or outside the organization. Top level managers may also have the authority to decide about the time and place of disseminating that knowledge. They might even withhold some part or whole of that information. This is also worth mentioning here that the superiors may even not have the technical abilities and relevant expertise to make such important decisions about the distribution of that knowledge. However, by only virtue of their higher position or status in the organization, they tend to enjoy such rights and privileges. Moreover, the use of language takes different shape for different situations in power distant cultures, where contents and forms of

greetings and messages also vary according to the status of the sender and receiver (Bhagat et al., 2002).

Prior research on the influence of power-distance on knowledge sharing with regard to combined working of the organizational members belonging to high and low power distance cultures, has mixed findings. On the one hand, some researchers argued that if the knowledge sharer or provider belongs to low power-distance culture and the receiver or acquirer belongs to high power-distance culture, knowledge sharing will be at ease and will have lower resistance barriers and greater success. In such a case, the accommodating and facilitating role of the sharer of the knowledge will make the whole process of knowledge sharing conducive and trouble free. (Almeida & Kogut 1999; Holtbrügge & Berg, 2004). On the other hand, cultural misalignment can have a negative impact on knowledge transfer. For example, if the knowledge sharer belongs to high power distance culture and the receiver belongs to lower power distance culture, then the process of sharing will not be that much easy and conducive because of the autocratic attitude of the sharer. US-Japanese joint ventures show that knowledge sharing and learning often is hampered and failed when the knowledge providers instead of respecting, try to impose their standards on their foreign counterparts. (Inkpen, 1996). According to Hall (1976), in high power cultures, like India, Brazil and China, people tend to emphasize on non-verbal clues and the contextual setting to develop sense; hence, they tend to use high media richness communication channels like, one-to-one communication or phone calls. On the other hand, the members of low power distance cultures: like, Germany, USA or Scandinavia etc. do not try to seek meaning from context or environment; since they tend not to perceive information from the environment.

#### ***d. Tolerance for Risk***

Another important element of cultural manifestation as mentioned in GLOBE is tolerance for risk taking (House et al., 2004). Keeping in view the influence of culture on individuals' behaviors, it is not illogical to expect that individuals' tendency and attitude towards risk taking should be heavily impacted by national culture and as a result of that, affecting the knowledge sharing behaviors of the individuals. This, for example, might be observed as "knowledge-sharing" versus "knowledge hoarding" behavior (King, 2007), since individuals tend to have lots of risks in their minds regarding the sharing of knowledge (Patrick, Rourke and Phillips, 2000), therefore, it definitely reflects in their attitude towards sharing of knowledge. Barton (1995) portrays the above idea in the best way that by emphasizing those values they provide a knowledge-screening and control mechanism. While in cultures having low score on uncertainty avoidance like Japan, Canada and Europe etc. knowledge sharing might be seen as a very formal process, following strict rules and as a result of that it might require a long time to develop knowledge management system to support knowledge transfer, cultures with high score on uncertainty avoidance, knowledge transfer might be more unorganized and informal and less restricted by rules and responsibilities (Wilkesman et al., 2009). People may be less concerned about testing the validity and reliability and quality of the shared information (Wilkesman et al., 2009).

#### ***e. The Performance Orientation***

The performance orientation dimension of GLOBE refers to the extent of rewarding the efforts of individuals by selective incentives about performing their duties. The research suggests that the cultures with high performance orientation will reward for transferring knowledge and can

punish for withholding the information. In high performance oriented culture like Japan, China or Hong Kong measurement and incentive schemes could be essential part of steering knowledge flows (Wilkesman et al., 2009).

### 5.3. Issues of translating knowledge from one language to other

Another noticeable issue in the domain of cross-cultural knowledge sharing is that of translating knowledge from one language to other as Venzin (1998) has noted, knowledge is “generated in different language systems, cultures and contexts and if any of these elements change, knowledge also changes”. That is why numerous scholars theorize the act of knowledge sharing as a form of translation (Holding et al. 2004). Hurn (1996) recognizes international management in terms of translating one’s own knowledge from his or her own cultural environment. Similarly, Garvin (1988) has made a valuable contribution in Harvard Business Review by urging the firms to translate new knowledge into new ways in the light of behavioral patterns. Dixon, (2000) another authority on knowledge management, has recognized that knowledge is translated into a form usable by others.

Based on the above explanation, it is quite rational to say that translation in fact, is a type of knowledge transfer, which aims at eliminating language barriers among people by forming a shared cognitive ground among them. However, the translation of knowledge from one language to other is full of issues, challenges and constraints. With regard to cross-cultural translations, at least two factors are important: interference, which refers to indiscreet errors from one’s own background and second lack of equivalence, which refers to deficiency of words or concepts that can be equivalent to produce the meaning or sense of certain words in other languages (Holding & Kortzfleisch, 2004).

***Interference*** refers to the usage of words, which look the same in different languages, but mean differently. For instance, French word licence does not always mean the same as in case of English word license. Among others, it can mean a university degree or membership of a sports

federation (Thody & Evans, 1985). Almost every learner of foreign language, up to a large extent, is influenced by the grammatical structures, vocabulary pronunciation issues among his and other learning language. Sometimes these deviations or errors may be so severe as to create literal ambiguities and make a person unintelligible. For example, a French speaker having an unsure command of English may say: 'I work here since three years' ('I have been working here for three years'). A German also with a relatively weak command of English might say: 'I worked here for three years'. In this case he means 'I worked there three years ago' (German 'vor', meaning 'ago' being confused with, and pronounced the same as, the English word 'for' as a temporal adverb) (Holding & Kortzfleisch, 2004). Sometimes the interference can result in amusing scenes. For example, in Arabic languages, there is no alphabetical letter which can produce the sound of P so Arabs generally use B instead of P. Once an Arab wanted to park the car somewhere in some building so he asked the security guard "Sir can I bark (park) here? The security guard replied "Yes you can bark but don't bite". Often some foreigners feel difficulty to distinguish between the English 'u' sound and 'a' sound (for example, in butter and batter). An English man while talking to a Russian said 'We have a lot of Russians in England'. The former (shocked): 'You still have rations in England?' (Holden et al., 1998).

The above-mentioned confusions are observed into millions of everyday cross-cultural conversations. Some of these might be ignored, others might be overcome and still some others may result in complications and distortion of the true meaning and sense one may want to convey to someone else. For instance, Japanese while speaking English can create confusion for others being influenced by Japanese protocols of politeness. In cross conversation, Japanese instead of categorically refusing a request mostly say: 'I'll think about it'. This may make the receiver of the reply as hopeful, whereas it actually means that there "there is no way I am going to do anything about it" (Holden et al. 1998). Another issue is that of obfuscation



(Nathan, 1999). How many foreigners for example, are aware that when an English man says “We must meet up some time”, in English society it means opposite intention? It simply refers to a decent way of conveying that an additional meeting is not actually desirable.

Finding the *equivalence of a word* of one language in other is also a very important issue of consideration for knowledge managers, especially when it comes to cross-cultural interactions. As Sager (1994) has noted: “Translation consists of producing in the target language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, firstly with respect to meaning and secondly with respect to style”. This offers a valuable insight into cross-cultural conversion. For instance, there is no straight equivalent of the American English word ‘manager’ in European languages. The words ‘der Manager’ and ‘le manager’ in French and German and French languages respectively, don’t convey real sense of word ‘manager’, because, there is a tendency in such languages to depersonalize manager into an abstract noun meaning management. Likewise, the Danish word ‘ledelse’ connotes ‘leading’, but without the essence of American sense of business leadership. In the same way the word marketing is difficult to translate in many languages e.g. Japanese and especially the languages of the former socialist world (Holden, 1998). Therefore, in such languages, the word ‘marketing’ remains in English form, overlaying distinctive nuances in each of these.

#### **5.4. Is Cultural Difference a Facilitating or Impeding Factor for Knowledge Sharing?**

An important research question of this study is to explore whether cultural diversity or language dissimilarity is a facilitating or impeding factor for knowledge sharing. Previous research findings also have established cultural diversity as a key factor influencing knowledge sharing and cooperation within the firm (Hartel & Fujimoto 2000; Hobman, Bordia & Gallois 2004; Mitchell, Nicholas & Boyle 2009). But the question whether cultural difference is a facilitating or impeding factor for knowledge sharing has mixed answers, since there has been disagreement among scholars as to whether cultural diversity is a facilitating or impeding factor for knowledge transfer. Because according to King (2007) culture is both important to, and problematic for, Knowledge sharing.

Some researchers (Palich & Gomez-Mejia 1999; Puck, Rygl & Kittler 2006) believe that a higher degree of cultural diversity within an organization can lead to worse organizational performance and less effective organizational knowledge sharing. In an empirical study conducted in 431 US and European companies by Ernst and Young (Ruggles, 1998) culture was determined to be the biggest impediment to knowledge transfer. In the findings of this research in fact culture stood as impediment No. 1 in the ranking. In a theoretical domain, “cultural barriers’ have been identified as one of two major categories that ‘make it difficult to realize the full value of knowledge management’ (McCann and Buckner, 2004, p. 47).

On the contrary, literature on knowledge management suggests that cross cultural teams tend to be more conducive for facilitating knowledge management processes than those where cultural homogeneity exists (Haas, 2006). For example, Haas explored that individuals belonging to heterogeneous backgrounds while working in trans-national teams proved to be

more likely to acquire technical knowledge at a faster rate than individuals with no previous experience of working abroad. In the study, the author concluded that knowledge transfer could be facilitated by recruiting individuals with a rich cultural awareness. Many other scholars also perceive cultural diversity to be better for superior organizational performance (Lockwood, 2005) and knowledge sharing (Zhu, 2004). Most of the studies found that cultural diversity of the workforce draws positive impacts on organizations' performance and can lead the organization towards competitive advantage (Lockwood, 2005). O'Reilly, Williams & Barsade (1997) argue that by having a diversified workforce, companies can capitalize on multiple and versatile skills, talents and insights of the organizational members to efficiently integrate different work perspectives. In a study conducted by O'Reilly et al. (1997) in an organization being famous for having a leadership position in group diversity issues, found that the work groups composed of culturally heterogeneous employees were more creative and better able to implement new ideas as compared to culturally (Williams & O'Reilly, 1998). Same applies to knowledge transfer in a culturally diversified work environment. For example, Cummings (2004) found that external knowledge sharing was more strongly associated with performance when work groups were more structurally diverse. Fong et al. (2013) in their research endorsed the findings of Cummings.

Hence, many organizations, instead of a problem, consider cultural diversity of the workforce as an asset and facilitating factor for knowledge sharing. However, if the companies want to effectively capitalize on the diversity views and perspectives, individuals in those companies need to be open to diversity, and view it as an advantage, not an impeding factor (Cabrera, Collins & Salgado, 2006). For individuals to learn effectively from colleagues of a different culture, they must be open to diversity and to work with others belonging to different backgrounds and ethnicities (Ambos & Ambos, 2009). An organization's ability to seek

knowledge and make it useful, largely depends on its systems for monitoring, collecting and applying the new knowledge to its existing knowledge base. Such absorptive capacities of the organizations according to Cohen & Levinthal (1990) tend to be mainly determined by cultural constraints (Kedia & Bhagat, 1988).

## 5.5. Empirical Evidence

The overarching influence of culture on KS has been evidenced in a number of research studies conducted in various contexts and settings all around the globe with mixed findings. Some scholars (e.g., Palich & Gomez-Mejia 1999; Puck, Rygl & Kittler 2006;) are of the opinion that that cultural diversification of a higher level within a company can result in reduced organizational performance and less smooth knowledge sharing among organizational members and others believe cultural diversity it as barriers (e.g., Luring, 2009; Peltokorpi, 2006; Ford & Chan 2002; Husted & Michailova 2002; Bhagat et al., 2002) in the process of effective knowledge sharing. In an empirical study conducted by Ernst and Young on 431 American and European companies culture emerged as impediment No 1 to knowledge transfer (Ruggles, 1998). From theoretical perspective, “cultural barriers’ have been identified as one of two major categories that ‘make it difficult to realize the full value of knowledge management” (McCann & Buckner, 2004, p. 47).

### 5.5.1. Research Studies Finding Cultural Diversity as a Barrier for Knowledge Sharing

The inter-cultural study of Peltokorpi (2006) on knowledge sharing trends between Scandinavian companies and their affiliates in Japan found cultural variation as an obstacle towards KS; due to difference of culture, languages, value systems and mind-sets. In their research, the participants reported many issues and complications of cross-cultural knowledge sharing; including misapprehensions, difference of work values and knowledge sharing trends and lack of trust. Most of the Scandinavian respondents shared their concerns regarding the non-cooperative attitude of their corresponding Japanese colleagues. The Nordic participants

reported some biases and a kind of clear discrimination between them and their Japanese counterparts, complaining that their Japanese colleagues mostly avoided to mix up with them and preferred to keep within the circle of Japanese associates. In the view of Nordic participants, the collectivist trends of groupism and hierarchical power differences oriented communication barriers also made the process of KS problematic; since Japanese colleagues did not furnish the needed data to the Nordic colleagues only due to being afraid of the upper managers (Peltokorpi, 2006). The findings of Peltokorpi (2006) on the complications in the process of knowledge sharing emanating from collectivist knowledge sharing tendencies like groupism and hierarchical distance-based differences, were also corroborated in the similar kind of study of Wilksmann et al. (2009) conducted in a German company and its Hong Kong-based employees. The empirical study of Sackmann and Friesly (2007) focused on the analysis of knowledge sharing during intercultural simulations also evidenced cultural dissimilarity as an impending phenomenon. Their findings noted that a significant cause of the barriers resulting from cross-cultural knowledge sharing emerged from the group-identity syndrome. The researchers evidenced better coordination and productive sharing of knowledge within homogeneous as compared to heterogeneous groups, who were observed to be strongly inclined towards group identity. The insider outsider group biases were reported as facilitating the knowledge sharing within the group members and blocking the same among outside group members (Sackmann & Friesly, 2007). In his study conducted in a multi-cultural setting of a Danish trans-national corporation, Luring (2009) also came up with the similar types of findings; reporting a number of complications of the inter-cultural knowledge sharing. The researcher evidenced clear segregation between Danish and non-Danish workers in knowledge sharing trends as well as in other collaborative facets. Majority of non-Danish staff reported that their Danish colleagues avoided to mingle with them. Language differences aggravated the disturbance and despite most of them were good at English (the official language of the

company); even then language differences blocked the sharing of knowledge. The researcher categorically observed smooth and effective sharing of knowledge both in terms of depth and breadth between Danish employees and problematic among Danish and non-Danish employee, restricted to only essential official requirements (Lauring, 2009). A European-based study of cross-cultural project teams conducted by Siaks et al (2010) could not find cultural dissimilarity as a contributory factor for inter-employee knowledge sharing. The interviewees shared loads of issues and complications of the cross-cultural KS including: challenges of adjustment with company practices of European firms, adapting to rigorous European Union related rules, difference of thoughts and beliefs on various issues and ideas, variance of backgrounds and expectations, misapprehensions due to cultural dissimilarities, language-related barriers and much more. Cummings (2004) and Gibson & Gibbs (2006) also found a negative influence of cultural variation on innovative capability of teams particularly psychologically less secure environments. Similar kinds of outcomes emerged from the investigation of Van Knippenberg et al (2004), who discovered potentially unproductive effects of cultural diversification in the form of group differences and damages team cohesiveness. In the similar vein, the findings of the research of Rosendaal (2009) approve the idea that a culturally dissimilar teams can emerge as a threat to cooperation among teammates regarding knowledge sharing, noting that “Working on stronger integration seems to be a proper way out, but this solution may have a price” (p.12). In a study conducted by Dube & Ngulube, (2012) in cross-cultural university teaching staff of a university; knowledge sharing severely suffered a number of problems due to cultural differences, language differences and lack of trust among the members. An interview extract from one of the participant typifies the racial biases of the staff with regard to sharing of knowledge; “People appear to have no problems with sharing knowledge across the various divides of the rainbow nation, but questions arise on the genuineness of the exercise. I am of the view that sharing is superficial. When it comes to in-depth knowledge

there are cliques. In meetings, for example, people do not contribute. Instead of asking questions people prefer to have mini-meetings that are clearly defined by racial and gender boundaries, after most Departmental meetings. At superficial level I would say yes, but at another level you choose the people with whom you want to share. In the meetings everybody says everything is fine, but you would be surprised to discover that certain individuals then go to the office of the Chair of Department to comment negatively about other people's work, conduct and abilities" (p.71). Kim (2018) also evidenced geographic diversity being negatively associated with KS and took cultural diversity as an implied factor of geographic diversity as she comments, "Therefore, physical barriers and national diversity may have jointly influenced knowledge-sharing outcomes. Although the current study did not delve into whether members perceived cultural differences as a significant obstacle for knowledge exchange, potential effects of national diversity should be taken into account. Cultural diversity leads to process losses through task conflict and decreased social integration (Stahl et al., 2010), which may bring about more adverse influences in the context of organizational restructuring" (Kim, 2018, P.22). The cross-cultural study of Wei & Miraglia (2017) conducted in China also documented negative imprints of culture on KS, as the researchers note, By contrast, project managers were more likely to hoard their knowledge completely, or share it only to a limited extent, with colleagues who were not part of those groups. In this respect, a striking piece of evidence was that such knowledge-hoarding behaviour was particularly recurrent when special and innovative technical insights were most needed in projects of strategic importance. These projects were often characterized by fierce competition between project members, due to the widely shared belief that special technical knowledge should be almost subject to individual ownership rights and, in absence of alternative mechanisms of protection of intellectual property, it was acceptable to hoard it" (p.583).



## 5.5.2. Research Studies Finding Cultural Diversity as a Facilitator for Knowledge Sharing

On the other hand, a number of researchers and scholars have viewed organizational openness to cultural diversity as a success factor for smoothing knowledge sharing within the firm (Mitchell, Nicholas & Boyle 2009; Hartel & Fujimoto 2000). These studies suggested that cultural workforce diversity leaves positive effects on organizational functioning can lead the firms towards achievement of competitive advantage (Lockwood, 2005). This has been empirically tested by many researchers. For example, in an empirical study, O'Reilly, Williams & Barsade (1997) found cultural dissimilarity being a positive factor for the sharing of knowledge, arguing a diversified staff can enable the firms to capitalize on multipurpose skills, insights and experiences of the organizational staff merging divergent work values, perspectives, methods and backgrounds. Haas (2006) in his research on diversified project teams discovered that local employees furnish key data about local conditions, trade practices, market behaviours and business dynamics and share their expertise with nonlocals. Haas (2006) also evidenced that while working in multi-national firms, organizational members belonging to heterogeneous backgrounds seemed to be more likely to obtain technical knowledge relatively faster than those having no previous exposure of working abroad. In the conclusion of the study the author noted that knowledge transfer could be improved by appointing employees possessing a rich cultural awareness (Haas, 2006). Based on these views, firms perceive cultural diversity as a very valuable organizational resource (Fong et al., 2013). In a study conducted at a company being famous for having a leading role in diversity related issues, it was found that a diversified workgroup consisting of Asian and white employees proved to be more creative and capable of implementing new ideas than the homogenous groups, composed of all white employees or other ethnicities (O'Reilly et. al; 1997). Same applies to knowledge transfer in a culturally diversified work environment. Cummings (2004)

for example in his study discovered external knowledge sharing being much better and also linked with team performance, when actually teams structurally were more diverse and his findings were endorsed Fong et al. (2013). Fong et al. (2013), observed inter-cultural variance being very much effective and conducive for knowledge transfer in their study of a Norwegian company and its employees in Vietnamese subsidiaries. In their study, unlike other studies, none of the 70 interviewees shared any issue related to sharing of knowledge among the staff belonging to two culturally divergent nations. In another empirical study, Luring & Slemer (2012) evidenced cultural diversity to be positively linked with knowledge transfer in their cross-cultural study conducted at three Danish universities. Instead of cultural, they found demographic diversity as a barrier to knowledge sharing. However, in the light of their findings, they noted that task relatedness tends to have a moderating effect on sharing knowledge in cross-cultural teams. In a US based study, Pinjani & Palvia, (2013) observed cultural variation as a contributory factor for knowledge transfer and posited that despite cultural diversity entails higher challenges for the firms, yet, it nurtures relationship building among organizational members and leads towards higher level of team performance. Ado et al. (2017) evidenced cross-cultural within Africa-China joint ventures to be a contributory factor with respect to KS and enhanced learning of Africans from Chinese through informal gatherings and collaboration. Hence, many organizations, instead of a problem, consider cultural diversity of the workforce as an asset and facilitating factor for knowledge sharing.

### **5.5.3. Research Studies with Mixed Findings**

Some research studies have come up with mixed kinds of results after their analysis of the impact of cultural diversity on knowledge sharing among organizational members. The study of Ford and Chan (2002) for example produced mixed results; in their study more number of

respondents were in favour of cultural diversity and despite the researchers observed some clear-cut culture-based groupings among the organizational members and language-based barriers in communication, but, still respondents did not identify substantial multicultural disagreements. Ford and Chan (2002) evidenced some cultural dissimilarities, but, at no place any participant came up with negative feelings regarding cross-cultural knowledge sharing and even the disagreements were functional and constructive not dysfunctional or reproachful. Singaporean study conducted by Dulaimi (2007), also yielded some mixed findings. Four projects were chosen for analysing the cross-cultural trends in knowledge sharing. Out of four, three projects managed by Japanese cultural knowledge sharing suffered at the hands of cultural diversity between Japanese and Singaporean colleagues. Singaporean workers reported lots of issues and difficulties in knowledge transfer; including lack of cooperation, trust and deliberate hoarding of information from their Japanese colleagues. However, in the fourth venture, managed by a German company, the sharing of knowledge went quite smoothly and trouble-freely between Singaporeans and Germans. No knowledge transfer related issue was shared by local Singaporean workers unlike the three projects that were run by Japanese (Dulaimi, 2007). The study of Shachaf (2008) based on the data collected from the employees of nine countries of a Fortune 500 company also produced mixed results.

## 5.6. Influence of Culture on Trust Development

### 5.6.1. Cultural Bases of Trust Differences

Keeping in view the findings that the national culture shapes up 25–50% of the human attitudes (Gannon and Associates, 1994), an organized and systematic study of the influence of cultural foundations on the development of trust posits a compelling need for conducting research in this area (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006). National culture, generally, powerfully influences trust building process, which is why; many authors have focused on the study of impact of cultural differences on trust building across and societies. Doney et al. (1998) have theorized how specific cultural norms and values relate affect the cultivation of trust. Arin˜o et al. (2001) argue that differences in value systems across cultures are likely to affect trust building, not only with respect to the degree but also, also with respect to the nature and type of trust.

Due to increasing global integration, cultural boundaries among the nation states are becoming fuzzy but cultural variations at the corporate level become more prominent and pervasive (Fukuyama, 1995). The trust in organizational settings is influenced by cultural similarity or difference in a cross-cultural setting and consequently, the shorter the cultural distance between parties, the higher the level of building trust between them. Chen, Chen and Meindl (1998) posit that people belonging to similar cultural background generally tend to use a similar form of trust (e.g., internal vs external or cognitive vs. affective). McAllister (1995) maintains that trust building will be much easier and meaningful if the two parties share a common trust form and difficult if they possess a different form of trust and according to Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) fewer cultural differences increase trustor's motivation for trust and reduce the likelihood of trust betrayal.

### 5.6.2. Is Trust an Etic or Emic Construct?

Based on the above-mentioned fact, an important question about trust on which there has been extensive discussion in literature on cross-cultural studies, is whether trust is an etic (universal) or an emic (culture-specific) (Triandis, 1994; Earley & Mosakowski, 1996). There are certain research findings, which prove trust development as an etic or universal (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006; Cummings & Bromiley, 1996), and others as an emic phenomenon (Triandis, 1994; Noorderhaven, 1999; Bachmann, 2001). Bachmann also calls for a more context driven and less universalistic conceptualization of trust, promoting the emic perspective. Quoting examples of national differences in the systems and orientations of Germany and UK, he argued that the strong forms of individual power in the two countries are not conducive for trust building (Bachmann's, 2001). Addressing the etic and emic issue, Ferrin et al. (2006) and Gillespie (2003) suggested that despite there is strong and consistent evidence that trust varies among cultures, there is also evidence that it is universal across cultures. This means that there are both context specific as well as universal foundations, antecedents and manifestations of trust (Saunders, 2010). But regardless of trust being as an etic or emic construct, the differences in the nature, type and extent of trust across societies have been found in several studies (Fukuyama, 1995; Yamagishi et al., 1998; Dyer & Chu, 2003) that endorse the asymmetry of trust across various cultures.

The emic or culture specific instead of etic or universal perspective of trust leads to nuances that are likely to make the role of trust highly complex in cross-cultural interactions (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006). The need of understanding and considering the differences in the meaning, nature and level of trust across different contexts becomes important when we study the plethora of extant theoretical literature and empirical evidence around the origin, importance,

antecedents, contingencies and consequences of trust in organizational (Lane et al., 2001; McEvily et al., 2003) as well as general settings (Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006).

### **5.6.3. How Culture Affects Trust Development?**

When partners belonging to same cultural background interact, the process of trust development should be relatively straightforward since the individuals possessing shared norms, values and socialization experiences hold similar assumptions and set of expectations required to cultivate and maintain a trust based relationship (Saunders et al., 2010). When ‘trust cues’ are common to both partners i.e., the approach and direction the target takes to cultivate trust is the same the trustor follows to establish the trust (Doney et al., 1998), then trust tends to develop quickly (Branzei et al., 2007; Griffith et al., 2000). However, this similarity and commonality is not available when the two parties engaging in trust cultivation process belong to different cultural backgrounds (McKnight et al., 1998). When person ‘A’ from culture 1 meets person ‘B’ from culture 2, the parameters of relationship might be similar aspirations and mutual gain, but backgrounds would be dissimilar which may influence the process of trust building. A’ and ‘B’ may wish to collaborate, but, because of dissimilar value system, set of expectations and approach may be fearful of being exploited (Saunders et al., 2010). This mix of agendas, intentions and interests, challenges trust development from the outset (Banai and Reisel, 1999; Sullivan et al., 1981).

Consciously or unconsciously, two parties from two different cultural backgrounds will give off some cues about their trustworthiness process and the level of trust in a relationship builds around the signals interpreted by the parties from these cues (Bacharach & Gambetta, 2001 cited in Branzei et al., 2007). Both parties cultural background will determine their conduct

and it will affect each other's processing of trust development behaviour also. Finally, cultural filters ('schemas') will also determine how both parties will interpret, weigh and prioritize each other's cues and signals (Gibson et al., 2009). People generally deal with sudden complex environments and events in the light of the categories already stored in their memory (Shapiro et al., 2008). That is why Branzei and colleagues (2007) argue that cultural patterns and norms that are significant for efficient trust development in one place may be insignificant, misleading and even detrimental in another.

'Ability', 'benevolence' and 'integrity' are the fundamentals of trust development, but, the understanding, judgment and interpretation of members about these constructs might be different in different cultures. In the light of this point, culture may impede the efforts to understand a member of other culture (Saunders et al., 2010). Few examples can throw light on this impact of culture on trust development. Giving bribery to take a friend out of trouble might be perceived as ability and benevolence in some cultures, but might be taken as sheer dishonesty in other cultures. Likewise, telling truth in a court against a friend might be seen disloyalty in some cultures, but might be taken very positive in other cultures. Trompenaars (2003) famously argued that members of 'universalistic' cultures tend to possess values and beliefs which have incompatible logics as compared to the values of the members of 'particularistic' society. In business ties, recommendation or reference of a friend or family member is highly significant in Chinese context; whereas such a provision might be rarely practiced in Anglo-American business context. In American conduct of business, a formal contract generally precedes trust; but in China, strong trust tends to be pre-requisite of signing any agreement and the interesting thing is that for both cultures, it is perceived normal and expected way of running the state of affairs (Saunders et al., 2010).

In short, culture exerts enormous impact on the establishment of trust cues in the individuals, and works as a filter for trust cues presented by the members of other cultures. Both the presentation and interpretation of trust cues are far from being clear cut and the same can impede the cultivation of initial trust in cross-cultural interactions (Branzei et al., 2007). When the understanding of trust cues and norms result in incomprehension and confusion, culture can serve as a soother by reaffirming one's own approach and disapproving that of the other party (Brewer and Yuki, 2007; Gibson et al., 2009, p.49). Thus if the interaction becomes anxiety producing, then the trained subject may fall back upon old responses with a new tenacity. This can hamper trust further.

The above discussion leads to a general question as to which cues and cultural dimensions are critical and which are less important or are too difficult to comprehend and process in trust building (Saunders et al., 2010). It is speculated that in terms of significance; nationality, ethnicity and gender may precede organizational or professional membership in the earliest phase of a relationship. However, Gibson et al. (2009, p. 57) note that people of a 'subculture' i.e. much smaller and more distinctive cultural manifestation, are likely to possess more similar values than the members of the same nation and thus a shared sub-culture or shared organization may surpass nationality and a shared workplace may surpass organization, etc.

#### ***5.6.4. Examples of the Influence of Culture on Trust Development***

Some studies have studied the national origins with respect to trends and behaviours of trust development. For instance, this has been noted by some researchers have that Americans trust strangers more than the Japanese (Yamagishi et al., 1998) and based on this, there can be clear inferences for the building of trust, for example, in a US-Japanese joint venture, instilling of



trust is likely to be harder in the Japanese partner than in the US partner. What trust means, why it matters and when it matters; all may vary across contexts. Further understanding of the sensitivity to trust development in different cultural settings is provided by Wasti and Tan's (2007) by comparing Chinese and Turkish firms. They identified differences in the understanding, interpretation and manifestation of the constructs of ability, benevolence and integrity in both Chinese and Turkish firms. They argued that high-context cultures place a much greater emphasis on relational and affective components of trust as compared to North American. Benevolence, for instance was found to be more broadly and deeply visible at the beginning stage of trust generation and encapsulated the behaviours such as magnanimity and concern for both the professional and personal welfare of the subordinate. Consequently, as with inter-organizational studies (Yousfi, 2009) while universal models of trust development and the characteristics of trust could be applied at a broad level, these appeared to be moderated by culturally specific manifestations and interpretations, again supporting calls for a more differentiated understanding.

In fact, the empirical studies of trust conducted in Eastern context have explicitly pronounced that influence of culture on trust is more than merely a moderating one. The study of Farh et al. (1998) in Chinese context, established that both *guanxi* (friendly bonds between individuals and relatives etc.) and demographic similarities (e.g., gender, age, sex, education, ethnicity, community, or profession) were correlated to subordinate trust in the supervisor. In another study conducted in Singapore, a Confucian-influenced society, Tan and Chee (2005) found that in addition to etic (universal) antecedents of trust, there are certain emic (context driven) factors such as humbleness, filial piety, and magnanimity. Like other studies conducted in Asian context, they further discovered that strong personal relationships and affective foundations were prerequisites for initial trust in this context. These findings of Tan and Chee (2005)

concord with the findings of Chua et al., (2009), which propose that in an organizational context, Chinese tend to develop trust through an affect based foundation and then add their personal and professional impressions, whereas Anglo-Americans tend to construct trust with a cognitive base leaving little possibility of mixing socio-emotional concerns (Wasti et al., 2010).

The emphasis on relational or affective components, in the context of trust development is not unique only to the Confucius society. In an ethnographic study, conducted at an Israeli-Jordanian organization, Mizrachi et al (2007) found Jordanians linking trust with human intentions and motives, instead of evaluating on the basis of competence and reliability. They also observed them diminishing the personal versus professional boundaries and extending the breadth and depth of trust by sharing personal information, time, and space in trust building process (Mizrachi, Drori, & Anspach, 2007). Moreover, the observations of Mizrachi et al.'s (2007) and Chua et al. (2009), regarding co-worker relations, are also aligned with the preference and presence of a paternalistic style of leadership in Middle Eastern and East Asian cultures (Cheng, et al., 2004, Aycan, 2001). It seems that personal versus professional dichotomy is less clear in collectivist cultures as compared to Anglo-American context (Sanchez-Burks & Lee, 2007), leading to formation of interpersonal trust differently than that depicted in the mainstream North American trust literature (Wasti. et al., 2010).

Referring to Doney et al. (1998), there are some further cultural differences in the trust development process, particularly with regard to benevolence, which emerges as the most significant antecedent in trust building in collectivist cultures. The demonstrations of benevolence appear wider and deeper, covering behaviours such as generosity and empathy in terms of both personal and professional welfare of the trustee. Additionally, compared to the

emphasis on cognitive foundation as a prerequisite for trust building as assumed in main stream trust literature, (McAllister, 1995), there are several observations where affective or benevolence component has been the most crucial factor of trust development and the findings of Ng and Chua's (2006) experimental study with Chinese students are in line with this argument. Indeed, benevolence nurtures personal loyalty that ensures integrity and trust in future dealings. This argument supports the findings of Chen, Chen, and Meindl's (1998) which maintain that collectivists' personal attachment to colleagues can be highly encouraging for task achievement, which, in return can lead to cognitive trust (Wasti et al., 2010). On the other hand, family values are also important for the trust development in collectivistic culture. For example, Tan and Chee (2005) have highlighted family values among the important factors of trust development in their study conducted in Singapore. Family values are taken into account while starting a relationship with someone specially trust based relationship. For instance, a person's behaviour towards his wife and respect for his or her parents is used as a testimony of 'good character to trust' (Tan & Chee, 2005).

In many instances, extant literature proves a significantly negative relationship between trust and individualism and positive association between trust and collectivism. In this connection, Doney et al. (1998) posit that the possibility that collectivists will show unprincipled behaviour is low, since people in collectivist societies respect group values and seek collective interests and self-serving attitude is expected less likely from collectivists because they tend not to be motivated by personal interest; whereas an individualist positioning provides limited indication that a trustee will act in the best of a trustor. Sullivan and Peterson (1982) introduce the Japanese conception "wa", which denotes congruence and value of a relationship among the trustor and trustee characterised by warmth, fellowship and mutual understanding, guiding towards trust building. This is why; achieving "wa" tends to be a key concern for the Japanese

society (Hazama, 1978). Based on the above explanation, apparently it would be deemed that members of collectivist societies, who give more emphasis on nurturing trust based relationship as compared to individualists (Chen et al., 1998; Triandis, 1995), might possess higher degree of trust than individualists. However, a thoughtful focus uncovers a dusky side of collectivism that may hinder trust building, especially when it comes to external trust. Collectivists tend to be categorically distinct with regard to building trust on others with respect to member of in-groups and out-groups (Triandis, 1995) as Watkins and Liu (1996) argues that the warmth of social interactions in a collectivist society, up to a very large extent, depends on whether the individuals belong to the same group or not. Collectivists according to Watkins and Liu, (1996) are generally observed to lack warmth and inclination to build trust on strangers and in many cases individualists, tend to manipulate, compete with and exploit out-groups more extensively (Huff & Kelley, 2005). Huff and Kelley (2003) also show, in a seven nation study that in business relations, a higher propensity to external trust exists in the US than in Asia and the reason of the same is that collectivist cultures, tend to be biased towards out-groups, ensuing in a low degree trust of for the individuals out of their group (Zaheer and Zaheer, 2006). It can be inferred from the above discussion, that the degree of in-group trust (internal trust) can be higher among collectivists as compared to individualists, out-group trust (external trust) can be higher in individualists compared to collectivists (Koufaris and Hampton-Sosa, 2004).

## 5.7. Influence of Language on Trust Development

Differences of language are mostly observed as an impediment in communication and the notion of language barrier is a common phenomenon in business firms, but in many cases its implications are overlooked. Language barriers emerge as a visible hurdle in communication and take place when organizational members working together feel difficulty in understanding each other's languages and this can be a big issue with regard to organizational working (Henderson, 2010). Research findings reveal that individuals can be motivated to work while ignoring cultural differences, if they aspire to cooperate "but language may be an even bigger potential problem than functional differences and culture per se" (Schweiger et al., 2003, p.134). Despite the fact that an 'international language' or 'corporate language' is used for business communication, yet the differences, issues, misunderstandings and tensions regarding language factor continue both at face-to-face or distanced communications. Hence, language differences although not consciously taken into account, exist among individuals in interaction and therefore draw a key impact on the development of trust (Henderson, 2010).

A thorough analysis of literature on sociolinguistics and cross-cultural communication theory demonstrates how language factor both fosters and hinders trust between parties (Henderson, 2010). Research has proved that the establishment of trust based relationship is closely linked with language factor and that for organizations, language barrier is a more serious challenge with regard to socialization processes as compared to technical aspects of work (Kassis Henderson, 2005; Lagerstrom & Andersson, 2003; Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000). It is probably because of this that Feely and Harzing (2003) argue that the issue of language barrier needs to be managed by the organizations as a corporate asset, since it can draw serious implications for them when it comes to trust development. They claim that the real cost of language difference can't be measured in terms of the cost of interpretation and translation

issue, but in terms of conflicts and damage of trust based relationships as a result of language difference (Feely & Harzing, 2003).

An affective and behavioural competency without language competence is perceived to be insufficient for the development of relationship (Griffith, 2002). The role of ‘caring talk’ in ‘personal conversations’ and ‘creating a common culture and procedure’ is acknowledged in trust building across language and cultural boundaries (Henttonen and Blomqvist, 2005). Social competence and flexibility according to Lagerstrom and Andersson (2003) tend to be dependent on proficiency in the shared working language. Research shows that crossing language boundaries can draw a negative effect on mutual trust and working atmosphere (Chévrier, 2000; Iles & Hayers, 1997; 2005; Lagerstrom & Andersson, 2003; Kassis Henderson, Schweiger et al., 2003). Unfamiliar communication cues drawn by team members as a result of language difference influence perceptions and attitudes, giving rise to ambiguity, uncertainty and doubts in the creation of trust. However, findings (e.g., Goodall and Roberts, 2003; Schneider & Barsoux, 2003; Holden, 2002) also show that if communication is managed effectively, differences of languages can be a key contributing factor to team performance, cohesion and even a source of trust building.

## 5.7. Empirical Evidence

### Influence of Culture on Trust

The influence of culture on trust development has been tested and verified all around the globe in multiple contexts, countries and cultures. For instance, the cross-cultural study of Hallikainen and Laukkanen (2018) based on the comparison of the trust related behaviours of Chinese and Finnish people has empirically tested and verified the influence of culture based on Hofstede's cultural taxonomy. They note, "Based on our results, cultural dimensions seem to have a clearly distinct influence on ability, integrity and benevolence. This is evident particularly in the case of collectivism, power distance and masculinity, strengthening earlier notions, according to which ability, integrity and benevolence are interrelated but clearly distinct from each other (Gefen et al., 2008; Schoorman et al., 2007). For example, ability is the only dimension of trustworthiness which plays a role for those with a highly collectivist orientation. Research suggests that the importance of the dimensions of trustworthiness may depend upon the type of relationship and the stage of the relationship (Schoorman et al., 2007), but it seems that differences also exist with regard to an individual's cultural orientation. From a theoretical perspective, the current study provides valuable insights about the interrelationship of national culture and trust" (Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2018, p.103). They further noted that "The results of our study show a statistically significant positive effect of collectivism and long-term orientation on disposition to trust, indicating that disposition to trust has a significant role in trust development, particularly in such cultures that possess high levels of both collectivism and have long-term orientations. On the other hand, results also show that national culture not only influences individual's disposition to trust, but may influence beliefs about online store's trustworthiness also directly. The results of our study indicate that ability, for instance, is influenced by uncertainty avoidance, collectivism, long-term orientation and

masculinity, while uncertainty avoidance, power distance and long-term orientation influence on integrity. All other cultural dimensions except collectivism influence benevolence” (Hallikainen & Laukkanen, 2018, p.106).

Based on Hofstede’s cultural taxonomy, the cross-cultural study of Chinese and North customers regarding their propensity to trust the online businesses conducted by Shobeiri, et al (2018) also endorse the findings of Hallikainen and Laukkanen (2018) that culture plays significant role in the development of trust. Another cross-cultural study (Rim & Dong, 2018) of the comparison of three nations, America, UAE and Korea regarding the level of trust of public towards business and government with regard to corporate social responsibility, endorsed that the three nations seemed to show different levels of trust with “UAE showing highest level of trust towards both government and business organizations and UAS public showed moderate and Korean public showed lowest level of trust towards government and business organizations regarding their role and contributions towards corporate social responsibility”( Rim & Dong 2018, p.12). As the authors note “A body of research has documented demographic factors and cultural values influencing publics’ CSR expectations. The current study pays particular attention to the phenomena of “trust” in the society. When examining the publics’ trust level, our findings revealed a pattern similar to Edelman’s Trust Barometer (2015, 2016), where the UAE was rated as a trusting country and South Korea as a country with greater levels of distrust. The UAE respondents in our survey showed high levels of trust overall, whereas the Korean respondents showed significantly lower levels of trust (i.e. mean scores for both government and business trust were below 3 on the seven-point scale). The trust level in the USA was in between UAE and South Korea, but the level of trust in government and business was significantly different across the three selected countries. While depressed trust in government has been



spotted globally (Edelman, 2016) showed high levels of government trust in the UAE sample” (Rim & Dong 2018, p.12).

Kwon Haleblan & Hagedoorn (2016) in their study have endorsed the impact of national culture on trust development. They note “In addition, we contributed to the traditional IB literature, which typically assumes that cultural distance is a general proxy indicator for national (dis)trust, but without critically testing this assumption. In contrast, our study shows that cultural distance has a low-order inverse correlation with national trust, and that national trust influences alliance governance decisions above and beyond the influence of cultural distance, which suggests that national trust and cultural distance are distinct phenomena. Thus, we add value to the IB literature by directly distinguishing national trust from cultural distance and then determining its influence on alliance governance” (Kwon, Haleblan, & Hagedoorn, 2016, p.33).

The study of Cyr (2013), based on comparison of eight countries ( Japan, Germany, Canada, China Chile USA, India and Mexico) regarding the trust of people towards the company’s website designs endorsed the idea that culture plays a vital role in the development of trust within individuals. The researcher noted that culture is the most dominant factor in the determination of trust of the individuals towards companies’ websites regardless of other factors.

The cross-cultural study of USA and Israel conducted by Gefen and Heart (2006) also endorsed cultural effects on trust development and as a result of that challenged the applicability of the trust building model of USA in Asian context like (Wasti et al. (2007) challenged in their study. They noted that “A summary of the differences highlights some of the cultural implications of applying a U.S. model to another culture. The U.S. is a very individualistic and low uncertainty avoidance culture. In such a culture people typically accept others as free agents and hence

knowing what to expect of others is a significant antecedent of trusting behavioural intentions. In contrast, Israel is a much more collectivist and uncertainty-avoiding culture. In such a culture, people expect familiar others to behave in accordance with community norms (Singh, 1990), and hence predictability, while still creating trust, is not a significant antecedent of trusting behavioral intentions. Moreover, familiarity is more highly valued in these cultures than in an individualist culture. These observations are supported by the data” (Gefen & Heart, 2006, p.18). Keeping in view the significant influence of culture on trust Gefen and Heart (2006) have demanded the inclusion of the factor of culture of culture in the conceptualization of trust. As they note “Adding national culture to models of trust in e-commerce, especially trust creation processes, could enhance e-commerce success and allow Web sites to cater to specific national cultural aspects. There is a big wide world out there. It is not all the same. This cultural distinction is necessary in studying trust in general because trust is about reducing social uncertainty (Gefen, 2000; Luhmann, 1979) and about the willingness to depend on others (Mayer et al., 1995). These two social aspects are also captured by the IDV, PDI, and UAI dimensions of culture as explained by Hofstede (1980a) and hence should affect trust (Doney et al., 1998)”. (Gefen & Heart, 2006, p.20).

### **5.7.2. Empirical Evidence: Cross-cultural studies on trust development**

Out of a number of cross-cultural studies focusing on the analysis of the influence of culture on trust development, the study of Jarvenpaa Tractinsky and Saarinen (1999) is the probably the only study that has not evidenced culture as a critical factor in the formation of trust as they note, “This study did not find strong cultural differences in the antecedents of trust and the rest of the model. Although we recommend building on the basic model of trust studied here in different cultural contexts, we specifically encourage examinations of cultural differences in

the antecedents of trust and the levels of trust in culturally representative samples. The Internet is increasing at an exponential rate the number of cross-cultural interactions between merchants and consumers. It is critical we understand the existence and nature of cultural differences on trust in economic interactions” (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, & Saarinen, 1999, p.25). However, this is again interesting that even they realise the strong influence of culture on the development of trust to the extent that they note “Let us reemphasize that the current results should not be used to suggest that web merchants can use the same site design attributes to engender trust among consumers from different cultures. We expect there may be cultural differences, particularly when the concept of trust is broadened to include affective and social components. The lack of cultural differences in the current study might be due to sampling bias, the insensitive measure of culture in the current study, or the narrow measurement of trust. Others have noted that trust in different cultures is a different phenomenon and hence any study that tries to apply a uniform definition and process of trust is suspect (Noorderhaven, 1999). We encourage studies exploring cross-cultural differences in trust and factors building trust. Cannon, Doney, and Mullen (1999) offer suggestions for research methods studying cultural differences in trust” (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky, & Saarinen, 1999, p. 25). Similar kinds of results were yielded by Cui et al (2018) in their cross-cultural study of the trust building trends of Chinese and Canadians. Houjeir & Brennan, (2017) evidenced powerful influence of culture on the development of trust in a comparative study of Arabs and Non-Arabs in their study conducted in UAE. They note, “Emiratis and non-Emiratis have very different perceptions of the antecedents of trust in banker-client relationships. The antecedents have different salience for Emiratis and non-Emiratis. One of the strongest factors is culture, which has been forged through centuries of desert survival into social culture, tradition and lifestyle. This is characterized by patriotism, a strong love of the nation, sheikdom and the ruling tribes” (p.506). They further note, “Emirati bankers deal with other Emiratis on the basis of trust as a means of demonstrating mutual

support for both the individual and the society: patriotism is one of the antecedents of this trust relationship, tribal traditions form another. Trust is contextually determined by the high-context culture in which Emiratis have, historically, come to trust only other Emiratis. They predict the behavior of others not by experience but in the belief that they will follow the same rules and values that they follow themselves. A non-Emirati banker or client finds it difficult to establish trust with an Emirati counterpart. Emiratis therefore have a very different perception of relationships, affective approaches and behaviours, temporality, risk aversion and trust-building behaviours, to name but a few variables, when compared to their non-Emirati business counterparts. Emirati perceptions are so bounded by these variables that they may find it difficult and uncomfortable to try to understand or modify their perceptions to accommodate non-Emirati or western business practices. In developing banker-client relationships, it is therefore expected that non-Emiratis will adapt to Emirati cultural practices” (Houjeir, & Brennan, 2017, p.506).

## 5.8. Chapter Summary

Previous chapter discussed theoretical foundations about trust and the influence of trust on knowledge sharing. This chapter was aimed at discussing the influence of culture on knowledge sharing and on the development of interpersonal trust in the light of the existing theories and contributions of the researchers, giving details of the empirical findings in the said fields. The chapter starts with the conceptualization of culture and its main components and the way it affects the lives of individuals. Culture determines how people think and what do they do (Tinsley, 1998), including their understanding of the fundamentals of trust and trustworthy behaviour (Zaheer and Zaheer, 2006). Based on the above idea, it can be inferred that culture's effect on individual and group behaviour is not so simple, since its influence comes from more fundamental outcomes, such as beliefs and values (Gibson et al., 2009). The chapter then highlights the influence of culture on KS and presents the idea that knowledge transfers across cultural boundaries, regardless of being intra- or inter-organizational, might be more complicated, since it involves different cultures which influence how people receive, process, interpret, and utilize the knowledge (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). That is why according to Bertels and Savage (1999) *"knowledge management is becoming increasingly the management of the transfer of knowledge generated by cross-cultural teams"*. As Doz and Santos (1997) have correctly pointed out, *"this involves the management of knowledge in a single administrative system, but residing in a dispersed and differentiated locations"*. The chapter then discusses the influence of culture on knowledge sharing and discusses cross-cultural differences of knowledge sharing with the help of examples in the light of Hofstede's model of cross-cultural analysis and GLOBE project of the cultural analysis; including Individualism VS Collectivism, Power distance, Performance Orientation and Risk Avoidance etc. The researcher has presented the influence of cultural factors in the light of the existing theory and empirical findings. The research has also discussed the influence of language on the

process of KS. In the next pages, the researcher has discussed whether cultural difference is a facilitating or impeding factor for knowledge sharing? Afterwards, the researcher has discussed the influence of culture on trust development in the light of the existing theories and research findings and in the final section there is discussion on the impact of language on trust development.

## Chapter Six

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 6.0. Introduction

Previous four chapters presented ample details about the theoretical foundations regarding the three main components of this research: Knowledge sharing, Culture and Trust with the help of existing literature and empirical findings. This chapter discusses the critical analysis of the research methodology as used in the current research project. In order to make the research credible and meaningful, it is very much essential to choose appropriate research philosophy (Rubin & Rubin, 2005); select suitable research approach (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008); apply sound research strategy (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007); adopt relevant sampling technique (Wilmot, 2005); use right means of data collection (Blaxter et al., 1996) and adopt corresponding data analysis technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006); keeping in view the nature, objectives and questions of the research project (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Since this research is designed to study the impact of trust on sharing of knowledge in a cross-cultural working environment, therefore, it is important to select the research methodology, which suits aims and objectives of the research.

The areas of knowledge sharing, trust and culture have been previously studied quantitatively (in majority of the cases) perhaps because of the ease of data collection and analysis techniques. However, unlike most of the studies of the domain of cultural effects on knowledge sharing or trust development, this research is planned to be conducted in a qualitative perspective using the most suitable relevant research philosophy, approach, strategy, techniques and tools of qualitative research. This choice is based on the recommendations of eminent scholars, (e.g. Miles & Huberman, 1994; Wang & Noe 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994), who suggest that

quantitative analysis may not be a suitable and logical choice for the study of the socially driven constructs like culture, trust and knowledge sharing. For example, Van Wijk et al. (2008) suggest that there are relatively few studies that have investigated the relationship of culture and knowledge transfer. According to Easterby-Smith, “this may be because cultural aspects are rarely ‘visible’ within the quantitative methods that have dominated in published studies, which suggests that if progress is to be made, issues of culture will best be investigated using qualitative methods and case studies” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p.684). Based on the above explanation of the type, objectives and assumptions of this research project; it is now important to suggest the relevant, philosophical base, approach, strategy, data collection and data analysis tools and techniques to be used in this research project.

The chapter starts with the identification and discussion of research philosophy including ontology and epistemology of the research project. The chapter then is followed by research approach i.e. qualitative research, research strategy i.e. multiple case study method; sampling techniques i.e. purposive sampling in this project research; data collection tools including qualitative interviews and focus group; rigor and quality of research in the light of reliability and validity and triangulation of data etc. The chapter then presents an account of the provisions for ensuring quality and rigor of this research project, including the application of research ethics and finally it discusses the data analysis scheme of the study.

## **6.1. Research Philosophy**

While conducting research in the field of social science, a cardinal decision to be made by the researcher is about the choice of determining philosophical base of the research through which the research might be conducted. The philosophical base of the research deals with deciding



about the ontology and epistemology of the research. Many can argue whether it is necessary to decide about the ontology or epistemology of the research. However, (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) provide sound judgment for choosing appropriate philosophical base for the research project especially in social science research. They argue that:

1. The selection of philosophical base guides you how to conduct your research. It tells you about your possible role in the research process, being neutral or active participant in the research project especially with regard to data collection. It guides you how to collect the data, which questions to ask, how to select the sample and how to conduct interviews.

2. The members of examining committee in case of a dissertation, or the members or editors of the board of review committee of a journal article in case of a research article publication, might believe in research philosophies different from yours and may ask you to convince them regarding your choice of a particular philosophical base for your research.

3. You need to adhere to the principles, rules, assumptions and guidelines of a particular research paradigm you have adopted in your research. Qualitative researchers, for instance, need not to say sorry in case if they could not interview in hundreds, nor quantitative researchers have to be defensive if they could not produce in-depth descriptions.

4. Understanding of theoretical base helps you to recognize and understand which research techniques and procedures can fit with your research project and which don't. It helps you in the designing of your research project and guides you to capitalize on the strengths and weaknesses of the different research techniques. (Rubin and Rubin, 2005, p.15).

### 6.1.1. Ontology: Subjectivist

Ontology refers to the conceptualization and interpretation of the nature of reality/existence/being and the approach through which it could be understood. This has been established as a choice between objectivism and subjectivism (Remenyi et al., 1998), or realism and constructivism or phenomenology (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Despite the difference of the labels of the two pairs, the essence of the meaning in each pair is essentially the same, i.e. belief in understanding and interpreting the phenomenon as a single objective reality, free from social actors (Objectivism), compared to a socially constructed reality, the product of multiple realities or actors (subjectivism). To explain the two in simple terms, it can be said that objectivism is an ontological position that refers to the pivotal point that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence independent of social actors. On the other side, constructionism or subjectivism believes that social phenomena and their meaning is continually being accomplished by social actors; therefore, they cannot be seen as separate from social actors (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

This research is an exploratory aimed at exploring the role of trust in knowledge sharing; the impact of culture on knowledge sharing and the trust development and to see whether cultural differences facilitate or hinder knowledge sharing? Keeping in view the exploratory nature of this research, the subject matter and constructs; like, trust, knowledge and culture, which talk about people, individuals and groups, institutions, culture, contexts, values, perceptions and attitudes, the study proves to be ontologically subjectivist. Morgan (1980) looks quite logical when he argues that human beings understand the world through subjective processes and not by isolation from the external world. Therefore, this research is underpinned by the subjectivist view of the reality, which treats the social world being constructed by individuals, groups and

institutions, and their thoughts, perceptions and attitudes that create the reality in which they operate (Berger & Luckmann, 1963; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Denzin, 1970). This subjective reality is based on a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, languages and so forth, set against the historical, cultural, political and economic context in which the actors exist and interact (Schwandt 2000, p.193). Within this subjective reality, the interpretive paradigm suggests it is possible to identify underlying patterns and order within the social world (Burrell et al., 1979), to better understand ways, which this reality is constructed of.

Since this study is cross-cultural, therefore it cannot be investigated under objectivist paradigm; because objectivists treat organizations and culture as static or pre-given realities that are external to the individuals and constraint their members. From an objectivist stance, organizations tend to have fixed rules and regulations, systems and procedures which the individuals have to follow. Strauss et al., (1973), for the first time, while taking insights from symbolic interactionism argued that organizations are neither pre-given nor pre-existing, rather they are continually changing and evolving social entities as a result of interactions, and responses to external challenges, requirements and dynamics of the business world. Likewise, when it comes to culture, proponents of subjectivist position challenge the view of portraying culture as external to social actors. Instead they argue that culture is an emergent reality in a continuous process of construction and reconstruction (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Constructionists also believe that the meanings and categories that people use in understanding the natural and social world are in fact social products, which don't possess built-in essences; instead they are constructed in and through interaction (Bryan & Bell, 2007). Many writers even don't acknowledge the existence or at least the importance of an objective reality. For example, Walsh argues that "we cannot take for granted, as the natural scientist does, the availability of

a pre-constituted world of phenomena for investigation and must instead examine the processes by which the social world is constructed” (1972, p.19).

It is neither suitable nor logical to detach the external factors if we want to understand processes within the organizations. Such a bearing can rigorously challenge our capacity to recognize and understand the intricacy and interdependence of the salient variables and factors within a particular situation. Instead we need to opt a holistic view (Polkinghorne, 1991; Cassell & Cymon, 1994) that might consider the “subject's meaning and interpretational systems in order to gain explanation by understanding” (Gill & Johnson, 1997, p.37).

### **6.1.2. Epistemology: Interpretivist**

Epistemology refers to the question that what is or should comprise an acceptable knowledge in any discipline. A fundamental issue in this connection is to decide whether or not to study the social world in the light of the principles and procedures of natural science (Bryman & Bell, 2007). With regard to epistemology, the researcher can choose between positivist and interpretivist philosophies (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Positivism refers to the application of scientific approach on the study of the world. Like natural science, positivism treats the external world as an objective reality which needs to be understood by observation, as explained by Comte: “there can be no real knowledge but that which is based on observed facts” (quoted by Easterby-Smith et al. 1991, p. 22). In research especially in social research, interpretivism is an alternate epistemological base. Interpretivism underlies the views of the scholars who disagree with the idea of applying scientific model to the study of social world. They argue that the subject matter of the social sciences –people and institutions- is basically different from that of the natural world; therefore, the study of social world, according to them, needs a

different research philosophy, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans compared to natural order (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Objectivist ontology tends to be studied with positivist epistemology and subjectivist ontology is studied with interpretivist epistemology. Since this research is based on subjectivist ontology, therefore, the logical corresponding epistemology in this study needs to be interpretivist.

According to positivist viewpoint, the observer of the facts tends to be independent of what is observed, remains objective and neutral, and allows the facts to offer causal explanations leading to universal truths. Positivism, an empirical scientific method, is based on the process of developing a hypothesis that can be tested i.e. verified, or falsified, through the evidence from an experiment, observation or some other empirical process. In the pure/natural sciences, a positivist might use laboratory experiments to test hypotheses, but in the social world or in the domain of management research, positivists make the use of sample surveys large enough to examine the real world problems and draw meaningful findings and conclusions.

The interpretive perspective aims at creating meanings and categories within certain contexts and the way those categories, meanings and experiences are interpreted to develop social action (Schwandt, 2000; Burrell et al., 1979). Here, the researcher plays the role of an interpreter, who attempts to identify particular social action and the meanings associated with it, as a result of conversation and interaction with participants. In other words, the researcher attempts to explore the subjective understanding of a social action through the words and actions of the participants (Schwandt, 2000). Simultaneously, the researcher challenges the existing ideas about the process under focus, by questioning the composition of a given context and what is happening in it (Toren, 1996; Murphy, Dingwall R., Greatbatch D., Parker S., & P., 1998).

Hence, the researcher makes us understand the social actions and the meanings behind them and the patterns found in a particular context.

Interpretive paradigm therefore, is a kind of reflexive process which up to a very large extent, depends upon the researcher's understanding and interpretation of a given context. Like positivist perspective, it is not about being objective, rather, objectivity here refers to the willingness and ability of researcher to listen to participants and give voice to them (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.43). At the core of it, researcher becomes part of the whole scenario, wherein he tries to understand and explain the participants' interpretations of the social world and looks for patterns that form and explain social activities. In this way, both the researcher and participant reach at the center of hermeneutic circle of their own (Denzin, 2002). As a result of this interaction, participant interprets and re-interprets her or his context in ways which she or he might have not thought of and the researcher moves from a level of pre-understanding to a level of complete understanding of the given context. Since data are interpreted and re-interpreted within this context, therefore, the act of understanding and interpretation tends to be fundamental and iterative here (Eisenhardt, 1989, 1991). In this process of interpretation, the researcher acts as a whole person and becomes an instrument in coordination, observation, selection, collection and interpretation of data (Eisenhardt, 1989, 1991).

To many experts of the field of research, good management research should be based on positivist epistemology, since it is scientific approach which holds the belief, that for identifying the truth and measuring its properties, the researcher needs to apply objective, scientific methods of research. Despite being challenged by many in the fields like education and social policy, positivist philosophy has been dominant in the field of Management research (Gill and Johnson, 1997, Skinner et al., 2000). However, scholars such as Guba and Lincoln

(1994) Grint (2000) and Patton (1990) have raised questions on the authenticity and validity of positivist approach in the field of social science, that are equally applicable in any management study, which is basically about individuals, groups and organizations and where contexts and values are important. Positivist approach treats the people like objects, ignoring their ability to address the problems, contexts and situations (Robson, 1993) therefore, the appropriate epistemology for this research is interpretive.

Scholars of interpretive school of thought assume not only interaction, but, also conflict between the individuals and their social environment. This social environment according to them is composed of multiple relationships created by constant interaction of individuals with one another and larger structures which, themselves, are viewed as autonomous, long-standing and almost permanent crystallizations of human interactions. These structures (e.g. a family, a clan, a profession, an organization, an institution, a city or even a state) not only participate to regulate patterns of interactions, but, also confront the individuals like alien forces and opponents (Burrell et al., 1979). As a result, an interpretive perspective signifies the control of individuals over their environment through their symbolic interaction, and at the same time takes in account the influence of this environment over them and assumes that there are certain contradictory powers which force individuals to behave in a particular way (Burrell et al., 1979).

Based on the above discussion it is quite obvious that an interpretive epistemological base is appropriate for investigating the sharing of knowledge in professionalized contexts under cross-cultural work environment in large medical institutions like Pakistan institute of medical sciences (PIMS), federal government services hospital (polyclinic) Islamabad and Shifa International Islamabad, wherein underlying patterns of social action are produced and applied

by individuals. The usefulness of interpretive epistemology for this research lies in the fact that it attempts to understand and interpret the basic nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience (Burrell & Morgan 1979). It focuses on investigating and identifying the patterns and their associated meanings in context-specific social processes, on the basis of the interaction of individuals and groups with their corresponding social environments. Such patterns and processes are identified by the participation and interaction of the researcher with the individuals whom he or she makes the subjects of the study.

The processes being explored in the current study are related to sharing of knowledge. These processes are based upon specific patterns which are supposed to facilitate knowledge sharing in cross-cultural context. For example, on-the-job learning is a process which is viewed as sharing of knowledge. Similarly, working together, resolving a problem or accomplishing a task as a member of a team, is a process which allows sharing of knowledge. All of the above examples, in the light of an interpretive paradigm, can be treated as processes with underlying patterns and meanings of social actions to the extent that they are created by the interaction of individuals. Moreover, these processes force the individuals to act in a way that may enable them to achieve the individual as well as organizational goals while being a part of a specific group.

To summarize, the interpretive approach views knowledge sharing processes as patterns with specific meanings that are dependent upon interaction of individuals with each other and with other larger superstructures such as Pakistan institute of medical sciences (PIMS), federal government services hospital FGS (polyclinic) Islamabad and Shifa International Islamabad, as organizations and professional institutions.



## 6.2. Research Approach: Qualitative

After deciding about the ontology and epistemology of the research study, next step for the researcher is to choose the appropriate corresponding research approach. Closely allied to the two research philosophies discussed above, is the choice between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies (Creswell, 1994). Quantitative research corresponds to positivist research paradigm which allows the researcher to familiarize with the problem or question under study and then develop hypotheses to be tested (Golafshani, 2003). Research questions, underlying concepts, variables and hypotheses are decided well in advance or at the beginning of the research and remain mostly unchanged throughout the research process (Creswell, 1994). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), the emphasis in quantitative research remains on (1) facts and causes of behavior (2) the data can be summarized and (3) statistical and mathematical procedure is the custom for scrutinizing the numeric data and (4) the ultimate findings are expressed in quantifiable terms or numbers (Charles, 1995). As Descombe (2003) portrays it, quantitative methodology inherently measures the phenomenon so that it can be transformed into figures and “once the phenomena have been quantified, they lend themselves to analysis through statistical procedures – procedures which are very powerful but utterly dependent on receiving numerical data as the input,” (Descombe, 2003, p.232). As a result, the researcher's techniques include “the use of standardized measures so that the varying perspectives and experiences of people can be fit into a limited number of predetermined response categories to which numbers are assigned” (Patton, 200, p.14).

On the other hand, in qualitative research, the researcher instead of manipulating the phenomenon of interest, tries to employ a naturalistic stance that leads to the comprehension of the phenomenon in context-specific situations, thereby allowing the "phenomenon of interest unfold naturally" (Patton, 2001, p. 39). Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 17) thus, describe

qualitative research, as "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification". Unlike quantitative researchers who attempt to find underlying prediction, determination and generalizability of results, qualitative researchers instead, look for understanding, clarification and extrapolation to the related circumstances (Hoepfl, 1997) and "transforming information from observations, reports and recordings into data in the form of the written words, not numbers" (Descombe, 2003, p. 232). On the other hand, Descombe (2003) perceives quantitative research being easy due to application of pre-designed user friendly statistical procedures for the analysis of data and Burgess (1982) suggests that the qualitative perspective, due to a limited number of samples, offers an opportunity to researcher to probe and go for an in-depth analysis and discover new clues, gain new insights and identify new facets of a given problem, based on personal experience.

Although not very easy to define qualitative research, Van Maanen put it this way: "The label qualitative method has no precise meaning in any of the social sciences. It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which is seen to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (Van Maanen, 1979, p.520). Qualitative research is based on inductive-theory building model of research. It produces a narrative of people's view(s) of reality and relies on words, talks and probing to generate texts. Qualitative data tends to be highly descriptive and often keeps an account of who said what and when as well as to whom why and how. The emphasis of qualitative research on situational details uncovering over time, allows it to describe processes (Gaphart, 2004). With the help of observations, qualitative researchers also provide detailed conceptual insights which offer visualizations of how broad concepts and theories operate in particular contexts. This approach

differs from that of quantitative research, which applies hypothetical-deductive model that unfolds significant relationships among variables of the study and tests general propositions (Gaphart, 2004). According to Denzin & Lincoln, (1994) qualitative research often analyses the phenomenon naturally as it occurs in the environment connected with social actors by adopting a multi-method approach, an interpretive and naturalistic stance. It answers the questions about the creation of social experience and the meaning given to it and offers representations of the world, which make the world visible (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Apart from this, because of its “flexibility and emergent character” qualitative research is “particularly difficult to pin down” and requires “highly contextualized individual judgments” (Van Maanen, 1998, p. xi).

According to Morgan and Smircich (1980), choice of the appropriateness of a research approach to be applied in any research project, depends on the aims of the study and the nature of the social phenomenon to be explored. On the basis of subjectivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, the essential corresponding research approach in this study calls for a qualitative analysis of the subject matter. Moreover, since the researcher wants to have an in-depth analysis of trust on knowledge sharing in cross cultural environment, which needs deep insights, extensive discussion and probing, therefore, he needs to apply qualitative approach to his research, because, only qualitative approach can provide deep insights, in-depth analysis and rich pools of data on any research topic. Although quantitative approach according to many is linked with rigor, authenticity and soundness of any research project, but, due to its numerical style, it does not allow extensive discussion and in-depth analysis of any topic (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The comments of Wang & Noe (2010) are very important in this connection, since they have analysed the literature on knowledge sharing. They strengthen the

idea of choosing qualitative approach for this study. After reviewing the available research on the topic of knowledge sharing they argue:

*“Approximately one-third of the studies included in this review were qualitative studies which have used interviews, observation, and/or archival documents analysis to answer their research questions. An important strength of the studies reviewed was that the majority were conducted in a field setting. Qualitative studies provide a rich and in-depth examination of the organizational context in which knowledge sharing occurs. More qualitative research that focuses on specific issues is needed to help us better design quantitative studies. Only a small number of the qualitative studies also collected quantitative data for analysis. It is important to recognize that the quantitative studies of knowledge sharing included in this review suffer from several significant limitations. For example, since measures of knowledge sharing are not readily available in the literature, researchers need to devote time to develop valid and reliable measures. This is also a common observation that field researches pose some challenges. However, researchers can take several steps to increase the internal and external validities of knowledge sharing research.” (Wang and Noe, 2010, p.127).*

Moreover, this study is based on the study of culture and Van Wijk et al. (2008) suggest that there are relatively few studies that have investigated the relationship of culture and knowledge transfer. “This may be because cultural aspects are rarely ‘visible’ within the quantitative methods that have dominated in published studies, which suggests that if progress is to be made, issues of culture will best be investigated using qualitative methods and case studies” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008, p.684). The further suggest:

*“In some areas, such as when investigating the impact of firm characteristics or the tension between cooperation and competition, the quantitative papers have most to contribute; in other cases, such as when investigating the role of cultural differences or investigating the processes of knowledge transfer, the qualitative studies have more to offer.” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p.688).*

It is worth mentioning here that every research method has certain limitations or contradictions and the researcher is aware of some contradictions of the qualitative approach. These contradictions of qualitative research are clearly discerned by Miles and Huberman (1994). Firstly, no standardized instrumentation is used in qualitative research as a research tool; therefore, researcher ultimately becomes the main measurement device in the study. This leads towards interpretation of data solely based on the researcher's judgment, which could be biased. Secondly, most of the analysis of qualitative data is presented in words, which have to be assembled, clustered, sub-clustered or broken down into segments. While performing these tasks, the researcher needs to be careful, not to distort or alter the situation being analysed. Thirdly, despite being conducted within a theoretical framework, qualitative data allows for unanticipated findings which can even alter the very course of the study. This is not the case of quantitative approach, wherein the operationalization of theoretical concept can produce rather more consistent data. Finally, findings of quantitative data are generally easier to analyse and interpret. A number of techniques, including statistical sampling methods, allow the quantitative method to generalize overall pattern or trend of data more easily as compared to qualitative approach.

However, regardless of the above mentioned limitations of qualitative research, there are numerous advantages in relation to applying the same to the present study. First, the theoretical framework employed here is based on a cross-cultural analysis of knowledge sharing in health services institutions therefore; the study is culturally constructed through individual and collective interactions. Consequently, no quantitative techniques or measurements can be suitable to apply in this kind of study. Secondly, the focus of the research is on the impact of trust on knowledge sharing, for which it looks very difficult to apply quantitative measurement. The case organizations of this study don't have assessment tools to measure the impact of trust

on knowledge sharing. Finally, the study seeks to identify the issues, beliefs, attitudes and behavioural patterns regarding the sharing of knowledge as a result of the interaction between doctors and nurses and among nurses and doctors themselves. Thus, the study aims not only at capturing subjective data on the perceptions of the actors (research participants), but also to gain an integrated overview of the cross-cultural organizational context wherein the participants are working and performing their duties. Therefore, qualitative approach is the ultimate and logical preference for this study. The scholarly comments of the editor of “Academy of Management Journal” about qualitative research are very much significant to express the true essence of the same:

*“Qualitative research is important for management scholarship for many reasons. In brief, it provides insights that are difficult to produce with quantitative research. For example, qualitative research can provide thick, detailed descriptions of actual actions in real-life contexts that recover and preserve the actual meanings that actors ascribe to these actions and settings. Qualitative research can thus provide bases for understanding social processes that underlie management. Qualitative research can also provide memorable examples of important management issues and concepts that enrich the field. Finally, qualitative research has potential to re-humanize research and theory by highlighting the human interactions and meanings that underlie phenomena and relationships among variables that are often addressed in the field” (Gaphart, 2004, P.455).*

### 6.3. Sampling Technique: Purposive/Selective

The researcher has applied purposive sampling in this study. Designing and applying a rigorous and relevant sampling strategy for a qualitative investigation is as important as for a quantitative inquiry. A carefully designed sampling technique that applies a robust and unbiased frame can provide robust and unbiased results (Wilmot, 2005). Unlike quantitative research, probability sampling is not used in qualitative research, since it is inappropriate for qualitative study. In probability sampling, the members of the research population are chosen randomly with a known probability of being selected. Since the aim in quantitative research tends to be to produce a statistically representative sample, suitable for hypothesis testing, therefore, all groups of population are represented in the sample in their true proportions. Qualitative research on the other side, applies non-probability sampling technique, since it does not require developing a statistically representative sample to draw statistical inferences (Wilmot, 2005).

With regard to non-probability sampling there are various techniques used in qualitative sampling, including: purposive sampling, convenience sampling, judgment sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling. Purposive or selective sampling is a technique that is often used in qualitative study (Wilmot, 2005). In a purposive non-random sample, the number of sample members is less important than the approach used to select them. Individuals' characteristics are used as the basis of selection, keeping in view reflecting the diversity and breadth of the population. However, purposive sampling tends to be linked with different sampling forms (Coyne, 1997). For example, Patton (1990) has mentioned fifteen different forms of purposive sampling including selective sampling and theoretical sampling. Purposive sampling by many

experts is also called theoretical sampling (Coyne, 1997). Theoretical sampling that according to Glasser and Strauss (1967) has developed as a result of grounded theory approach, but according to Marshall (1996), although it is the principal strategy for the grounded theoretical approach but it is used in some form in most qualitative investigations necessitating interpretation. Grounded theory refers to the process of theory building as a result of conducting qualitative data. Theoretical sampling or purposive sampling in the context of grounded theory tends to be based on an iterative process, employing continual sampling, while collecting and analysing the data until 'theoretical saturation' is achieved. The iterative process of the theoretical sample design is important for qualitative research. It gives the researcher the possibility to analyse the data while the sampling progresses and that the researcher can change the sample design by adding or subtracting the sample members and in doing so the process ensures robustness of the generated theories and the same happened in this research (Wilmot, 2005). The researcher had initially decided the sample size of 50, but, after interviewing and exploring some aspects of the research, the researcher kept on increasing the number of sample members till it reached the figure of 75 interviews.

A significant aspect of qualitative sampling is that the number of sample members tends to be small. This is mainly because; there is no need to apply statistical tests for generating statistical inferences in qualitative research (Wilmot, 2005). Moreover, since qualitative method aims at depth and breadth of collected data, therefore, the analysis of a manageable number of qualitative interviews might be a logical decision, since the large number of in-depth interviews might limit the capacity and ability of the researcher to analyse large amount of qualitative data efficiently and effectively. The issue of sample size in qualitative research also depends upon the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the sample population (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). To generate some meaningful idea from a qualitative investigation one might expect to achieve



the purpose with 20 to 50 interviews for single one-to-one in-depth interviews or around 6 to 10 group based interviews, depending upon the research questions and objectives of the study (Wilmot, 2005). Keeping in view the above both factors: one of the generation of meaningful inferences from the data with in-depth insights and the second of ensuring the representation of both male and female doctors, nurses and paramedical staff belonging to different ethnic groups of Pakistan working in the three case organizations in the capital, the researcher decided a sample of 40 respondents, but, after conducting interviews the researcher increased the number of interviewees to 75 to ensure both depth and breadth of the data for rich analysis and the representation of the various ethnic and cultural groups of the country of the researcher.

Since this study was a cross-cultural therefore, it was mandatory for this study to ensure the inclusion of participants from major ethnic groups with almost equal representation. To achieve this, objective, the researcher included the participants/interviewees from all ethnic groups of Pakistan with almost equal amount of representation. Although this was difficult and time consuming but, the researcher did not compromise on this, since it could result in untrue and biased results. Moreover, since this study was conducted in medical institutions and was aimed at doctors, nurses and administrative staff, therefore, the researcher included all parties, doctors, nurses and admin staff with equal number of both male and female respondents.

### **6.3.1. Double Sampling**

The researcher adopted double sampling method Tenenbein (1972) for data collection in this research project. Double sampling is applied in case if the researcher feels that the available data generated after interviewing the respondents does not produce enough findings to justify the answers to all research questions and research objectives. The researcher conducted interviews in 2014 and after two years while analysing the data felt, need of collecting

additional data to get insights from the respondents on certain aspects of the study. For this purpose, the researcher went to re-interview the respondents and asked few more questions and integrated those data also in the findings of the research.

## 6.4. Data Collection Tools: In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Group

### 6.4.1. In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews

According to Patton (1990), interviews help explore what is in someone's mind, to extract out things from him that cannot be observed directly (Patton, 1990). Interviewing offers means of exploring people's perceptions and gaining some understanding of the way in which they interpret the world. At one extreme, personal interview may be tightly structured, based on a pre-selected list of questions, requiring specific answers from the respondents based on mostly close ended questions, or it may be based on some pre-decided questions, followed by spontaneous open ended questions emerging on the basis of discussion with the respondent (Blaxter et al., 1996). Keeping in view the usefulness of the semi structured interviews, the researcher has chosen qualitative; in-depth and semi structured interviews to collect data for the present study. Qualitative interviews are one of the most extensively used methods of qualitative research to explore opinions and views of the participants to investigate and understand a phenomenon in a particular context. Kvale (1983) defines the qualitative interview as:

*“An interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, 1983, p.174).*

For qualitative analysis, probably no data collection tool can be more useful than face-to-face interview, which according to Blaxter et al. (1996) allows the researcher to indulge into in-depth probing and discussion with the respondent and gather a handsome pool of data for understanding the topic under study. Most qualitative interviews provide the ground to the researcher to acquire 'inside' information from the respondents, including their own subjective

views about their experience and the impact of organizational structures and processes. Yin (1994) mentions that the qualitative interview is one of the most widely used sources of case study research and that most interviews of a case study investigation tend to be of an 'open-ended nature' (p. 84) in which respondents can be inquired about facts and opinions. Patton (1990, p.278) suggests, that "qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit", a stance that is entirely in accordance with the current study. Easterby-Smith et al. (1991) suggest that unstructured or semi-structured interviews are suitable when the researcher wants to understand the underlying constructs that the respondent uses to form opinions or beliefs about a particular situation or issue or when he wants to create a comprehension of the respondent's world.

The purpose of the interview in a qualitative perspective is not only to collect quantifiable responses (Kvale, 1983) rather, interpretation of a context both from the perspective of interviewee and researcher (Denzin, 1970; Mishler, 1979). Well known guru of qualitative research, Denzin (1970), has mentioned three types of interviews: standardized interview, non-standardized interview and the semi-structured. A standardized or structured interview follows list of pre decided questions to be asked each respondent with the same sequence and wording. A non-standardized or unstructured interview does not follow any order or specific themes. A semi-structured interview follows a list of questions which, overtime, may be altered in line with the emerging themes emanating from the discussion with the respondent (Denzin, 1970; Patton, 2002).

In the current study, the researcher adopted semi-structured interviews due to following reasons:

Structured interviews were not suitable to the research topic since they could not capture respondents' views of the subject matter in detail. This is a proven fact that structured interviews often neither consider nor create the breadth of interactions that is required between the researcher and respondent for a qualitative analysis of a given phenomenon of interest (Mishler, 1979). For instance, structured interviews often ignore certain situational factors that affect the encounter between interviewer and interviewee and help build up the quality of interview. These situational factors can be for example, their bodily presence, the attractiveness or unattractiveness of the two parties to one another, the social, physical and role distance, etc. Like everyday life interaction, these factors play important role in the quality of an interview (Cicourel, 1964). An unstructured interview technique was also inappropriate in the context of the current study, because of the underlying risk of gathering large amount of excessive unneeded data. Although unstructured interviews can produce handsome amount of data, however those data can overwhelm the researcher with the amount of extra information (Ackroyd, 1996). Moreover, that additional data could be irrelevant due to social desirability bias wherein a respondent with the intention of impressing the researcher can distort the facts and the same could even detract the researcher from the actual focus of the research topic (Murphy et al., 1998). An unstructured interview was also irrelevant to the present study because, as the researcher was interested to analyze a context in relation to existing KM literature, so he needed to adopt some structure around the interview process to ensure the generation of key themes during the data collection stage.

Based on the above factors, the researcher deemed semi-structured interviews to be more adequate to the study since they could help better investigation of the context of health services institutions in relation to existing theories of knowledge sharing. With the use of a structure or schedule of interviews, the researcher would be able to collect data around key themes of the

knowledge management literature and avoid generation of irrelevant data. Moreover, researcher could collect more data through structured interviews than standardized interview technique. For example, semi-structured interviews offer more flexibility during data collection because the researcher can add questions to the initial interview schedule initially prepared to collect data. Similarly, with the help of semi structured interviews, the researcher could be able to follow a framework and sequence of key themes and issues during the interviews, related to the subject matter.

The semi-structured interview technique applied in the present study has both strengths and weaknesses. With regard to weaknesses, firstly, semi-structured interviews are just like any other social interaction between two individuals, subject to social norms and rules. This can create what Murphy et al. (1998) termed ‘a dance of expectations’ “I produce my actions in the expectation that you will understand them in a particular way. Your understanding reflects your expectations of what would be a proper action for me in these particular circumstances which, in turn, becomes the basis of your response which, itself, reflects your expectations of how I will respond. And so on. At any point, there may be disjuncture between actions, responses and expectations which requires that the parties engage in some sort of repair work” (Murphy et al. 1998, p.120). Secondly, the open-ended questions used in the interview process, sometimes prove interesting but generate unneeded information. Thirdly, sometimes, data produced from in-depth interviews can be difficult to analyze due to repetition, variation and lack of sequence in the contents of the interviews. Fourthly, during the interview, respondent can irritate any unwanted clue from the interviewer like asking a sensitive question etc. Fifthly, semi- structured interviews can be time consuming, which means reducing the possibility of interviewing more number of respondents. Therefore, the researcher needed to be conscious about these issues of semi structured interviews. On the other side, semi structured interviews

have many strengths also. A notable strength is that it allows the respondents to answer the questions from their own frame of reference (Seidman, 1991) and the same can likely generate a rich pool of data and explore further significant issues for discussion which might have not been included in the original schedule of interview. Moreover, the relaxed and informal environment of the interview, backed by the candid attitude of the interviewer and his effort to be a good listener, can encourage the interviewees to express their own views.

The researcher has conducted 75 semi structured interviews; with 25 interviews from each of the three case organizations. In order to make the study more meaningful, the researcher has interviewed both male and female doctors and nurses, administrative staff and paramedics belonging to various ethnic groups of Pakistan. About 80% of the interviews were recorded and then were transcribed during data collection.

#### **6.4.2 Focus Group**

Another data collection tool used in this research is focus group. Having been introduced in the field of marketing research, focus groups are recognized as well established method of data collection in the field of qualitative research, over the last few decades (Kitzinger, 1995). In a focus, group data is generated as a result of the interaction and sharing of the diversified and multi-faceted knowledge, opinions and experiences of the participants of a group consisting of 6-8 members under the supervision of a moderator. The main distinctive feature of focus groups involves in highlighting the group norms, cultural and sub-cultural values and processes of social interaction (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001), wherein the participants present, defend and exchange their ideas, attitudes, perceptions, thinking, and framework of understanding (Kitzinger, 1995; Kitzinger, 1994; Krueger & Casey, 2000). Since focus group

setting provides an audience for each participant from among group members, therefore, it encourages a greater freedom and variety of conversation and as a result, a pool of rich and multi-dimensional data on the subject matter can be collected. (Kitzinger, 1995). Another important advantage of focus group is that it is an economic and time saving kind of data collection source, through which the data that can be generated through 4-6 in-depth interviews, can be generated in one focus group of the length of 1-2 hours.

The methodological strength of focus groups to highlight group processes, norms, values, beliefs and attitudes and their analysis is especially useful in the domain of social research. Since participants in a focus group, freely present and defend their ideas, therefore it becomes effective in spotlighting the processes of social interaction (Bloor et al., 2001). The data collected through focus group discussions can also uncover socio-cultural contexts for individuals' frame of thinking (Green & Hart, 1999; Kitzinger, 1994). This is mainly due to the nature of the talk produced in focus groups, being a combination of the personal beliefs and available collective narratives of the participants that are flavoured by the influence of their local circumstances. That is why, Gamson (1992) suggested that focus groups offer researchers an opportunity to “observe a concentrated interaction on a topic in a limited period of time, and raise questions and perspectives that would not naturally occur” (p.192).

Successful and meaningful interactions between focus group members largely depend upon the moderator (McLafferty, 2004; Krueger et al., 2000; Redmond & Curtis, 2009). Despite being a very useful tool of qualitative data collection, focus group poses a number of challenges to the researcher (Clark, Maben, & Jones, 1996). Therefore, while using focus group methodology, the underlying challenges of the same should be kept in mind and the role of the



moderator on group interaction should be taken serious (Warr, 2005), otherwise there is a risk of collecting poor quality data and consequently less authentic results.

This needs to be noted that unlike other conventional tools of data collection, focus group is less likely to generate coherent and consistent data (Bloor et al., 2001) and it may also lack decorum and detail (Warr, 2005) since participants in group discussions can discuss argue and interrupt each other. However, instead of taking these issues as limitations or weaknesses of focus group, much stronger attention and precaution should be made towards the conversation of the participants to see how the sense is jointly formed, conveyed, challenged and revised during the discussions. Due to complexity of data analysis as a result of multiple voices, themes and subjects, focus group calls for more serious corresponding analytical techniques of qualitative data analysis, to properly capitalize on the data generated through focus (Warr, 2005).

The researcher intended to conduct total 4 focus groups, but, he could conduct only two focus group interviews. The main reason of this was that the participants were not able to talk freely and easily since the nature of study was based on cross-cultural and cross-ethnic issues. Secondly, the respondents were also scared of management control during group based discussions. However, the searcher observed that the respondents seemed to be easy in sharing their views during individual one-to-one interviews.

#### **6.4.4. Interview conditions and Reflections of the Researcher regarding the interviews**

Interviews were conducted one-to-one personally in a semi-structured way. Most of the interviews were recorded. The researcher also took extensive notes during the interviews and those notes became very helpful later on during the analysis of data. Keeping in view the nature and significance of the research, except few, most of the interviews were conducted in clam and cool environment free from any kind of disturbance. Before the interviews, all interviewees were fully informed regarding the purposes and objectives of the interviews and consent was sought from interviewees.

The researcher at initial stage was very much worried regarding the interviews since half of the respondents were doctors and it was very difficult and challenging to get the time from the doctors for the interviews because in Pakistan, doctors remain very busy and in most of the cases, their duty schedules tend to be very hectic and as a result of that it generally tends to be difficult to seek time from doctors. Hence, the researcher had to struggle a lot for taking appointments from the doctors. Many of them were not willing to sit for the interview and were avoiding due to time constraint and therefore the researcher took help from the management and influenced the doctors and nurses through the management. Doctors were influenced through registrars and HRM managers and for the interviews of the nurses, the researcher sought the cooperation from the nursing superintendents. Even after this, in many cases, the researcher went for the interview and returned without interviewing because the doctors were busy and they did not show up themselves available for interviews. The timing of the interviews varied from 30 minutes to 90 minutes, keeping in view the interest of the respondents in the

interview and their depth of ideas being shared in the interviews. Some interviews were of the duration of two hours and even more.

The researcher faced some unique and interesting situations during the process of interviews. For instance, many interviews were completed in parts and the interviewer had to make several visits for a single interview because the doctors were not available for extended time for the interview. Hence, they used to answer some questions in a single day and asked the researcher to come next. In one interview, the researcher observed a very unique and interesting situation. The respondent, a senior paediatric doctor had to see/examine dozens of patients and he was not able to sit in the interview due to time constraint, therefore during the interview, he answered some questions and after 15 minutes he stopped the researcher and allowed the peon to send the patients for examination and examined them for the next 15 minutes. After that he stopped the entry of the patients and sat with the researcher for the interview for 15 minutes and after 15 minutes he called the patients and after 15 minutes he resumed the interview. He kept on doing this till the interview ended after 3 hours.

There was another problem in the in the interview of female nurses, because Pakistani society is influenced by religious influences and due to this, the separate one-to-one meetings of young men with women is not deemed to be a socially good idea. Due to this, some nurses were hesitant to sit alone with the interviewer for the interview and in order to mitigate this, the researcher had to make some additional ladies sit along with those nurses/ girls to provide them psychological safety.

Mostly the interviewers provide financial or non-financial incentives to the respondents for the interviews and keeping in view this particular factor, the researcher had also allocated some

budget for this purpose from his own resources, but he felt too lucky that in many cases instead of offering incentives, he enjoyed the hospitality of the respondents in terms of refreshment being provided by the doctors and nurses. One reason of this treatment from the respondents relates to the cultural values of the country of the researcher especially with regard to hospitality of the guests. Since the interviewer in many cases was like a guest, therefore, he was provided refreshment like tea coffee drinks and lunches and dinners from the doctors and nurses.

Most of the respondents showed little reluctance in answering the questions during the initial stage of the interview but after some time when rapport was built by the researcher, then they used to express their views quite freely and happily and that motivated the researcher on one hand and allowed him also to gather a rich pool of data on the other, which helped in building up the logic and sequence in the story development regarding so many research objectives of the research project. Overall, the interviews were conducted quite effectively and productively wherein the researcher tried to receive and the respondents tried to provide maximum information relating to the aims and objectives of the research.

## 6.5. Quality and Rigor of the Research

In research, being qualitative or quantitative, the researcher is supposed to assess the rigor or quality or exactitude of her or his research. In positivist research, the assessment of quality and rigor of research is done through checking its validity, reliability, internal validity and external validity etc. But according to (Golafshani, 2007), such a criterion might be inappropriate for interpretivist research, since it tends to base on the basic principle that there is no single 'truth', subjectivity tends to be fundamental aspect of the qualitative research design, and only a small number of cases are studied.

On the other hand, Patton (2001) argues that while designing a study, analyzing results and assessing the quality of the study, reliability and validity are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about. This really corresponds to the argument that “How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). To answer to this objection, Healy and Perry (2000) assert that the quality of a research study in any paradigm should be judged against the terms of its own paradigm. For example, while the terms Validity and reliability are essential criterion for judging the research quality in quantitative paradigms, the terms Consistency or Dependability, Credibility or Trustworthiness, Neutrality or Conformability and Applicability or Transferability are the essential criteria to test the quality and rigor of qualitative for research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Close to the term reliability in quantitative research, the term “Dependability” is used in qualitative research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Likewise, Clont (1992) and Seale (1999) adopt the word “Dependability” to denote “Consistency” or “Reliability” in the domain of qualitative research. Seale (1999) argues that in order to ensure quality in qualitative research, application

of “Trustworthiness” is crucial. He maintains that “for any good qualitative research, “Trustworthiness” of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability” (p.266). In quest for the meaning of rigor and quality in research, Davies and Dodd (2002) find that the notion “rigor” in qualitative field should differ from that of quantitative research by “accepting that there is a quantitative bias in the concept of rigor, we now move on to develop our re-conception of rigor by exploring subjectivity, reflexivity, and the social interaction of interviewing” (p.281).

### **6.5.1. Reliability**

According to Joppe (2000) reliability means: “The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable”. (p.1).

Although ‘Reliability’ as a concept is mainly used for testing the rigor of quantitative research, but, in the view of many scholars, the term reliability is neither applicable to qualitative research in the sense as it is applied in quantitative research nor should it be demanded for. Because, the very difference in purposes of evaluating the quality of studies both in quantitative and quantitative forms of research, is one of the reasons that make the concept of reliability irrelevant for qualitative research. As Stenbacka (2001) argues that if “reliability” with a “purpose of explanation” is the criterion to evaluate the rigor/quality of any quantitative study, in the same way, the concept of “quality” with the purpose of “generating understanding” is the criterion to test the rigor of qualitative study. According to Stenbacka (2001), since the

concept of reliability concerns measurements, therefore, it can be irrelevant and even misleading in qualitative research. Moreover, she argues that “if a qualitative study is evaluated against reliability as a criterion, the consequence then rather is, the study is not good” (p. 552). That is why Gulafshani argues that if application of the idea of testing for checking the reliability of any research is the standard, then perhaps the most important test for any qualitative research should be its quality (Golafshani, 2007). A good quality study can help us “understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing” (Eisner, 1991, p.58).

The criterion of reliability covers the concepts of replicability and consistency in terms of the ability of the measurement procedure to produce the same answer whenever it is applied and that whether the investigator following the same procedures would arrive at the same conclusions or not? (Kirk and Miller, 1986). These assessment criteria don't offer a logical stance for assessing research quality in the context of case study research, as it is applied in the present study. Each case is unique, because the combination of contexts, culture, values and individuals cannot be the same in differing situations. Nor do the institutions and situations remain same over time. “It is not possible to step into the same river twice”. Additionally, any endeavour to reproduce the same results by a replication of the study by someone else, fails to recognize a fundamental characteristic of the non-positivist qualitative approach, i.e. recognition of the influence of the researcher's experience on the research process and the role choices that the researcher makes. All discourse is immediate, emergent and grounded in the concrete context bound specifics created by the interaction (Denzin, 1997). This interaction tends to be first time occurrence and the dialogues produced in it cannot be repeated and each attempt at repetition brings a new experience (Denzin, 1997, p. 36). It would, therefore, be impossible for another researcher to recreate exactly the same piece of research and produce

identical outcomes. It needs to be noted, however, that inductive approaches tend to be based on distinct assumptions (Silverman, 2001) and based on this, it is, for instance, not to be expected that replication of a research can produce exactly the same results in other organisations or situations, because of contextual differences.

Due to above mentioned issues, Guba and Lincoln (1989), instead of “Reliability”, suggest a more appropriate, alternative criterion i.e., “Dependability” to assess the quality and rigor of qualitative research. They maintain that “Dependability”, in qualitative research can be achieved by using multiple data collection sources and employing an “audit enquiry” that would permit another researcher to analyse and understand the decisions taken by the researcher during the research process from start to end, and also to assess the appropriateness of those decisions in the light of the research objectives and available data pool (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Hoepfl (1997) has introduced the concept of “Consistency” instead of “Dependability”. Like Guba and Lincoln (1989), he also refers to almost the same criterion to be applied for the assessment of “Consistency” to check the consistency of qualitative research. He highlights the verification of processes and product of the whole research activity (Hoepfl, 1997). Clont (1992) and Seale (1999), in this connection, ratify the concept of “Dependability” and “Consistency” instead of “Reliability” in qualitative research. Campbell (1996) suggests that consistency can be achieved by verifying the steps of research through careful inspection like research questions, raw data, data analysis procedures and process notes etc.

### **6.5.2. Validity**

Traditionally, validity has been a positivist research term which encompasses a bunch of empirical concepts like; objectivity, truth, universal laws, evidence, reason, actuality,



deduction, fact and mathematical data to name just a few (Winter, 2000). Joppe (2000) provides a very convincing definition of validity in quantitative perspective of research:

*“Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. In other words, does the research instrument allow you to hit "the bull's eye" of your research object? Researchers generally determine validity by asking a series of questions, and will often look for the answers in the research of others” (p.1).*

From Qualitative perspective, the concept of validity is not a single, fixed or universal concept, but “rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects” (Winter, 2000, p.1). Despite considering validity concept irrelevant for qualitative research, many scholars have realized the importance for some qualifying checks or measures for the qualitative research such as, quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mishler, 2000; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001). Creswell & Miller (2000) suggest that the researcher’s perception of validity and his/her choice or assumption of research paradigm reflects the presence of validity in his or her research. As a result, many researchers have developed their own concepts of validity and have often generated or adopted what they consider to be more appropriate terms (Golafshai, 2003). It is perhaps because of the above explanation that Stenbacka (2001) argues that the concept of validity needs to be redefined to judge the authenticity and rigor of qualitative researches.

#### **6.5.2.1. External validity**

External validity, which refers to the ability of a research to generalize its findings to a wider population, has been an important criterion for judging the authenticity of positivist research, and so it is widely discussed within the field of non-positivist research. However, since the

current study is based on case study method, therefore the concept of external validity is not applicable here. As Yin (1994) despite being a positivist in his approach, justly argues that the concept of external validity cannot be applied in case study research like it is applied in statistical research. As Tellis (1997) notes, both Hamel et al. (1993) and Yin (1994) strongly recommend that “the relative size of sample, whether two, ten or a hundred cases cannot convert multiple case study research into a macroscopic study, nor is that a significant issue in qualitative research domain, since the validity, insights and meaningfulness produced from qualitative study tends to be linked with information-richness of the cases selected and the observational or analytical capabilities of the researcher, than with the sample size”. (Patton, 1990, p. 185) Moreover, the attempts of authors such as Yin (1994) to follow positivist social science by increasing the number of cases in multiple case studies with the belief that, random sampling of cases can represent larger populations are subject to criticism (Knights & McCabe, 1998). As Stake (1995, p. 4) points out “case study research is not sampling research, we do not study a case primarily to understand other cases”.

Since emerging hypothesis according to Guba and Lincoln (1981) tend to be context- driven in qualitative research, therefore they suggest that the results of qualitative research cannot be transferred at other place without properly understanding the original context; hence they use the term “fittingness” being more important than external validity and argue that the question regarding the transferability of results to other situations cannot be asked in qualitative research. However, Stake (1978) refers to 'naturalistic generalization', which according to him, can be achieved through identifying similarities in the two contexts. He further recommends that explicit comparisons of the two similar situations can be made by the use of individual experiences and tacit knowledge, to reach realistic generalizations (Schofield, 1993). “The in-depth knowledge about the organization and its context and especially about the processes and

the underlying behaviours, can lead towards the specification of the conditions under which the behaviour can be expected to occur. In other words, in case study research, generalization is not about populations, but theoretical propositions” (Hartley, 1994, p.225).

#### **6.5.2.2. Internal validity**

In research, internal validity can be affected due to flaws in the research design or data collection; e.g., not controlling some of the major variables (designing problem) or research instrument (a data collection problem). "Findings can be said to be internally invalid because they may have been affected by factors other than those thought to have caused them, or because the interpretation of the data by the researcher is not clearly supportable" (Seliger & Shohamy 1989, 95). While discussing internal validity, Yin (1994) emphasizes on the importance of testing the drawn inferences and conclusions to check if some important variable has been overlooked while designing the study. Lincoln and Guba (1989) describe the internal validity as credibility or truth value of the research and mention the possible problems relating to the bias of the interviewer and interviewee and the distortions that can arise from the researcher and subject relationship. The perspectives may differ, but, the focal point is the same, that is, the audience should believe that the findings are authentic and credible.

Although external validity might be difficult to test in qualitative research, since it requires the issue of generalizability, which is difficult to achieve in qualitative perspective, but, internal validity might be relatively easier to ensure in qualitative research especially with regard to face validity, criterion validity, construct and content validity. For example, face validity relates to confirm as to apparently whether the instrument is measuring what is planned or decided to be measured? Criterion validity is tested by analysing the criterion used for the conduct of test; construct validity relates to the selection of constructs of the test and content

validity is measured by analysing the contents or questions of the test. Now, in quantitative research, all these types of validities can be analysed in the light of criterion used for the test, constructs, questions selected and scales used in the instrument and when it comes to qualitative research, these validities can be tested by thoroughly analysing the research objectives, research questions, research constructs/variables, research techniques or data collection tools applied, the questions asked in the interviews and the way the results are analysed.

For example, construct validity means to make sure that research instrument was based on the constructs to measure what it was supposed to measure and in the same way it was supposed to measure. Yin (1994) has coined construct validity as a criterion for judging the quality of qualitative research and suggests “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied” and identifies three principles to increase its presence in a research study: (1) establishing a chain of evidence or the audit trail (2) use of various sources of evidence and (3) having a draft report reviewed by key informants.

### **6.5.3. Triangulation and Testing of Validity and Reliability**

“If the concepts of validity, reliability, rigor, quality and trustworthiness are meant to differentiate a 'good' from 'bad' research then testing and increasing the validity, reliability, rigor, quality and trustworthiness should be important elements of research in any paradigm. If the reliability, validity or trustworthiness can be maximized or tested for more “credible and defensible results” (Johnson, 1997, p. 283), then this may lead to generalizability which is one of the hallmarks of good qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001). Therefore, apparently, the

quality of a research is linked with the concept of generalizability and consequently with the increasing degree of trustworthiness or validity of the research.

On the contrary, Maxwell (1992) argues that the degree of generalizability of the results clearly differentiates quantitative research from qualitative and Patton (2001) states generalizability being one of the characteristic of quantitative research, and for qualitative research, he suggests the concept of triangulation. Triangulation is a kind of research strategy applied to improve reliability and validity of research and its findings. Mathison (1988) elaborates this by saying:

*“Triangulation has raised an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches to evaluation [in order to] control bias and establishing valid propositions because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology”. (p.13).*

Patton (2001) recommends the application of triangulation by saying that it strengthens the rigor of research through combining various qualitative and quantitative methods and using multiple data collection sources and techniques. However, Barbour (1998) has challenged the approach of combining various methods. She agrees with the mixing of paradigms, but she disagrees with the concept of mixing qualitative and quantitative methods within a single research approach e.g., qualitative research, which she argues, can be problematic, since according to her, each research approach tends to have its own assumptions. Barbour (1998) however, does not discard the applicability of the concept of triangulation in the field of qualitative research and asks for defining triangulation in each paradigm from a qualitative research's perspective. For example, from an objectivist paradigm, usage of triangulation may be useful for confirmation or disconfirmation of the hypothesis whereas it should be the modification of theory. Constructivism is another paradigm generally

associated with qualitative research, which treats knowledge as socially constructed which may change according to changing circumstances. The belief of constructivist paradigm, that reality is changing whether the observer wishes it or not (Hippis, 1993), presents the possibility of multiple or diverse constructions of reality. Constructivism signifies multiple realities; which people possess in their minds. Therefore, in order to acquire multiple reliable and valid realities, usage of multiple methods of searching and gathering of data is quite logical. And if this demands the use of triangulation from constructive perspective, then the use of investigators, methods and data triangulations to record the construction of realities should also be logical (Johnson, 1997). An open-ended qualitative perspective in constructivism adheres with the idea of data triangulation by encouraging the participants in a research to assist the researcher in data collection process and in answering the research question as well. Using multiple methods, such as, study of available literature, interviews, focus groups and recordings will pave way for more reliable, valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities. To improve the analysis and understanding of construction of others, triangulation is a step taken by researchers to involve several investigators or peer researchers' interpretation of the data at different time or location. In a related way, a qualitative researcher can "use investigator triangulation and consider the ideas and explanations generated by additional researchers studying the research participants" (Johnson, 1997, p.284). Triangulation may include multiple methods of data collection and data analysis, but does not suggest a fix method for all the researches. The methods chosen in triangulation to test the validity and reliability of a study depend on the criterion of the research.

#### 6.5.4. The Role of Researcher

As already mentioned during the discussion on internal validity, the nature of the relationship between researcher and subject and the possibility of researcher bias are issues that need serious consideration in the field of qualitative research. Inevitably, the selection of research paradigm on the basis of ontological and epistemological stance greatly influences the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the subject. In positivist research, the role of researcher might not be so critical, but, in non-positivist research, the role of researcher is extremely important. There are a number of possible roles which a researcher can play in a qualitative inquiry, ranging from the objective, interviewer, moderator, interpreter and data analyst, model-builder role through to that of an organizational actor immersed in the stream of contexts, events and activities (Evered & Louis, 1991).

An acceptance that human beings interpret their observations and experiences through the filters of their own understanding, experience, values and expectations, necessitates the logic that the same can be true for researchers, regardless of being quantitative or qualitative and especially in case of non-positivist research. Hence, the investigator and the subjects under investigation are interactively linked and the findings can't escape the influence of that interaction. As Cassell and Synnon (1994) argue, the researcher cannot be neutral bystander, but a social being who draws impact on the behaviour of the subjects he or she is involved with. As Stake (1994) explains, a case study is not only the process of learning about the case but also a product of researcher's own learning, because the researcher becomes the research instrument in qualitative inquiry (Cassell, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2005; Turato, 2005). Therefore, a qualitative report must include information about the researcher (Patton, 1990). Morse (1994) cautions against conducting research in an organization where researcher is an employee, primarily due to possible conflicts of interest and roles, whereas authors such as

Gummesson (1988) point out the benefits of pre-understanding that leads the researcher towards the reality of relationships, processes and factors within an organization, not least the appropriate method and level of access. From a pragmatic point of view, pre-understanding or at least pre-introduction of the researcher with research premises increases the speeds-up the process through which the researcher establishes herself within a research setting. This helps in creating some familiarity with organizational culture, processes and jargons which assist in the building of rapport and establishing of credibility. Patton (1990, p. 56) argues the importance of empathy on the part of the researcher “being able to take and understand the stance, position, feelings, experiences and world view of others”.



## 6.6. Provisions to Ensure Reliability and Validity in the Current Research Project

In the above pages it has been discussed with lots of references and arguments of the eminent scholars and the experts of the field of academic research (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Hartley, 1994; Knights & McCabe, 1998; Stake 1995; Patton, 1990; 2001 Golafshani, 2007; Hoepfl, 1997; Clont, 1992; Seale, 1999) that the concepts of reliability and validity are basically questioned, discussed and linked with quantitative research because of its peculiar nature and these concepts are neither questioned and applied nor expected and discussed in the same way in qualitative research as in quantitative research. However, in qualitative research, the concepts of reliability and validity are replaced by or seen in the light of some other labels or constructs; e.g., reliability is seen in terms of dependability and consistency and validity in the sense of rigour, quality, and exactitude of the whole research process from start to end including the trustworthiness of the researcher. The experts however, have emphasized to ensure quality, rigour, dependability, consistency and trustworthiness in the qualitative research and the requirements and provisions for ensuring them have been discussed in the above pages. Keeping in view various aspects, assumptions, requirements and provisions of ensuring the concept of reliability/dependability/consistency and validity/quality/rigour, the researcher has tried his utmost to ensure both reliability and validity in this research project. The details of this are mentioned below:

**1. Design and Conduct of Research:** The researcher has tried his best to design a sound research plan, based on the logic and principles of good research, by choosing appropriate ontology, epistemology, research approach, research strategy and data collection tools, coupled with suitable data analysis techniques to ensure credible research findings. The researcher also remained committed to carry on the research

project with full care, caution, devotion and dedication fully complying the code of research ethics to come up with fruitful findings and meaningful conclusions.

*2. Triangulation:* An important method of increasing the validity and reliability of research in qualitative perspective is to go for triangulation. The use of multiple data sources for triangulation has also been recommended by other experts of qualitative research such as, (Eisenhardt, 1989: Lincoln & Guba, 1994: Patton, 1990: Stake, 1995) who argue that triangulation is an important means of authenticating the findings. This is also important to notice that the use of triangulation requires some precaution and also to recognize whether multiple sources of evidence are actually measuring exactly the same thing or not (Blaikie, 1991: Guba & Lincoln, 1989: Mathison, 1988). With regard to triangulation, the researcher has applied both secondary and primary data. Before using primary data sources, the researcher compiled a handsome amount of existing literature on the various constructs and variables of the subject matter which broadened his knowledge and insight about the same. Chenail (1997) with regard to literature survey maintains that literature review of the subject, comparing and contrasting the field, knowledge of the phenomenon with literature and the researcher's personal experience shapes the triangulation process engine in a qualitative study. This stance of Chenail (1997) usefully endorses the sense-making process which is employed in the present study wherein the role of the researcher as interpreter has been put into practice and both literature and multiple data sources including qualitative interviews and focus group are used as part of an iterative process to understand the phenomenon and also to know, how emergent findings fit into larger contexts. This triangulation will definitely enhance the validity and reliability of the current research.

*3. Multiple instead of Single Case Study:* In further discussion of triangulation, Marshall and Rossman (1989, p. 146) recommend that a multiple case study design provides another type of triangulation. They argue that designing an inquiry in which multiple cases are used and multiple data source and informants are used can highly strengthen the usefulness of the study for other settings. The researcher has met this condition by choosing a multiple case study strategy. Instead of single case study which might have been easier for the researcher to manage, the researcher applied multiple case-study method, in order to ensure the quality and reliability of the research. An important reason of adopting multiple case study method was to avoid any possible bias. This means that had the researcher focused on only one instead of three case study organizations, the findings might have been limited to only one organization, leading towards selection bias and limited scope of study due to being confined to only one organization, whereas by increasing the number of case organizations the researcher has tried not only to avoid the selection bias but has also increased the validity of the study by comparing the findings of one study group with the remaining two. Secondly out of three case organizations, two: Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences Islamabad and Federal Government Services Hospital Islamabad are government organizations and the third Shifa International Islamabad is a privately owned organization. This selection of cases provides the ground for two things; firstly, to eliminate selection bias of public or private organizations and secondly to evaluate and compare the similarities and differences of the patterns of knowledge sharing and trust at the three organizations.

*4. Constructs and Interview Questions:* With regard to ensuring rigor and quality of research, especially in the light of internal validity, an important thing is to choose appropriate and relevant constructs and contents/questions in the data collection

process. In this context, the researcher decided the constructs of the study and intended questions after an extensive study of the available literature and then he discussed the same with experts then also conducted some pilot study about the questions of the interviews before finalizing a list of the interview questions.

5. *Consistency*: This is already discussed that the word consistency is used in place of reliability in qualitative research (Hoepfl, 1997; Campbell 1996). Reliability can be tested if the research can produce the same results if conducted again, which can be achieved only if all the respondents are asked the same questions. For ensuring reliability in qualitative perspective, it is important to ensure consistency in asking the questions. For achieving this objective, the researcher used the semi-structured interview method which contained a list of questions to be used in interview and except some situational questions, the researcher asked the same questions from every respondent and this thing can contribute towards ensuring consistency in qualitative research which is replaced by reliability in quantitative research.

6. *Informing the Respondents about the findings of the Research*: An important aspect of good research especially with regard to maintaining the reliability and sanctity of the research project, is to inform the respondents about the research findings at various stages of the research process Yin (1994) and keeping in view this particular aspect, the researcher is intending to keep the respondents informed about the findings of the research at various stages.

7. *Substantial number of Qualitative Interviews*: Generally, the qualitative research studies tend to be based on 20-30 qualitative interviews, but, the researcher has

interviewed 75 interviewees in order to make the study more productive and meaningful and secondly in order to include opinions of the respondents belonging to various ethnic groups of the country of the researcher.

8. *Careful selection of Sample members*: An important aspect of ensuring quality of a research project is to apply appropriate sampling technique with full care and caution, keeping in view nature, objectives, philosophy, approach and strategy of the intended. Since this study was a cross-cultural therefore, it was mandatory for this study to ensure the inclusion of participants from major ethnic groups with almost equal representation. To achieve this, objective, the researcher included the participants/interviewees from all ethnic groups of Pakistan with almost equal amount of representation. Although this was difficult and time consuming but, the researcher did not compromise on this, since it could result in untrue and biased results. Moreover, since this study was conducted in medical institutions and was aimed at doctors, nurses and administrative staff, therefore, the researcher included all parties, doctors, nurses and admin staff with equal number of both male and female respondents.

9. *Double sampling*: While analyzing the generated findings from the transcribed data, in the light of the research questions, the researcher felt that some research questions still needed to be asked in order to generate more comprehensive and authentic findings. For achieving this objective, and strengthening the concept of rigor and quality of research, the researcher went for re-interviewing the same respondents after two years of the initial data collection. After getting the additional data, the researcher repeated the same process and merged the new data set with the

existing one, to produce a more meaningful and thorough analysis of the answers of the research questions and research objectives.

**10. Role of Interviewer:** An important aspect of the quality and rigour of the qualitative research is the role of the interviewer and interviewing process. The researcher conducted all the interviews with full professional manner putting the respondents at ease to share their honest and true responses. Despite the sensitive nature of the study which involved questions about the cultural and ethnic biases and differences of the various ethnic groups. The researcher having used his previous research techniques asked indirect questions in certain cases wherein respondents were not willing or reluctant to give real answers if they were asked direct questions.

**11. Costs and Benefits of the Study:** Another considerable issue according to Rosenthal (1994) to evaluate the worth and soundness of any research is its associated costs and offered benefits. A good research is one whose benefits may outweigh its costs. Although it is difficult for the researcher to claim about benefits of this research but he is confident to claim that the benefits of this research if don't outweigh its costs, then still are not less than its costs. For example, one of the most apparent utility of this research is that it has integrated multi-dimensional literature on knowledge management together, for example, the literature on the knowledge sharing, the influence of trust on knowledge sharing, the influence of culture on knowledge sharing and the influence of culture on trust and finally integrating the literature on organization studies and medical sociology. The empirically based evidence of this research can open new vistas of thinking and new dimensions of action which can lead towards policy making and decision making about knowledge management,

which is one of the issues of top most priorities for almost all organizations regardless of being profit or no-profit. The findings of this research can also open new dimensions of research, opening new research questions and new research areas in the domain of knowledge sharing. Finally, the research project can enable the researcher to use his existing and extended (during the research process) information of knowledge sharing and research expertise to complete this PhD dissertation. This means that this research can train the researcher how to get a PhD degree. Obviously the research has taught the researcher how to conduct qualitative research and thus he can and he will use this whole training and experience for conducting more research in future, writing research papers and also training young researchers.

**12. Role of Researcher:** It is already mentioned in the above pages that researcher's role in a fruitful qualitative research should have both pre-start and post-start dimensions of the research process. Pre-start role encompasses the understanding and existing knowledge of the researcher about the subject of the study and the field experience and the post start dimension encompasses know how and experience of the researcher of the field of research process. Based on this logic, the present study could have not been possible without the prior knowledge of the researcher about the subject matter of the study. The researcher gained extensive knowledge about the subject of the study during his MS degree in Management from Federal university of Pakistan. Before this, he has earned a Master's degree from university of Surrey in HRM and an MBA from top ranking university of his country. Moreover, the researcher has been teaching management subjects for the last 20 years, in which he touched the area of knowledge management also.

As far as practical dimensions of research process are concerned, the researcher has been involved with the sharing of knowledge for the last 20 years during his teaching career and also during his corporate sector job as a manager marketing. As far as the research experience of the field of research and specially that of qualitative research is concerned, the researcher has been supervising research theses of the students of masters and bachelor's degree students, for the last 15 years and has been teaching the subject of research methods both at bachelors and masters levels at some of the top ranking universities of his country. The researcher was introduced to the term qualitative researcher, about 20 years before, when he had taught the module "Marketing Research" to MBA marketing students. Moreover, the researcher has been a part of qualitative research during the research he conducted for the thesis of his MSc HRM at university of Surrey UK.

This is already mentioned that researchers like Gummesson (1988) and Patton (1990) point out the benefits of pre-understanding pre-introduction of the researcher with the case organizations which lead the researcher towards the reality of relationships, processes and factors within an organization and helps in creating some familiarity with organizational culture, processes and jargons which assist in the building of rapport and establishing of credibility. In the light of the above notion, it is notable here that all the three case study organizations chosen for the current study were not strange and unknown to researcher, rather quite well known and extensively visited by him since they all belong to his city of residence. The researcher has already been observing certain organizational cultural traits, working habits and trends of the case organizations. This prior knowledge of the researcher about the research premises definitely helped him reduce strange feelings between him and the research surroundings and respondents. Moreover, this also helped reduce the apprehensions of the researching/case



organizations regarding the permission of accessibility for conducting research in their organizations.

## 6.7. Data Analysis Technique: Thematic Analysis

An important element of research methodology is the analysis of data. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) define data analysis as a process through which researcher brings down large amounts of data to a story, readable or meaningful form. Patton (1987) explains three main steps/characteristics that occur during the process of data analysis: data are organized, categorized as per the emerging themes and patterns and then summarized bringing them in a readable form. In quantitative research the data tends to be analyzed through numbers, figures and quantifications, whereas in qualitative research, the focus of the researcher instead of numbers and figures remains on text or data, meanings or insights. The text that is used by researchers to analyze qualitative data mostly tends to be in the form of transcripts of interviews or notes from participant observation sessions, however, text can also be in the form of pictures or other images that the researchers examine (Ratcliff, 1994). Analysis of qualitative data is a reflexive and iterative process that begins right from the time of data collection instead of when data collection has ceased (Stake, 1995). In the process of qualitative data analysis next to field notes or interview transcripts, the qualitative analyst jots down ideas about the meaning of the text and the way they might relate to other issues. This process of reading data and interpreting them continues throughout the research project. While analyzing the data, the analyst adjusts the process of data collection keeping in view the emerging themes and concepts as they emerge during collection of data. This process is termed progressive focusing (Parlett & Hamilton, 1976). Qualitative data analysis involves immersing oneself with the data in such a way that one becomes familiar with it then looking for patterns and themes generating from the data and then searching various relationships within the themes and patterns. This process helps the researchers to compile the findings of the data in a readable and interpretable form (Kawulich, 2004).

It is good to understand as to how the analysis of qualitative data differs from that of quantitative (Patton 2002). Engel & Schutt, (2012) have defined the difference of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Each of the following points explains the role of qualitative researcher in which he plays an active role right from the start of the data collection till compiling the final results; compared to the role of a detached and isolated investigator of specific patterns and relations among distinct variables as happens in case of quantitative data analysis:

- Focus of researcher on meanings instead of figures or quantifiable phenomena.
- Collection of large amount of data from few interviewees instead of gathering small amount of data from many respondents.
- Detailed study of data without pre-determined variables, categories or directions.
- Researcher as an “instrument,” not the designer of instruments to measure certain variables.
- Applying sensitivity to context instead of seeking generalizations.
- Focus on the effect of the value of researcher and participants on the course of analysis instead of permitting value-free inquiry of respondents.
- Rich explanations of the world, instead of measuring the specific variables.

(Engel & Schutt 2012, p. 325).

There is no single way or technique for analysis of qualitative data. The books offer a lengthy list of analytical tools of qualitative data. To quote Patton (2002), “Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings. No formula exists for that transformation, guidance, yes, but no recipe. Direction can and will be offered, but the final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when—and if—arrived at” (p.432). That is why, novice researchers sometimes get overwhelmed by the variety, however it might be useful for them to understand that there is no any prescribed technique to address the process. The ways they choose to

analyse qualitative data should stem from a combination of certain factors including philosophical and theoretical foundations of research, approach of the research, objectives and questions of the research (Kawulich, 2004). Ratcliff, D. E. (1994) for example has defined 15 techniques for qualitative data analysis including: *Typology* (Patton, 2002) a classification system, taken from patterns, themes, or other kinds of groups of data; *Taxonomy* (Spradley, 1980) generally used along with domain analysis for developing taxonomy from a single domain; *Constant Comparison/Grounded Theory* (Strauss, 1987) used for indicating categories in events and behaviour naming and coding them on document ; *Analytic Induction* (Katz, 1983) used for looking at event and developing a hypothetical statement of what happened; *Event Analysis/Microanalysis* (Erickson, 1992); looks like frame analysis; *Metaphorical Analysis* (Smith, 1981) usually used in later stages of analysis; *Domain Analysis* (Spradley, 1980) mostly used for analysis of language of people in a cultural context; *Hermeneutical Analysis* (Manen, 1990) used for making sense of a written text; *Discourse analysis* (Gee, 1992); linguistic analysis of ongoing flow of communication; *Semiotics* (Manning, 1987) science of signs and symbols, such as body language; *Content Analysis* (Weber, 1990) sometimes considered as a specific form of typological analysis; *Phenomenology/Heuristic Analysis* (Moustakas; 1990, 1994) relating to how individuals see the world; *Narrative Analysis* (study the individual's speech) (Reisman, 1993) relating to the study of individuals and *Quasi-statistics* (Becker, 2008), used for counting the number of times something is mentioned in field notes as very rough estimate of frequency.

The researcher has applied thematic analysis approach for the analysis of data in the current study, since it is the most widely used data analysis technique in the field of qualitative research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Keeping in view, the diverse, complex and nuanced nature of qualitative approaches, thematic analysis deserves to be applied as a fundamental method for

the analysis of qualitative data (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Owing to its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis offers a flexible and useful data analysis tool, which can provide a meaningful, detailed and rich yet complex base of data investigation. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is the first data analysis method of qualitative research that researchers need to learn, since it applies core skills, which can be useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative data analysis. In fact, Holloway and Todres (2003, p. 347) argue that “thematising meanings” is one of the few fundamental shared skills of qualitative data analysis. That is why, Boyatzis (1998) portrays it not as a specific tool, but as a method to use across different methods.

Based on the procedure of thematic analysis suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006), the researcher applied following steps in the process of data analysis for the current research:

### **The First Stage: Transcribing of Data**

The first step of thematic analysis as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2006) is familiarization of the researcher with the data through the process of transcribing. Based on this, the researcher recorded all the interviews and then transcribed those interviews to familiarize himself with the data. After transcribing the data, he kept on reading the written data again and again to develop his understanding about the data and started noting down the initial ideas. This transcribed data later on was used for the identification of codes, generation of relevant themes and development of the whole story. The researcher had already taken very rich and extensive notes during the interviews. Those notes helped him a lot while merging them with the individual transcribed templates of the answers of the interviews of the participants.

### **Second Stage: Identification of codes from the data**

While reading the data, the researcher took lots of notes from the interview transcripts regarding the important things being mentioned by the interviewees and also underlined or encircled them. While reading the data, the researcher tried to find and highlight those “particular statements” “sentences or words” “phrases” or “events” “doings”, “happenings” etc. that provided some sense specially relating to the research objectives and questions. This means that while doing so, the researcher was identifying the codes from the available data. “Codes” can be about “actions”, “activities”, “meanings”, “relationships” and “settings” etc. The researcher kept on taking notes, marking underlining and encircling those particular statements, sentences or ideas “codes”.

For example, while analysing the data on the antecedents to trust development, the researcher identified the following codes from the interview transcripts, obviously, there were hundreds of codes in the data but only for giving an example, and certain codes have been taken:

1. Is against nepotism and favoritism
2. Wants the restoration of individual rights
3. Fulfilment of promise
4. Fulfilment of duty
5. Never backs out
6. Shows strong resolve
7. True friendship
8. Becomes happy with my happiness
9. Feels pain when I am in Pain
10. Always available
11. Dedicated
12. Wants to help you
13. Takes pain for you

14. Thinks of you.
15. Wants to help you
16. Takes pain for you
17. Thinks of you.
18. Does not avoid you.
19. Listens to you
20. Does not think of risk while helping you
21. Always ready
22. Wants to bring change
23. Does not like injustice
24. Wants equality

### **Third stage: Development of initial Themes**

In the third stage, the researcher tried to scrutinise the codes from the large list of multiple codes or to put them into particular order and sequence to generate the “initial themes” from the available codes. Initially there were too many codes and therefore the researcher, during this stage refocussed the codes again and again and tried to understand the interconnection between the codes and sorted out the similar codes together and grouped them and from these grouped similar codes he tried to generate “themes”. Themes can be “more frequently repetitive codes”, “grouping of similar codes” “metaphors and analogies”, “similarities and differences” and “connectors”. For example, while analysing the data on the question of “antecedents to interpersonal trust”, following “initial themes” were identified in the light of the above mentioned “codes”:

The theme “Supportive/Cooperative” generated from the following codes:

### Identified codes

1. Wants to help you
2. Takes pain for you
3. Thinks of you.
4. Does not avoid you.
5. Listens to you

The theme “Tested” generated from the following codes:

1. Time-based relationship
2. Know him over the last many years
3. Always remained helpful
4. Never backs out
5. Shows strong resolve

The theme “Loyalty” generated from the following codes:

1. True friendship
2. Becomes happy with my happiness
3. Feels pain when I am in Pain
4. Always available
5. Dedicated
6. True

The theme “Stands alongside with you” generated from the following codes:

1. Fulfilment of promise
2. Fulfilment of duty
3. Does not think of risk while helping you
4. Always ready



The theme “Fights the status quo” generated from the following codes:

1. Wants to bring change
2. Does not like injustice
3. Wants equality
4. Is against nepotism and favoritism
5. Wants the restoration of individual rights

#### **Fourth Stage: Development of Major Themes**

In the fourth stage, the researcher developed the “major themes” and sorted them out in the light of the research questions and research objectives. For example, the “major theme” “Commitment” as one of the antecedents to interpersonal trust development emerged from the above initial themes:

1. Supportive,
2. Tested, loyalty,
3. Cooperativeness,
4. Stands alongside with you.
5. Fights the status Quo

#### **Fifth Stage: Merging relevant interview extracts against major themes.**

During this stage, the researcher kept on merging the particular interview extracts under each “major theme”. For example, with regard to individual antecedents to KS, he identified the main themes like “motivation”, “organizational commitment”, “religious spirit”, “passion to help others”, reciprocity” “organizational duty”, “source of recognition” and “source of acknowledgement” etc. and kept on finding and placing the relevant interview extracts corresponding to each of these major themes. This was very important because in qualitative

data analysis, the researcher needs to validate his or her findings with the help of the extracts from the interviews of the interviewees. For example, all the extracts of the interviews which highlighted the importance of trust, were put under the major theme, “trust” and similarly all the relevant interview extracts mentioning the problems and issues of cross-cultural knowledge sharing, were merged under the major theme “complications of the cross-cultural KS”, so on and so forth. The researcher kept on segregating the extracts of the interviews in the light of the collected themes (Level 1) and then tried to apply this process with the entire data set to develop a thematic map for the analysis (Level 2).

#### **Sixth Stage: Sorting out the most powerful and striking interview extracts**

During this stage, the researcher selected the most relevant or the most appealing extracts of the interviews; because otherwise the interview extracts were too many in number and if all the relevant interview extracts were added then the data analysis chapter might have been doubled in size and content; since the researcher had conducted 75 interviews and hence a handsome pool of data was generated from those interviews.

#### **Final Stage: Compilation of the report:**

In the final step, the researcher tried to compile a report through selecting the vivid, relevant and compelling themes and extracts from the interviews while relating them with the research questions, research objectives and available literature to produce a meaningful and scholarly research report based on the analysis of the data. While analysing the produced findings, in the light of the research questions, the researcher felt that some research questions still needed to be asked in order to generate more comprehensive and authentic findings. For achieving this objective, the researcher went to for re-interviewing the same respondents after two years of

the initial data collection. After getting the additional data, the researcher repeated the same process and merged the new data set with the existing one, to produce a more meaningful and thorough analysis of the answers of the research questions and research objectives.

The choice of thematic analysis for the analysis of data in this research project is also based on the philosophical base of this study, since ontology and epistemology tends to be linked with data analysis. Since this research is based on constructionist ontology therefore, thematic analysis is a logical choice for data analysis as Braun, and Clarke, (2006) comment:

“The research epistemology for example, guides what you can say about your data, and informs how you theorise meaning. For instance, with an essentialist/realist approach, you can theorise motivations, experience, and meaning in a straightforward way, because a simple, largely unidirectional relationship is assumed between meaning and experience and language (language reflects and enables us to articulate meaning and experience) (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995). In contrast, from a constructionist perspective, meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced, from individuals (Burr, 1995). Therefore, thematic analysis conducted within a constructionist framework cannot and does not seek to focus on motivation or individual psychologies, but instead seeks to theorise the socio-cultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided. Thematic analysis that focuses on “latent” themes tends to be more constructionist, and it tends to start to overlap with thematic discourse analysis at this point (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.12).

## 6.8. Ethics of the Research

From ethical point of view, this research is aligned with all 6 following ethical principles of research of ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council)'s Research Ethics Framework (2005). These include:

1. Maintaining quality and integrity of research;
2. Keeping the subjects of the research being fully informed about the aims and objectives, methods, procedures and uses of the research;
3. Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity;
4. Ensuring voluntary participation of the respondents;
5. Avoidance of harm to anyone during the research process or after the disclosure of research results;
6. Keeping the research independent of any conflicts of interests or ulterior intentions.

Additional to the ESRC's principles, this research has followed the recommendations of Rosenthal (1994) on research ethics. Rosenthal suggested that in order for any research to be ethically sound, it should satisfy on three aspects: (1) conduct of the research (2) data analysis and (3) reporting of results. While explaining conduct of research, Rosenthal (1994) suggested that the researchers should pay attention towards the issues of consent, confidentiality, social desirability, accurate conclusions, hyper claiming and issues of costs and utility of research. The researcher has complied with the ESRC's principles of ethics of research.

1. Ensuring Quality: Firstly, the researcher has tried his level best to ensure the quality rigour and exactitude of the research at all stages right from literature review to data

collection and data analysis. The details of this are mentioned in previous pages both during the reliability and validity issues.

2. Informed consent: Rosenthal (1994) suggested that informed consent is a sign of an ethical research. For instance, he argued that the research design could be ethically questionable if informed consent was not obtained and consequently, weaker quality in research design can lead to inaccurate conclusions which can damage the very purpose of the research. That is why the researcher obtained formal consent of the case organizations and also of the individual respondents, prior to data collection. Printed consent forms were used which contained all details of the aims and objectives, rules and guidelines about the participation in the research process. The respondents were also informed to withdraw from the research at any stage without causing them any harm.
  
3. Additional to the ESRC's principles, this research has followed the recommendations of Rosenthal (1994) on research ethics. Rosenthal suggested that in order for any research to be ethically sound, it should satisfy on three aspects: (1) conduct of the research (2) data analysis and (3) reporting of results. While explaining conduct of research, Rosenthal (1994) suggested that the researchers should pay attention towards the issues of consent, confidentiality, social desirability, accurate conclusions, hyper claiming and issues of costs and utility of research. The researcher has complied with the ESRC's principles of ethics of research.

4. Complete confidentiality and anonymity was observed. For anonymity purpose, all the names of the respondents were changed to protect individuals' identification.
5. The researcher avoided any hyper-claiming in this research. Hyper-claiming refers to boasting and claiming from the researcher to readers or funding agencies about unrealistic and unattainable benefits of the research within the given time frame, resources or theoretical framework. In order to avoid any hyper claiming, the researcher explicitly defined all the aims and objectives of the research and also discussed all the limitations of the study.
6. This research is free from any issues of harming anyone during the research process or after the disclosure of its results.
7. This research is also independent of any conflicts of interests or ulterior intentions.

## 6.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter critically examined the research methodology being employed in this research study. The chapter started with the discussion of research philosophy including ontology (being “Interpretivist” in the current research) and epistemology (being “Subjectivist” in the current research project). The researcher after discussing the need of selecting proper philosophical base for the research, discussed in detail as to why Interpretivist ontology and Subjectivist epistemology was relevant for this study keeping in view the research objectives and research questions. The chapter then was followed by research approach (i.e., is “Qualitative” in the current study), research strategy (i.e., “Multiple Case Study Method” in the current research project) and sampling technique (i.e., “Purposive Sampling” in this research). The researcher provided logic and rationale behind the selection of qualitative research approach, multiple case study strategy and purposive selective sampling for this research project. The researcher then presented data collection tools including “Qualitative Interviews” and “Focus Group” and also discussed the reason and logic behind the selection of the said data collection tools in the light of the objectives of the current study. Afterwards, the researcher discussed the “Rigor” and “Quality” of research in the light of “Reliability and “Validity” and “Triangulation” of data. The chapter then presented an account of the provisions for ensuring quality and rigor of this research project, including the application of “Research Ethics” and finally it discussed the data analysis scheme of the study. The researcher discussed the step-by-step process which applied in the data analysis. Next chapter will present data analysis and findings of the research.

## Chapter Seven

### Data Analysis and Research Findings

#### 7.0. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed research methodology in detail including: research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, data collection and data analysis and the rationale behind the selection of all these items in the light of existing literature, keeping in view the objectives of this research. This chapter aims at analyzing the data and presenting the findings of the research. The chapter discusses the findings of qualitative in-depth interviews and focus groups regarding the influence of trust on knowledge sharing compared to other factors being considered as important for knowledge sharing from an organisational perspective, the influence of culture on trust development and knowledge sharing and antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment. The chapter has six sections. Section one discusses the findings on the importance of trust for knowledge sharing as compared to other factors. Section two discusses findings on the influence of culture on trust and section three discusses antecedents to trust development. Section four contains findings on the influence of culture on knowledge sharing, including issues and problems of cross-cultural knowledge sharing and the impact of language on knowledge sharing. Section five discusses the findings on organisational antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment and section six discusses findings on individual antecedents to knowledge sharing.



## 7.1. Section One: Influence of Trust on Knowledge Sharing

In order to collect answers to the research questions of the current research, the researcher conducted 75 qualitative interviews (of an average duration of 45-90 minutes) from the participants (doctors, nurses and other administrative staff) from the three case organisations. The participants belonged to major ethnic groups including Sindhies, Punjabies, Pathans, Baloch, Urdu Speaking, Hindko, Chitrali and GilgitBiltistani. The case organisations were the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Islamabad, the Federal Government Services Hospital (Poly Clinic), Islamabad, and Shifa International, Islamabad.

The findings of this research led to the conclusion that trust is not only an important and essential factor, but is also one of the most important factors of consideration for knowledge sharing in the medical profession and according to the respondents (doctors, nurses and administrative staff) trust is an implied, fundamental and most significant factor for knowledge sharing. On enquiry, the respondents replied that they consider multiple factors being important for knowledge sharing including for example, *cultural or language factors, organisational duty, professional relationships, personality factors of the sharer (including, personality image, credibility education, depth and breadth of knowledge and attitude towards knowledge sharing*. Among all of the above mentioned factors, *trust*, according to the view point of the respondents, proved to be the most significant factor for knowledge sharing. Thirty-eight interviewees (58%) reported that they consider trust as the most important factor for sharing knowledge with their colleagues. According to the respondents of the study, *trust is needed for any sincere and meaningful relationship in life*. They further argued that *they could not go ahead and perform their duties without trusting each other. They need to have a credible background by having a feeling of mutual trust among them*. Moreover, according to fifteen

respondents (22%), *trust tends to be the fundamental factor of smooth interaction and meaningful communication* and effective communication is a cardinal factor of interpersonal knowledge sharing. According to respondents, *if trust breaks then communication breaks and when communication breaks then knowledge sharing stops or becomes disturbed.*

They further commented that since they work as teams and teamwork is generally linked with trust.

The following extracts from the interviews exemplify all the dimensions of the above details:

*While sharing knowledge you can consider different factors. You can consider the age of the person, education, experience, language, ethnicity, attitude of the person, but I think the most important factor is trust because our medical profession is based on trust. Senior Consultant Doctor (SCMR8) Case# 1*

*Without trust, there is no possibility of knowledge sharing because trust is needed for any sincere and meaningful relationship in life and in the same way trust is needed for effective knowledge sharing. Trust is important not only for knowledge sharing but even for your personality development and career development because people will trust you if you trust them and that will help you in career development. Male Nursing Superintendent (PNMS64) Case#3*

*Trust is very much important for knowledge sharing in the medical profession. Trust is an essential factor not only in connection to our interaction with patients, but also with doctors and nurses. The doctor patient relationship cannot go ahead without trust. If a patient thinks that the doctor is interested in listening to his or her problems seriously then the patient will start trusting him, but if the patient does not trust the doctor, then he or she will not give the real information about his disease. In the same way, as far as the interaction among doctors and nurses is concerned, we need to have a credible background by having a feeling of mutual trust among us. Senior Consultant Female Doctor, PAFS65) Case#3*

*I personally consider three things to be very important for smooth knowledge sharing and those are trust, quality of work and the capability of the person. In the process of knowledge sharing, trust is the most important thing. When trust*

*breaks then communication breaks. If someone breaks your trust, then you will stop open communication with that person and the process of knowledge sharing will stop and in future you will avoid working with that person till he does something to regain your confidence. Assistant Executive Director and Doctor (FAFH36) Case# 2*

An important reason for ensuring trust in knowledge sharing, as per the opinion of the respondents, is that the process of knowledge sharing *involves some risks*. Likewise, the use of knowledge may result in *risk to an individual*, such as ‘*receiving information from a source that provides incomplete information or bears a questionable record of accomplishment.*’ According to the opinion of the respondents, ‘*when the sharer of knowledge is not perceived as trustworthy, his or her information or advice may be more resisted or openly challenged.*’ A commonly observed issue with regard to knowledge sharing is that of cheating. Respondents view trust as very important for knowledge sharing because of the ***factor of cheating in the process of knowledge sharing***. It has been observed that, in certain cases, the receivers of knowledge cheat on the sharers. They may try to get praise from others or get promotions by claiming that they are the originators or creators of the knowledge. They may also misuse that knowledge by distorting (adding or subtracting something from it) or may use it for a negative purpose. The fear also remains that the information might even be used against the sharer. In organizational life, many times seniors or bosses exploit their juniors or subordinates by showing their subordinates’ work as their own creation or contribution. Due to these reasons, respondents perceive trust as an important factor for knowledge sharing and that is why, while sharing information with others, people generally remain sceptical about whether the recipient of the information will show the same reciprocity of trust and confidence regarding the fair use of the information or not. Therefore, they will only share information if they feel that sharing will result in a positive outcome or at least not a personal loss. Some respondents shared their personal experience regarding the *issue of cheating* as exemplified in the following extracts:

*If I share some study related knowledge with someone and if he or she misuses my knowledge by showing that he or she is the initiator of that knowledge, then it will definitely damage my confidence. That is why I consider trust as a very important factor for knowledge sharing. Actually, I have been the victim of this kind of thing; that is why I perceive trust as so important. PG Female Doctor (SDFS23) Case#1*

*Although I consider organizational duty and friendship to be very important for knowledge sharing, sometimes you share knowledge with someone and then he or she misuses your knowledge and even can use it against you. Due to this reason, I consider the trust factor as the most important one for knowledge sharing even more important than organizational duty or friendship. Sometimes some colleagues can steal your research ideas when you share knowledge with them. Therefore, trust is very important in this context. I have faced this problem. I shared knowledge with my colleagues and they used it against me and created conflicts between my management and me. Therefore, regardless of ethnicity or friendship, trust has the supreme position in knowledge sharing. Even in organizational management, trust is very important. Male Nurse (PNMS68) Case# 3*

Interviewees reported that if they trust someone in the process of knowledge sharing then it will **reduce their doubt and confusion** with regard to accepting or rejecting the shared knowledge, build up their confidence about the correctness of that knowledge and they will be inclined to share that knowledge with others. Some female interviewees and one male interviewee linked the factor of trust with **male-female interaction** in the context of knowledge sharing. Since Pakistan is a traditional country with certain religiously founded restrictions and socially embedded rituals regarding male to female interaction, sometimes the *difference between male-female* applies to knowledge sharing behaviors also, and here again trust plays vital role. Due to generally perceived separate identities, both men and women tend to have certain *issues of reservation, reluctance, hesitation and confusion with regard to open one to one communication* and this has been reported by some respondents in their perceptions regarding the importance of trust in knowledge sharing. In the interviews in the current study, some male

respondents mentioned that in many cases, they *don't get positive responses or feedback* when they want to share knowledge with their female colleagues, *due to shyness or inconvenience* being felt by their female counterparts. They mentioned that in some cases their female colleagues *take it negatively and offensively when they talk to them*. On the other hand, many female respondents shared their own issues and problems with regard to sharing knowledge with colleagues and gave great emphasis to trust in the context of knowledge sharing. Actually in many cases women in Pakistan are brought up in such an environment that they are discouraged to talk to men except in very serious need. The following comments of three female senior nurses including one head nurse prove the validity of the above statement:

*We avoid conversation with males except in some very essential situations, so in normal situations we will feel comfortable sharing knowledge only with those males whom we trust. Female Nurse (FNFH27) Case#2*

*Trust is the most important and fundamental element for knowledge sharing; especially when it comes to the male and female relationship. I am a female and, obviously, I will consider trust as very important because I generally don't talk to anyone without serious need and then you can understand that trust should be a very important factor for me with respect to knowledge sharing. Female Nurse (PNFS57) Case #3*

*To me, trust is important for knowledge sharing. If you don't trust someone you will not even let that person interact with you. Being a woman, I consider trust a very important factor for knowledge sharing both as a sharer and receiver of knowledge. Female Nurse (FNFR37) Case#2*

A senior male nurse shared his views in the following way:

*While working with females, some women mind if you talk to them or look at them. Now how will you share knowledge if someone does not even feel easy talking to you? Deputy Superintendent Nursing Male (SNMC9) Case#1*

According to the findings, *the type of knowledge* also counts a lot in the discussion of the impact of trust on knowledge sharing, since knowledge can be of different types (Miller & Karakowsky, 2005). Some interviewees reported that the extent of trust relates to the type of knowledge being shared. For example, in the words of respondents, *one piece of knowledge can be general, a second specific and a third highly personalized* or research-based knowledge, and so the degree of trust also varies with respect to the type of knowledge being shared. One may not need any trust for sharing the general kind of knowledge, but he or she may consider trust being fairly important while sharing some specific knowledge and extremely important while sharing highly personalized knowledge, due to this factor of risk as mentioned above. This emanates from the value of knowledge factor, when individuals feel that the knowledge they possess is valuable then knowledge sharing becomes a complex process due to decisions about which knowledge to share, with whom to share, and when to share. For example, research and development (R&D) based knowledge is perceived as important due to its scientific and commercial value. Professionals generally tend to guard their knowledge and in case of some specified or valuable knowledge they will be either reluctant to share that knowledge or at least they would like to share with only those in whom they trust the most and the same has been the opinion of some of the participants of this study. The following extracts throw light on the above fact:

*Trust is important for knowledge sharing but it depends on the type of knowledge. If the knowledge is of a common type, then trust is not very important; for example, if I am teaching in the class then I will share with the students regardless of trust. But if the knowledge is important or specific, then the trust factor will be very important. Deputy Registrar and Doctor (FDMS30) Case# 2*

*Trust is very important for knowledge sharing, but it actually depends upon the type of knowledge being shared. If you share common job related or profession related knowledge, then you may not consider trust that much important. But if you are going to share some specific knowledge then obviously you will share*

*with only those whom you trust because that specific knowledge may contain some personalized contents. Post Graduate Doctor (PDMB58) Case#3*

In the medical profession, doctors and nurses have to share knowledge among themselves and with patients also and the degree of trust varies here again. For example, according to the findings of the research, *trust is not that much needed while sharing knowledge with patients* since doctors and nurses perceive their responsibility to share knowledge with patients regardless of trust. However, trust is very much needed *while sharing with the colleagues*. Twenty-one interviewees (32%) reported that they don't consider trust that much important while sharing knowledge with patients. The following extracts epitomize this:

*While sharing knowledge with patients I consider the factor of education; but when I discuss knowledge with my colleagues, juniors or seniors, I consider trust as the most important. PG Female Doctor (SDFP5) Case#1*

*While sharing knowledge with patients, I consider professional responsibility. But when I share knowledge with my colleagues, then I consider trust as a basic factor for knowledge sharing. PG Female Doctor (SDFR17) Case#1*

Despite the fact that most of the respondents seriously emphasised the importance of trust in knowledge sharing, there were still some of them who denied ***the importance or any role of trust in knowledge sharing*** by arguing that in the medical profession it is their duty to share knowledge regardless of trust. Nine interviewees (14%) rejected the importance of trust in knowledge sharing. The following extracts, for example, are presented for the reader to understand the viewpoint of those respondents also:

*I don't think trust has any significant role in knowledge sharing because it is your organizational duty to share the knowledge whether you trust someone or not. Senior Female Nurse (PNFP54) Case#3*

*In the medical field, trust may not be needed in knowledge sharing; because this is possible that I may not trust a senior or junior doctor, but I am still bound to share the knowledge especially with regard to patients' diseases. GP Doctor (FDMP35) Case#2*



### 7.1.1. Other Factors Influencing KS

On enquiry, the respondents replied that they consider *multiple factors* being important for knowledge sharing, such as *trust, cultural or ethnical issues, organisational duty, professional relationship, personality factors of the sharer (including, personality image, credibility education, depth and breadth of knowledge, attitude towards knowledge sharing and friendship*, etc. Actually knowledge sharing is an interactive process which includes two parties: sharer and receiver of knowledge, and there is a third factor also that is the context or environment where the knowledge is being shared. Based on this, various elements can play their role and multiple factors can be considered by the respondents in the discussion of knowledge sharing. Some factors might be related to the sharer and others might be related to the receiver and still some other category of factors might be related to the context or environment where the knowledge sharing takes place. That is why respondents emphasised *multiple factors being critical for the process of knowledge sharing*. For example, the following extracts illustrate the above mentioned fact:

*For knowledge sharing, you cannot just consider only one or two factors. Multiple factors should be considered. For example, you can consider trust, because trust is very important. You can consider the knowledge and personality of the person. Sometimes you consider organizational duty and professional relationships etc. Simply I think you cannot say that you will consider one or two factors for knowledge sharing. Nursing Superintendent (Female), (FAFR42) Case#2*

*I consider trust as the most important factor while sharing knowledge with anyone. After trust, I consider the reputation of the person. I also consider my personal relationship, the nature of my relationship and the length of time of my relationship with that person. Additionally, I use my personal judgment. I have been judging the people with regard to my relationship with them for many years, so when I receive any knowledge from those whom I trust, then I accept it easily and comfortably because I know them, that they are trust worthy and that they will not hurt my confidence. However, when I receive any knowledge from other people, then I go on the reputation and education of that person:*

*how educated he or she is and what the personality image or personality disposition of that person is. When I receive knowledge from someone whom I do not know at all or I can't judge him or her from personality image, then I try to test or verify whether that person's knowledge is credible and authentic or not and try to confirm the information from other sources. Principal of Nursing College (PAFP66) Case#3*

Since the medical profession is directly linked with the health and wellbeing of the people, the ***authenticity and credibility*** of the knowledge and the source of the knowledge of the knowledge sharer is a critical factor in the field of medical science. That is why the respondents placed emphasis on the factor of *credibility and authenticity*, while sharing their opinions about the most important factors for sharing of knowledge with their colleagues and also patients. A large number of interviewees emphasized the factor of credibility and authenticity of the shared knowledge or the source. A way to test the authenticity and credibility of the shared knowledge is to check the authenticity of the source of the knowledge i.e. the sharer, his or her education, degree, experience, caliber, perception among colleagues, reference of the book, the writer and the publishing agency, etc. That is why some respondents highlighted ***crosschecking the source or reference of the shared knowledge***. Some doctors said that they are taught not to accept any knowledge without verifying the authenticity and credibility of the knowledge. The respondents frequently used words like *verification of the source, cross-examination and reference checking* while pointing to the issue of *authenticity and credibility* of the source of the knowledge being shared. The following extracts justify the importance of credibility and authenticity of the sharer or source of the knowledge:

*We are in the medical profession; we are entrusted with the job of saving human lives. Therefore, it lays a great responsibility on our shoulders and based on that it is very much important for us to be selective and conscious in accepting or rejecting any information and in this regard trust is very important. PG (Post Graduate) Male Doctor (SDMB23)*

*For knowledge sharing, the sharer is important. If the sharer is a senior and credible person then you will feel more inclined to accept his or her knowledge and if the sharer is junior or less experienced, then you will feel less inclined to accept any knowledge from that person or you will try to reconfirm his or her knowledge through some other sources. Deputy Registrar (FAMS30) Case#2*

*Credibility is important for knowledge sharing. The credibility of the person and the evidence is considered in the sense of asking how credible that person is and whether his or her knowledge is evidence-based or not? Authenticity of the knowledge is also important. In the medical field, knowledge tends to be level-based e.g. level A, B and C. For example, level A is globally recognized both in terms of theory and practice, level B is recognized in some particular area, and level C means not extensively tested. Therefore, based on this fact, the credibility of the person with whom we share the knowledge, is important. PG Female Doctor (SDFR17) Case # 1*

***A sense of organizational duty*** or organizational commitment (Porter et al., 1974) has been a very frequently mentioned factor in the process of knowledge sharing in the findings of this research. A substantial number of reported that they consider the factor of organizational duty for sharing knowledge. Some respondents feel it their *professional duty* and they said that *'they are bound to share knowledge since without sharing it, a hospital will not be able to run'*. Others feel it their *moral duty* to help their colleagues by sharing knowledge. In the words of a dispenser, *'if they ask me ten times I will answer them'*. The following extracts illustrate the above details:

*In the medical profession, the most important factor in knowledge sharing is organizational duty because we have to give best services to patients. Getting latest knowledge and sharing it with patients and my staff is my organizational duty. Here I am in charge of many things including, OPD, emergency, wards and other doctors also. I am senior registrar and all my junior doctors and house officers come to me for assistance with patient related cases if they need any help, and for this reason I have to keep my knowledge updated so that I may be able to guide them. Deputy Registrar (FAMS30) Case #2*

*We consider professional duty in knowledge sharing. Professionally we are bound to share knowledge. Although everyone tends to hold soft spot for people*

*of his community, other than that, we are taught that humanity is above all. Therefore, we don't consider ethnicity or friendship, but we consider only professional duty and humanity as the most important factors while sharing knowledge. Male nurse (FNMS31) Case #2*

*It is our moral and professional duty and we are bound to share knowledge with every one, patient, doctor or nurse, because without that these hospitals will not be able to run. For example, we share knowledge on three dimensions: with the patients, juniors and seniors. First is counselling with patients, second is sharing with juniors while leaving the duty and then third is sharing with senior doctors who come for visits to wards or if I refer a patient to the operation theatre or some other department like ICU or others. Male GP (FDMP35) Case #2*

Many interviewees view **professional relationship** as one of the most significant considerations for knowledge sharing. Both doctors and nurses tend to be connected through a professional network of relationship. According to Marshall (1998), the main motivation for GPs and senior consultants to maintain good professional relationships and to support and facilitate each other, apart from traditional professional protocol, is a desire to preserve potentially a long-term based relationship between them, keeping in view the perceived benefits for patient care based on a relationship of trust and self-respect. In the words of a junior doctor, *'I have to maintain good relationships with my seniors, because in the event of some difficult patient case, I have to consult a senior doctor'*. This is how professional relationships seem important in the process of knowledge sharing in the medical field, as mentioned by two senior doctors:

*Professional relationships are the most important factor for doctors in the context of knowledge sharing, because we doctors generally remain in our doctor community and our conversation revolves around our profession. Therefore, professional relationships are natural and the key factor in sharing knowledge. Female Specialist Doctor (FDFR43) Case#2*

*Professional relationships play a vital role in knowledge sharing in the medical field. The patients whom I treat here tend to be common in terms of their medical treatment needs and I don't face any problem. However, if I face some problem then I will get the help of some of my colleagues. If I fail to get help from some colleague, then I will refer the patient to some senior doctor, and if fail then, I will refer to a book to get knowledge on that patient-case. Deputy Registrar and Doctor (FAMS30) Case #2.*

According to the respondents, the need for considering **professional relationships** also emanates from the fact that while sharing knowledge, *they need to consider the nature of the professional relationship. One might see the position, rank or status as colleague, junior or senior*, because it will directly affect the whole process of knowledge sharing. For example, in the view of the respondents, *some people may be pleased to share with only seniors to learn from them and may not welcome juniors*, keeping in view the wastage of time, whereas another person may be opposite to that individual. Another person *may feel shy in sharing with seniors and may feel enthusiastic in sharing with juniors*. Moreover, it will also shape up the nature and setting of the communication being held in the process of knowledge sharing. Therefore, in all these cases, the *nature of the professional relationship* with the sharer of knowledge will count a lot and the same view is shared by two female doctors in the following extracts:

*Professional relationships are very important, for example, when we share knowledge with the same ranked colleagues, we will have one-way communication and if we discuss with others, like higher or lower level colleagues, then obviously we will have a different way of communicating, keeping in view the nature of our professional relationship. PG Female Doctor (SDFP5) Case #1*

*An important aspect of knowledge sharing is the relative status or rank of the person, whether he or she is a junior senior or peer. The knowledge of the other party also counts a lot. Obviously, I can't share knowledge with every person roaming around or any peon or sweeper. I have to see the level of the person and his or her organizational relationship with me. PG Female Doctor (FCFR49) Case # 2*

A considerable number of interviewees emphasized **personality factors**, such as *attitude, caliber of the person, education, experience, depth and breadth of knowledge, personality image or repute of the person, intellectual capability, hierarchical position or nature of organizational relationship, being a senior or junior, way of communication, information needs of the person, etc.*, as important for the sharing of knowledge. Personality factors, as mentioned by the respondents, also included *eligibility, thinking, character, temperament, decency and level of tolerance, etc.*, since, according to the interviewees, all of the above factors affect the way of communication among the two parties involved in knowledge sharing. According to the participants, personality factors also include the **understanding level** of the other party. Interviewees mentioned the importance of understanding the other party involved in the process of knowledge sharing. The understanding level has two connotations: one, *what is the capability power of understanding of that person?* And the second relates to the level of understanding between sharer and receiver of knowledge. In order to know the level of understanding of the sharer of knowledge, some respondents remarked that *they use their judgment about the sharer of knowledge* in terms of *pre-judgment, concurrent judgment and post-judgment* in the process of knowledge sharing. For example, based on their pre judgment, they may *decide to share their knowledge with that individual or not*. During concurrent judgment they can decide *to continue or discontinue their knowledge sharing* and with post judgment they may decide *whether to accept, retain and promote that knowledge*. The following extracts throw light on all of the above aspects and dimensions of personality factors being important for sharing knowledge:

*The personality of the person with whom you share knowledge is important. Personality includes the education and experience of the person, the authenticity and relevance of his or her knowledge, communication skills, the breadth and depth of knowledge and overall behavior which counts her or his friendliness, tolerance and attitude towards knowledge sharing. I judge the*

*personality of the person on these parameters and that decides my participation in knowledge sharing. Specialist Female Doctor (FDFR43) Case #2*

*I consider the knowledge of the person and the way of delivery of that knowledge. With regard to knowledge, I consider the subject and ongoing discussion and the arguments and ideas of the person. If I feel a positive and meaningful connection between the ideas of the person and the subject matter, then I feel interest in sharing the knowledge and secondly I closely observe the body language of the knowledge sharer. The body language of the person tells you a lot about whether the person is knowledgeable or not. So basically, I consider these two factors as most important for knowledge sharing. Male Nurse (PNMS68) Case# 3*

Some interviewees shared that they consider their own personality factors also in the process of knowledge sharing, such as how much knowledge they possess on a given subject and what kind of relationship they keep with the sharer of the knowledge. For example, in the following extract, a junior doctor throws light on this dimension:

*I consider the seniority and experience of the person who shares the knowledge with me and when I share the knowledge with someone, then I will consider the information, the need of the person and my knowledge. Sometimes I practically demonstrate also but I don't give the impression that my knowledge is perfect and final. If I think that I can make him or her understand, then I guide him, otherwise I refer him to some senior. Junior Doctor (FDMP40) Case#2*

### **7.1.2. What is more important for knowledge sharing: Trust or Ethnicity?**

With regard to the above question, despite acknowledging, understanding and emphasizing the influence of culture and ethnicity on knowledge sharing, the majority of respondents reported that they consider culture and language as extremely important for knowledge sharing, but, they consider trust as more important for knowledge sharing compared to ethnicity or language issues or simply the most important factor for knowledge sharing. Out of seventy-five respondents, around Sixty-five (87%) said that they prefer trust over ethnicity in knowledge sharing. Section four of the current chapter is exclusively allocated for the analysis of the results on the influence of culture and language on knowledge sharing.



## 7.2. Section Two: Influence of Culture on the Development of Trust

Since this research is a cross-cultural one, an important objective of this study is to investigate and analyse the influence of culture on the process of trust development in a cross-cultural setting. This section aims at analyzing data on the development of trust in a cross-cultural working environment. Due to difference of motives, beliefs and assumptions and moods and aspirations, trust development tends to be difficult, but the development of trust in a multi-ethnic environment might be more challenging. This is because the people belonging to different ethnic backgrounds might hold different views about trust building and might emphasize different factors in building up trust in the people external to their cultural group. The findings of the current study show that culture has a tremendous role in trust building. A large number of respondents of all three case organisations belonging to all ethnic groups, including Sindhies, Pathans, Punjabis, Hindko speaking and Urdu speaking, etc., acknowledged the strong influence of culture on trust development by saying that *they build up their trust based on the similarity of culture, ethnicity, community or language*. According to one third of interviewees in the current study, culture plays a very powerful and significant role in the development of dyadic trust. For example, the following extracts from the interviews provide evidence of the influence of culture on trust development:

*Most of my colleagues whom I trust belong to my community because I prefer a cultural similarity factor for trust development. Within my ethnic group I consider education as a basis for trust development. Junior Tech (FNMU28) Case #2*

*According to my observation, the extent of trust in my colleagues is generally more on a lingual basis. I also trust those more that belong to my community. Senior Doctor (SDMU24) Case#1*

*Ethnicity is one the strongest factors of trust building. Here, almost every second person considers ethnicity for trust building. Male Nurse (PNMS68) Case# 3*

*Although you can be cheated by anyone, the probability of being cheated by a person belonging to your community is less. That is why I base my trust in culture. I will trust the person who belongs to my community. I think my community people are more trustworthy. PG Doctor (SDMB12) Case#1*

According to some participants, *it is quite natural that one feels more closeness towards the people who belong to his or her ethnicity* and that leads towards the building of trust. An important reason for considering the factor of culture or ethnicity for trust development relates to serious ***ethnic and linguistic differences*** among the respondents of the current study. Although the respondents of this study belonging to various ethnic groups work together, many of them still prefer to live, talk and walk with the people belonging to their community and they feel more secure while interacting with their own people, which leads to a buildup trust. The impact of cultural issues and ethnic biases is so strong that in some cases according to some interviewees they *fail to develop trust in people other than their own community*. For example, in the following extracts, a doctor and a nursing superintendent explain that due to *ethnic differences and the biased attitude* of other ethnic groups, they have been so disappointed that they could not develop trust in anyone beyond the sphere of their community:

*I have not been able to develop trust here because of certain ethnic issues. Although I don't believe in ethnic terms and consider myself only as a Muslim and doctor and being a professional I consider all being equal, because in our code of conduct it is mentioned that our religion is humanity, but sometimes I am made to feel that I am a Sindhi and I am given this feeling. Because of this feeling, I have not been able to develop trust in others. Male GP Case# 3*

*My colleagues generally form and maintain their trust on an ethnic basis. When some employees get a disappointing response from managers or colleagues of other ethnic groups, then it shatters their confidence and they start developing trust for their own people. Nursing Superintendent, (Male) (PNMS64) Case#3*

### **7.2.1. Cultural Differences and Individual Ethnic Behaviors and Tendencies with Respect to Trust Building**

In order to further dig out the cultural differences on interpersonal trust building and especially the individual behaviors and tendencies of the various ethnicities regarding trust building, the researcher chose to re-interview the respondents of this study. The interviewer indulged in deep discussion and probing with the participants to understand the individual ethnicity-based trends of the various ethnic groups of Pakistan trust building. Based on the answers of the respondents, the following trends and tendencies of the various ethnicities regarding interpersonal trust building can be presented. It needs to be noted here that these differences and behavioral tendencies regarding knowledge sharing are solely based on the opinions and answers of the participants, not based on the personal opinion of the researcher.

The respondents reported that ethnicity plays a major role in the process of trust building and despite the fact that all ethnic groups tend to consider language a very strong factor for trust building, Sindhies, Pathans, Balochies and Siraekies tend to be most ethnically oriented when it comes to trust building. Among the above four ethnic groups, Sindhies tend to be the most ethnically biased with respect to trust building followed by Pathans, Balochies and Siraekies. Apart from the ethnic factor, there is a very strong involvement of factors of community, tribe and cast among Sindhies, Baloch and Pathans with regard to trust building. Moreover, all Pathans, Sindhies, Baloch and Siraekies mostly believe in affect-based trust. They consider the language and community a very strong factor compared to professionalism or professional working relationships. Pathans and Sindhies also believe in long-term based trust compared to, for example, Punjabies and Hindko people, who generally don't believe in long-term based trust. Pathans, Sindhies, Baloch and Siraekies also consider the factors of commitment and reliability and trustworthiness in building up trust.

On the other hand, based on the answers of the participants, Punjabis, Urdu Speaking, Hindko, Chitral and Gilgit-Biltistani people tend to possess more or less similar trends and behaviors with respect to trust building. They tend to be culturally or ethnically least biased when it comes to building up trust in others. Among these four nationalities, Chitrali and Gilgit-Biltistani tend to be the least biased followed by the Punjabies, Hindko and Urdu Speaking. Moreover, Chitralies, Gilgit-Biltistani people, Punjabies and Hindko tend to be most pragmatic in trust building compared to other nationalities. They trust all people without any issue of ethnicity, but Punjabies, Hindko and Urdu Speaking don't trust others quickly like Sindhies or Pathans. They tend to be judicious and take more time in deciding to trust someone. Additionally, Punjabies, Hindko and Chitrali speaking people mostly believe in cognitive-based trust and consider professional relationships and ethical soundness, etc., unlike Sindhies and Pathans who tend to believe in affect-based trust. Moreover, people of northern areas (Chitrali and Gilgit), Punjabies and Hindko people neither believe in tribal nor community-based trust, nor do they consider political factors. Generally, they don't believe in long-term based trust like Sindhies and Pathans. However, Urdu speaking people believe in ethnic-based trust and they also tend to believe in political affiliation with respect to trust building.

### 7.3. Section Three: Antecedents to Trust Development

The previous section presented findings on the influence of culture on trust development and this section is aimed at presenting the findings on the antecedents to trust development. Antecedents to interpersonal trust cover a long list of constructs including, for example, *commitment*, and *loyalty*. The list also includes *confidentiality*, *dependability*, *reliability*, *responsibility*, *affect* and *group similarity*, etc. In the current study, the interviewees shared a number of factors they consider the most important for building up trust in others in their individual as well as organizational lives. Broadly, these themes can be categorized under *ethnicity*, *professionalism*, *religiosity*, *confidentiality*, *sincerity*, *commitment*, *length of relationship* and *level of mutual understanding* as the most important antecedents to interpersonal trust development. While commenting on the approach being used for trust development, some interviewees reported that they build up their trust on the basis of *first impressions* and others said that they use their *experience* and *judgment* and still others said they use their *intuition*. Some referred to *personality and impression* and others mentioned *personal experience with the person*.

**Professionalism** has been one of the most frequently pointed to factors of trust development among the respondents of all the three case organizations selected for this research study. Twenty-nine interviewees (45%) pointed out that they consider professionalism for building up trust. Professionalism is one of the significant antecedents to cognition-based trust since professional credentials serve as clear indications of role preparedness. Especially with regard to a professional and organizational life perspective, participants of the current study viewed professionalism or professional attitudes as the most significant basis for building up trust in others. Because of the vulnerability and potential clinical complexity, expectations for technical performance and professionalism from doctors and nurses tend to be higher. This

might be because medicine is a particularly professionalized field and, based on that, *professional attitudes* and *professional working* can definitely be a major source of inspiring and impressing others. In the interviews, respondents linked numerous labels while talking about their perceptions of professionalism, such as *ethical soundness, dutifulness, job commitment, honesty and fairness, efficiency, responsibility, professional ownership, regularity and punctuality, dedication, goal orientation, performance orientation, dependability*, etc. In the view of the respondents, this also includes the concept of **professional ownership** and a person's *dedication and seriousness with regard to performing his or her organizational duties*. The following extract from the interview of a female doctor very vividly throws light on the attributes of a professionally sound person:

*I generally focus upon the professional attitude of the person, because, it includes everything. It includes a person's intention, extent of honesty and fairness. Attitude also includes devotion towards their profession which is also an important basis for developing trust. I like the people who tend to be focused on their work and show full dedication towards their work and organizational duties. The attitude of a person is very important because attitude cannot be measured through degrees or richness of a person. A poor or less educated person's attitude can be better than a highly educated or a rich person. PG Female Doctor (SDFP5) Case #1*

Professionalism includes the element of **Job Commitment** also. In Pakistan, sometimes conflict is observed with regard to performance of *professional duty or religious duty*. Some think that performing religious duties is important, but many others believe that *performing organizational duties is far more important than performing religious duties*. In the following extract, such a case is discussed in the context of professionalism, wherein a doctor, while performing a religious duty, paved the way for the death of a patient. It also throws light on the dimension of *job commitment* being an important characteristic of professionalism and also a basis for the development of trust in colleagues:

*I prefer professionalism. Efficiency, punctuality and capability of the person are the most important things to me if you ask me how I develop my trust in others. I trust the people who are properly trained, dedicated and sincere in their work. I need commitment in the job and the fulfillment of the duties. Neither have I believed in religious nor in ethnic terms. To me professionalism remains on the top. To me, a non-religious or secular but efficient person is more preferable than an outwardly virtuous or religious but inefficient person. I saw a doctor who left his patient unattended to offer his prayer and in his absence the patient died. Now you tell me how this act of that doctor can be justified. But you will be surprised that the doctor was adamant that he did right. To me, performing religious duty is important but patient care and patient welfare is more important than performing religious duty. Deputy Director and Senior Doctor (PAMU53) Case# 3.*

According to one-third of the interviewees, professionalism has an **ethical** dimension also which includes *showing honesty, responsibility, fairness and complete dedication towards performing organizational duties*. Eight interviewees emphasized **Halal earning** (justified and legal earning) especially in the context of *performing organizational duties honestly with full punctuality and dedication*, and perceive it as an important feature of professionalism. The following extract from the interviews of a senior consultant female doctor and a senior nurse are very important and worth reading in the running discussion of professionalism:

*Professional and ethical soundness is important. I consider ethical soundness for trust development. Here, those who work and those who don't work are treated with the same yardstick. Some senior consultants come at 12 pm and leave at 2 pm how can they justify their earning? But I don't want unjustified earning. I know it will destroy my children. I know it and my father has trained me from my childhood that if I earn illegally, it will destroy the talents and careers of my children and I will be deprived from the bounties of God. Senior Consultant Female Doctor (PAFS65) Case#3*

*In organizational life, I base my trust on professionalism. Professional honesty is very important. I serve the patients in the best possible manner and never make any small negligence in performing my duties. To me this is also corruption if I don't give medicine to patient on time. That is why I tell my colleagues also to be honest and punctual in their duties, serve the patients in the best professional manner and get their prayers and well wishes, because I have seen and observed clear signs and impact of patients' prayers. Most of the employees try to build up relations with upper management or join groups for getting their organizational issues resolved favorably. I don't have any reference based relationship with upper management but, many times I get my organizational issues and matters resolved only through the power of the prayers of patients, because I serve them with full dedication. Senior Female Nurse (PNFP54) Case#3*

How can **sincerity** be separated from the determinants of trust building? A considerable number of interviewees shared that they consider sincerity of the person for trust building. The respondents associated words like *candor, helpfulness, purity, supportiveness and cooperativeness, feeling pain for others* etc. while expressing their views about sincerity as an antecedent to trust development. Sincerity is opposite to selfishness. Sincerity denies living only for oneself and forgetting others; it includes the dimension of *taking care of others and feeling pain for humanity*. This dimension of sincerity is highlighted in the interview of a senior female doctor who says that *she likes and trusts those who become happy on the happiness of others*. According to some interviewees, sincerity also includes *being sincere in organizing with regard to performance of duties and showing a responsible attitude in organizational working*. Among the dimensions of sincerity as discussed by the respondents includes *being*



*straightforward*. Sincerity, in the light of the views of the respondents, also includes **loyalty, fairness and truthfulness** that were mentioned frequently by the respondents. Some mentioned *truthfulness*, some talked about *loyalty* and some commented on *fairness* while giving their opinions about trust development. In the respondents' view, **trust and sincerity** go side by side. Truth also needs some degree of trust in order to discover truth, lessening one's defensiveness, and in discovering what exists beyond one's understanding and experience. The following extracts exemplify the above-mentioned dimensions of sincerity:

*I trust those people who tend to be sincere with the organization and their work. In organizational life, I prefer to trust sincere and educated people. Male Nurse (FNMS32) Case# 2*

*I trust simple and straightforward people, the people who are candid and always say the truth. I like the people who never manipulate, falsify or distort the facts and statements. I don't trust the people who listen to one thing and then add something from their own and then transmit to others. Nursing Superintendent (Female) (FAFR42) Case# 2*

*I consider the goodness of the character of a person. I trust the people who are sincere, the people who become happy when you are happy and become unhappy when you become unhappy; the people who cannot leave you alone when you are in difficulty. If I think that someone is true, he can't tell a lie, he cannot hurt my confidence, he becomes happy and sad with happiness and sadness of others, then I trust that person regardless of that person's social class, ethnicity or religion. Senior Specialist Female Specialist Doctor, (FDFR43) Case# 2*

A considerable number of participants reported that they considered the factor of **commitment** for building up trust in others. In light of the interviews, commitment includes the dimensions of *consistency, reliability, fulfillment of promises and duties and justifying the role of a trustworthy relationship with someone*. Consistency, as viewed by respondents, refers to the idea that people should not show differences between what they say and what they do, and

what they claimed and what they did. In the context of the current study, commitment has a very strong connotation of *bravery and boldness and courage and fearlessness*. Six interviewees emphasised the idea of being brave and courageous. They prefer to trust those individuals who are *ready to help someone and stand alongside their friends or dear ones*. Many interviewees reported that they trust their *tested friends and colleagues*. They put them through some test and if they see them as trustworthy, then they start trusting them. Some others added another dimension of commitment in the discussion of trust building. They reported that they would like to trust those *who might reform society and might be bold enough to fight the status quo and bring change in society*. The following extracts throw light on all of the dimensions of commitment as discussed above:

*I trust practical and solid people, the people who don't show contradiction in what they say and their actions. You know some people talk very impressively, but they tend to change, prove disloyal at difficult times, therefore I trust the people who can stand with me in difficult times. Male Nurse, (PNMS68)*

*I like and trust bold people, people who are capable, responsible and reliable. I like courageous people especially my juniors who are not afraid of asking me something even at odd times. Senior Consultant Doctor, (SCMR8) Case# 1*

*Any person who fearlessly shares any kind of knowledge with you, is willing to work with you especially in difficult circumstances and is willing to favor you or take your side in difficult conditions, naturally you start trusting him or her. Specialist Doctor, (SDMG22) Case# 1*

*I generally trust the people who want to bring change in society; those who try to reform society; those who have the courage to fight against social evils and social taboos. I trust those who have the courage to challenge the status quo. Principal of Nursing College and Female Doctor, (PAFP66) Case#3*

Although *religiosity* has not been linked with trust development as an antecedent to trust development in most existing studies, in the current study, religiosity has emerged as a very

strong antecedent to interpersonal trust development. One-fourth of the respondents reported that they based their trust on the factor of religiosity. Pakistani society is predominantly a religious society and although with the passage of time, like everywhere else, the grip of religion has been weakening, many people think in religious terms, and so has been the case in the findings of this research. Respondents mentioned that they like religious people and they consider religiosity *a powerful base for the development of trust*. Some interviewees viewed religious people to be *more honest fair and reliable and less prone to cheating*. One of the reasons for religiosity as a basic factor for trust development is that Pakistani people tend to have many religious groups and some religious sect members prefer their own religious group members in their individual and collective life affairs, and this is reflected in their trends of trust development behaviors also. It is also notable that few interviewees reported that they *would trust religious people not only because of the fact that they adopt a religious dress code or perform some religious rituals, but also if they have a real fear of God, a passion and love for the poor, are honest, modest, cooperative and supportive, sincere, fair and loyal towards performing their organizational duties and obligations as a common citizen*. The following extracts illustrate all the themes and concepts discussed in the above paragraph:

*To me, religion is the most important factor for trust development. I generally prefer to trust those people who are more religious. I generally don't trust people who don't practice religion. Although religious people have shattered my trust in certain cases, the percentage is very low compared to those who are not practicing religion. Senior Doctor, (SDMU24) Case#1*

*I consider religiosity for trust development, despite the fact that I know that many people use religion for deceiving others, whereas actually religion tells you that you should be true, honest and dutiful. Religion does not say that you may offer your prayer and forget your official duty. When I interact with people, I can see who are true, who are honest and who fulfil their duties honestly. Therefore, anyone whom I will find honest, true and dutiful then I will trust that person. Senior Female Nurse (PNFP54) Case#3*

*I build trust on a religious basis. The people who belong to our religion never tell a lie, they never deceive others and that is why I trust the people who belong to my religious sect. Our people don't adopt religious rituals but they try to practice religion in real terms by practicing good things like fairness, honesty, humanity peace and harmony. Female Nurse (SNFC15) Case#1*

***Length of relationship*** has been an important antecedent to trust development in this study. One-fourth of the interviewees mentioned that they consider the factor of time for building up trust. According to respondents, *trust cannot be developed instantly. It needs time to develop rapport with someone and then cultivate trust.* That is why the time factor has a lot of significance in the process of trust development and the findings of the current study validate this. In the interviews some respondents mentioned that *they don't trust based on the face value of a person and take time to decide to trust or not.* Others observed that *they use judgment for trust development and actually the time factor helps them in judging and analyzing someone.* The following extracts testify to the importance of the length of time in the process of trust development:

*It depends upon the length of time of relationships with someone. The more time you spend with someone the more you tend to be friendly with that person, you understand the nature, habits and temperament of that person, and then you start trusting that individual. I have relatively higher level of trust for the people with whom I have spent more time. Doctor and Assistant Executive Director, (FAMR47) Case#2*

*Trust building is a time-based concept. You cannot trust a person overnight. It takes time and moreover like respect, trust is earned and commanded. You need time to judge a person, whether he is a trustworthy person or not? You know that every person looks at you, he observes you, what you are saying and what you are doing. I take time and I don't trust on face value of people. I check them and observe and only trust a person when I feel that he is trustworthy and shows commitment. I also consider consistency of the person in his or her behavior. Female Doctor and Registrar, (PAFS65) Case# 3*

The extract below from the interview of a female doctor and assistant administrative director of Case#2 organization is very interesting to read for understanding the importance of the time factor for the analysis of a person's personality for trust development:

*Trust cannot be developed overnight. It takes time. In my early years of age, I used to trust everyone and used to tell everything to everyone especially with my colleagues, because I had not much exposure to external life. I was living in a very religious atmosphere and I thought that every elder is like my father and every young man is like my brother and only after many years I came to know that everyone is not your father nor is everyone your brother; then I decided that I can't trust everyone. So I felt that trust building needs time and thorough analysis of the person. Now I keep on judging the people for an extended period of time and then decide whether to trust someone or not, based on his or her personality disposition. Female Doctor and Assistant Executive Director, (FAFH36) Case# 2*

One-fourth of the interviewees in the current study shared their views that they consider the factor of *secret keeping and confidentiality* in the process of developing dyadic trust. Confidentiality or discreetness is the ability to keep confidence between the trustor and the trustee. According to the respondents, *trust increases with sharing of information and they especially specified personal information*, because by sharing sensitive personal information, people make themselves more vulnerable and this increased level of vulnerability can lead to an increased level of confidence and trust towards them. Moreover, by sharing personal confidential information, people “*reduce the extent of strange feelings towards them*” and create an atmosphere of acquaintance or friendliness. The findings of this research align with this idea, since respondents frequently mentioned that they prefer to trust those who are *strong in keeping secrets and don't tell them to others*. According to some respondents, *confidentiality and secret keeping builds up the image of a person's personality* and to others, *secret keeping*

also includes not spreading anything without confirming the right to. As an example, the following extracts are presented:

*In personal life, I trust the people with whom I have understanding and those with whom I discuss my personal things. I also consider the factor of confidentiality. I trust those who can keep my secrets. Female Nurse (SNFG10) Case#1*

*I consider the reputation of a person. I generally don't trust people who don't possess a good reputation. Personally I trust the person who doesn't spread anything after listening because you know that some people spread things without properly investigating and you know that there is a saying of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW): 'It is sufficient to judge a person's falsehood if he spreads anything without confirming'. Doctor and Assistant Executive Director (FAMR47) Case#2*

While sharing their views about **mutual understanding**, some respondents reported that they like to trust the people with whom they feel a higher degree of understanding and **mutuality of ideas, beliefs and political ideas** etc. The respondents mentioned that they give weight and age to the factor of *matching the mental level* for building up trust and others said that they *like those who like their political, social or religious ideology* and, based on that, they develop their trust in others. Some respondents claimed that they develop trust on the basis of a mutuality of interests and activities and another four said that they base their trust on the mutuality of political ideas, as the following extracts from two doctors' interviews demonstrate:

*If my mental level is same with a person then I start trusting that person. After that, I consider the moral soundness of that person. I also consider educational level of the person because I think that educated people can be more trustable. PG Female Doctor (SDFS23) Case# 1*

*I will prefer to trust the people with whom my ideas match; in other words, those who belong to my ideology. Now those ideas can be religious, political or social ideas. PG Doctor (PDMB58) Case# 3*

*I trust those people who like my ideology. I am a naturalist I believe in live and let live. Specialist Doctor, (PDMB62) Case# 3*

A sufficient number of interviewees emphasized the factor of **education and academic soundness** in the discussion of factors of trust building. Apart from these, respondents also pointed out factors which cannot be merged into any of the above categories. Those factors include: *aptitude, good behavior, broadmindedness or open mindedness, straightforwardness, stability of nature and temperament, level of maturity, being practical, being unbiased.* Additionally, some other factors were mentioned by one interviewee each and these include: *communication, decency devotion, experience hard working, helpfulness, humbleness, loving, politeness, positive mindedness, repute of the person, respectable attitude, simplicity, solid and supportive* in the context of the antecedents to trust development.

### **7.3.1. Some Don't Believe in Trusting Others**

Few interviewees reported that they *do not trust anyone except their families*. The reasons were linked with general trends of selfish and irresponsible behaviour of members of society. Some of the respondents complained about a lack of sincerity among people and others mentioned cheating. The following two extracts exhibit denial of trusting others:

*I trust many people in professional life; for example, I can trust that this nurse can perform this task, this doctor can do this operation, but in my personal life, I don't trust anyone; I trust only my family members. In organizational life, I build my trust based on professionalism. Senior Consultant Female Doctor, (FSFR44) Case# 2*

*Generally, I don't trust anyone because whomever I have trusted, he or she has cheated on me and that applies to all regardless of ethnicities and due to this reason I trust only my family members and nobody else. GP, Doctor, Case# 3*

*Actually, I don't trust anyone because I have seen that almost everyone is selfish and nobody is sincere. People remain friendly to you till they have some selfish interest; once they leave you then they completely forget you and that hurts me a lot. For example, I had two students here who used to come frequently and were friendly to me because they had to learn things from me, but when they left here they did not give me a single call. I used to help anyone but when I was in need, people did not help me at all. Female Nurse (FNFB39)  
Case# 2*

The following extract from the interview of a very senior consultant female doctor shows that she is so disappointed that she is even not willing to trust her family members:

*Generally, I don't trust others, because, I don't believe in trust. Trust is a vague term. Trust in itself is nothing. You need to create trust in yourself. I mean you need to modify and develop yourself in such a way that people may start trusting you. You can't even trust your family and kids. Many a time I ask my subordinates and even my kids to do something, but they don't do it, so how can I trust anyone then? I believe in 'seeing is believing'. I believe on check and balance rather than trust. Senior Specialist Female Doctor (FCFR49)*



## 7.4. Section Four: Influence of Culture on Knowledge

### Sharing

This section aims at analyzing the data regarding another very important objective of this study i.e. the influence of culture on knowledge sharing. The analysis includes biases and issues, problems and complications, and positive and negative aspects of cross-cultural knowledge sharing. The analysis also gives answers to the questions as to whether culture is a facilitating or impeding factor in the process of knowledge sharing and whether language is a barrier or facilitating factor in the process of knowledge sharing.

Although, based on the findings of this study, the cultural factor is not the most important factor affecting knowledge sharing, according to the viewpoint of the respondents it is definitely *one of the most importantly considered factors for knowledge sharing*; in particular, after trust, culture was mentioned as the second most important factor for knowledge sharing by the participants of this study. Participants belonging to all three case organizations gave their views in detail, mentioning that *'cultural differences and biases are a big reality and that affects the process of knowledge sharing'* also. Majority of the interviewees mentioned trust and many others mentioned that they consider cultural or ethnic factors being the most important for knowledge sharing. Overall around half of the respondents acknowledged the influence of culture, and especially language, as very significant. According to the respondents, *people tend to be biased towards their cultural groups*; that is why they give substantial importance to cultural and ethnic factors while sharing knowledge with their colleagues. The respondents view trust as the most important factor for knowledge sharing, but *after trust, they consider the factors of ethnicity and language as very important* and this is mentioned in the following extracts of the interviews:

*To me, trust is the most important factor for knowledge sharing, but after trust factor, second important thing for me with regard to knowledge sharing is ethnicity. Senior Male Specialist Doctor (SDMU24) Case#1*

*To me, trust, cultural and language similarity are important factors for knowledge sharing. I think my other colleagues also consider the cultural and language factor as important for knowledge sharing. Here people generally communicate either in English or in Urdu and I am weak at both English and Urdu. That is why I feel difficulty in communicating with people. Female Nurse, (SNFC15) case#1*

#### **7.4.1. Cross-cultural Biases in knowledge sharing**

A considerable number of respondents reported number of problems and complications of cross-cultural KS. The following extracts from the interviews provide ample evidence of the cultural biases among the sharers in knowledge sharing:

*I think people focus on culture while sharing knowledge. For example, every person of any ethnic group would like to form their own group and they would always prefer their own ethnic group for knowledge sharing. Even while collective or multi-ethnic conversation and sharing of knowledge, individuals will try to give clues by saying some sentences and indirect codes to their own ethnic people while conversation and those codes could be decoded by the people speaking that language. Now it varies from person to person; some more educated colleagues may not think in this way and may think the betterment of all ethnic groups' people, but ethnic issues are a big reality. Nursing Superintendent (Male), (PNMS64) Case#3*

*I have also observed that with regard to knowledge sharing, even teachers help and guide those students better who belong to their own community and don't pay attention to those who don't belong to their community and that hinders knowledge sharing. Not only from teachers' point of view, but also even from students' point of view these biases can be observed. Here people generally make their friendship on ethnic basis and because of this, they fail to share their knowledge or learn from their colleagues who belong to other ethnicities. For example, I see the people from Gilgit and Chitral, Sind and Balochitan who live only with their own people. Principal of Nursing College, (PAFP66) Case#3*

Some respondents reported that an important reason for the problems or hurdles of cross-cultural knowledge sharing is that sometimes in running cross-ethnic discussions and conversations, *some colleagues suddenly start talking in their own languages with their friends* and that *embarrasses other colleagues*, resulting in frustration of some of the participation and dilution of the very essence of knowledge sharing. For example, the following extract illustrates this:

*To me, the difference of culture and language negatively impacts the sharing of knowledge. Although all the people talk English or Urdu here, they speak Urdu only when they speak to other community people. However, they talk in their own local languages while talking to their own people in formal or informal conversation. Many a time knowledge sharing occurs indirectly, for example, you are sitting somewhere and two people are discussing some topic with each other and you learn from their talk even without talking to them, but how will you learn if they talk only in their own language, the language which you don't understand. Female Nurse (SNFC11) Case#1*

After interviewing, the researcher realized another dimension of the problems and biases of cross-cultural knowledge sharing that was shared by some respondents. Some respondents came up with the feeling and experience that in most cases, cross-cultural knowledge sharing goes smoothly if the knowledge being transferred is general and common in nature. However, according to some interviewees *when some particular or specific kind of knowledge comes under consideration*, then in many cases *ethnic biases play their roles*; in the sense that the sharers try to avoid sharing with other ethnic group colleagues and prefer their own community people. The following extract epitomizes this:

*We are simple and peace loving, but people here in Islamabad are very sharp. They manipulate things and that reflects in their knowledge sharing behaviors also. If there is common knowledge they will share with everyone, but when the knowledge is important, especially the one which can help in career development, then the people of other ethnicities share the information only with the people belonging to their ethnic groups like Sindhis share with*

*Sindhies, Punjabis share with Punjabies and likewise Pakhtoons share with Pakhtoons. Female Nurse (SNFC15) Case#1*

The following extract from an interview with a female doctor presents another problem of cross-cultural knowledge sharing. Cultural differences can be bad conductors for knowledge sharing since certain things may be liked and appreciated by the members of one community and *'might be taken as adverse and disliked by the members of some other community'*. She thinks that due to cultural differences, *some people can feel offended or embarrassed* in the process of knowledge sharing due to a lack of understanding and common culture:

*I will also consider cultural differences while sharing knowledge, because our country is a multi-cultural society. We need to be very careful while sharing knowledge. This is possible that some people belonging to some cultural, political or religious group may get offended or feel embarrassed while I share knowledge with others. Senior Specialist Female Doctor, (FDFR43) Case#2*

About one third of the interviewees reported cross-cultural conflicts and disputes. It is worth mentioning that the researcher also observed cross-cultural biases towards knowledge sharing among all ethnic groups and most of the respondents belonging to different ethnicities. Sindhies, Pakhtoons, Balochies, Hindko etc. reported and commented on these biases, but these kinds of biases were reported in a very low frequency from Punjabi and Urdu speaking respondents. There are two possible reasons for this. One is that most of the employees from Punjab and Karachi (Urdu speaking) tend to be good at both English and Urdu languages. Second Punjabi people being a majority ethnic group generally don't think in racial terms as compared to minority groups who perceive Punjab as a dominating province. Some participants

complained against their Punjabi colleagues that they make fun of them regarding their communication skills, language and pronunciations etc. The following honest and candid comments of a Punjabi speaking female doctor throw light on the above mentioned issue:

*I am a Punjabi and if you ask me I can honestly say that Punjabies think that they are the most superior people. They mostly make fun of other ethnic groups of Pakistan and even make jokes about them. This is ridiculous and very harmful for unity and cohesion. PG Female Doctor, (PDFR73) Case#3*

#### **7.4.2. Individual Ethnic Differences, Behaviors and Tendencies with Respect to Knowledge Sharing**

In order to further dig out the cultural differences regarding knowledge sharing, and especially the individual behaviors and tendencies of the various ethnicities regarding knowledge sharing, the researcher decided to re-interview the respondents of this study and indulged into deep discussion and probing with the participants to understand the individual ethnicity-wise trends of the various ethnic groups of Pakistan regarding knowledge sharing. Based on the answers of the respondents, the following trends and tendencies of the various ethnicities are presented. It needs to be noted here that these differences and behavioral tendencies regarding knowledge sharing are solely based on the opinions and answers of the participants, not based on the personal opinion of the researcher.

**Punjabies:** According to the majority of the respondents, Punjabies tend to be the most active and open for knowledge sharing. They tend to be knowledgeable and possess a pragmatic approach toward knowledge sharing. They mostly seem confident in knowledge sharing since

they don't feel the problem of language, because their Urdu and English (both languages of communication) generally tend to be better. They mostly avoid any kind of favoritism with respect to knowledge sharing; however, sometimes others feel that they tend to be little perceptive and tactful while sharing the knowledge especially with the members of other communities.

**Pathans:** Pathans tend to be the most group oriented with respect to knowledge sharing. They tend to possess a passionate approach toward knowledge sharing. They always seem confident in knowledge sharing but, sometimes feel the problem of language, because some of them do not tend to be very fluent at both Urdu and English, the two languages of communication. They always feel ready to share knowledge and whenever they exchange, they share with full zeal and spirit, but mostly prefer their own people in knowledge sharing and seem to show strong group orientation with respect to knowledge sharing. Sometimes in running discussions they start speaking in their native language *Pushto*, disregarding the presence of other participant colleagues, which obviously frustrates others.

**Sindhies:** Like Pathans, Sindhies are also observed to show group orientation and prefer to share knowledge with people who speak their language i.e. the Sindhi language. Like most of the other sub-cultural groups, they too face the language problem in certain cases. Being little shy and introvert they prefer to remain within the circle of their own community and as a result of this, they miss many opportunities of sharing knowledge with non-Sindhi colleagues. They also tend to possess a passionate approach toward knowledge sharing. When they tell something, they share the knowledge with full zeal and spirit.

**Balochies** tend to possess the mixed trends of Pathans and Sindhies in knowledge sharing because geographically they live near Sindhies and Pathans. However, despite facing language problems, they tend to be less biased from the language point of view and seem to be open and enthusiastic in sharing knowledge with anyone.

**Urdu speaking** people tend to possess the characteristics like those of Punjabies with respect to knowledge sharing. They tend to be confident and open in knowledge sharing with anyone because they don't face the language problem. They are lucky that the national language of Pakistan is their mother tongue; therefore, they don't face the language problem in communication like other communities. They show very little group orientation and seem enthusiastic in knowledge sharing disregarding the language biases or community based issues.

**People of Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan** tend to be very much open and enthusiastic in knowledge sharing. Despite the fact that they also face language issues since they seem to be a little weaker in both languages (Urdu and English), but still they don't show any language based biases and seem to be most cooperative and willing to share knowledge. Ethnically these people tend to be least biased and seem to be the most soft-spoken and friendly with all communities/ethnicities and remain ready to communicate with the people of any community and share their knowledge.

**Saraiki:** Despite the fact that Siraekies live in Punjab, culturally and in terms of their way of living they tend to be closer to Sindhies since they live adjacent to the Sind province, hence their knowledge sharing behaviors' tend to be closer to Sindhies. Interestingly in the same way, **Hindko** people, despite the fact that they live in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, they are

geographically close to Punjabies, therefore culturally they are closer to Punjabies and their knowledge sharing behaviors tend to be closer to those of Punjabies.

### 7.4.3. Language is a Barrier in KS

Apart from the issue of cultural differences and their impact on knowledge sharing, according to slightly more than half of the respondents, *language is a big barrier in the process of knowledge sharing*. In Pakistan, the medium of communication is Urdu and English, English being the official and Urdu being the national language. The main reason for the language barrier is that there are many people belonging to different ethnicities living in remote areas who tend to be weak at both English and Urdu, and this becomes a big problem in their knowledge sharing, understanding and communicating with others. One fourth of the interviewees reported that they are weak at both English and Urdu. Due to difficulties and problems, this issue in some cases, according to some respondents who belong to rural areas, *leads individuals towards a sense of deprivation, frustration and inferiority complex*. A vast majority of doctors and, especially, nurses belonging to all ethnicities and territories complained regarding this issue. The following extracts show the intensity of this problem:

*Language matters a lot when you discuss knowledge sharing because the people like us who come from remote areas who have not been accustomed to communicating in English and Urdu, face a lot of difficulties in communication and then obviously it hampers knowledge sharing. This also links with the sense of deprivation. People of minority groups tend to have a sense of deprivation and they psychologically take the influence of these things. I am from Gilgit and I personally have been facing and observing ethnic biases and differences among people and due to these issues I quit my job previously. Senior Specialist Doctor, (SDMG22) Case#1*

*I think ethnic differences are harmful for knowledge sharing and they need to be eliminated if we want to improve knowledge sharing here at our institute.*



*Language is barrier in knowledge sharing because when for example, a Pakhtoon doctor shares some information with some Pakhtoon nurse (while we other non-Pakhtoon nurses are also standing and listening to that doctor) then mostly he will talk in the Pashto language and in this way we non-Pakhtoon nurses will not be able to understand anything and this is how it will hamper knowledge sharing because the same happens in the case of other ethnic groups also. Female Nurse (PNFS57) Case#3*

*Although the medium of communication is Urdu and English, many people like Pakhtoons, Gilgiti, Hazara and Sindhies don't understand both English and Urdu properly and many other foreigner trainees also don't understand Urdu. That is why language emerges as a barrier in knowledge sharing. If all the staff of this hospital had been speaking my language, then my knowledge would definitely have been much better because I personally feel that language is a barrier in knowledge sharing. Male Nurse, (PNMS68) Case #2*

Although the doctors and nurses interviewed in this study shared mixed opinions regarding the issue of language being a barrier or not in knowledge sharing, some perceived it as a *barrier* and others did not think that way. However, when it applies to *sharing knowledge with patients*, almost all of the respondents reported that they perceived *language as a big barrier*. The reason for this is that a large number of patients in the hospitals of Islamabad who come from nearby remote areas speak *Pashto, Afghani* and *Hindko* languages. They fail to understand both Urdu as well as English and due to this issue the majority of the doctors and nurses fail to communicate and understand their patients' languages and it hampers knowledge sharing. Because of this communication problem, hospital management hires the *services of interpreters*. The following extracts from the interviews testify on this matter:

*Yes, language is a barrier, because everyone gives importance to his or her language. It is a barrier over all but when it comes to patients; it becomes much more severe to share the information with them or their relatives. That is why we have hired interpreters of languages like Pashto, Hindko and Afghani languages. Female Nurse, (SNFC15) Case#1*

*Language is the biggest problem in knowledge sharing not only with regard to staff but with regard to patients because the bulk of patients comes from Pashto and Hindko and Kashmiri speaking communities and they neither can speak English nor Urdu and it becomes very difficult to take their history from them and do further counselling with them. Deputy Registrar (FAMS30) Case#2*

It is also notable that when the respondents were asked to comment on what could happen if there were no language barriers, twenty interviewees replied that '**it would increase their overall knowledge**', because they said, '*It is always easier to communicate and transfer knowledge in one's own language*' compared to some other language. The following extracts can be quoted for example:

*I think if everyone speaks my language then obviously my knowledge will be much better as I will not face any language barrier because I have seen that mostly the people of KPK, Gilgit-Biltistan speak their own language when they communicate with their own people. Female Nurse, (PNFR72) Case#3*

*Had there not been the language differences, my knowledge would have been much better because I have seen other colleagues being biased. Especially Pakhtoons and Punjabies discriminate in terms of the sharing of knowledge, patient care and other general working since both Punjabies and Pakhtoons are in the majority and they dominate others. Some previous heads hired Pakhtoons even on the quota of other provinces including Sind and this creates problems. GP Doctor, Case#3*

#### **7.4.4. Cultural Diversity, a Hurdle in KS**

Based on the extensive discussions and probing with the respondents, from the findings of the current research the researcher has concluded that cultural diversity has a negative impact on the researcher and it is a hurdle in the process of research. One-third of the respondents reported that in *many cases, people show biases, supporting and preferring their own people in knowledge sharing*, and although, as mentioned above, there are also *certain issues of*

*language, people show clear cut discrimination in knowledge sharing. For example, in a nursing college or in a medical college, ‘when a teacher is teaching, in some cases he or she will give more focus regarding the transfer of knowledge to the students who belong to his community’.* The following extracts can be presented as evidence:

*Cultural diversity is a barrier. My colleagues seem to be group specific in knowledge sharing. There is clear cut discrimination both in general terms and in knowledge sharing also because people prefer their own people while sharing their knowledge with their colleagues. They don’t want to listen and appreciate the people other than their community. Female Nurse, Case#3*

*Yes, there is ethnic bias to a considerable extent and many fellow workers try to favor their own people and the same reflects in knowledge sharing also because they prefer their own people and want to help them in promotions and career development. I am a Pakhtoon myself and if you assure me confidentiality of the interview process then I would like to tell you that being a Pakhtoon I feel that Pakhtoons are the most biased people with regard to knowledge sharing and the same applies to Sindhies. Moreover, both Sindhies and Pakhtoons complain about Punjabies, but I am the principal of this nursing college and based on my personal experience I can tell you that for example Pakhtoons bring very high marks in their respective degree programs but their knowledge tends to be zero and same applies to Sindhies. Principal Nursing College, (PAFP66) Case# 3*

Another cultural problem, as already mentioned in the start of this section, is that during running discussions *some people suddenly start talking in their local languages*, like *Pashto, Sindhi* or *Balochi*, rather than the common languages of communication like Urdu and English, and that becomes a problem because other colleagues fail to understand the ongoing conversation. Some interviewees shared this problem, as the following extract presents with the experience of an interviewee:

*I have seen lots of cultural and ethnic conflicts and issues among my fellow colleagues. Mostly they remain stuck to their own group and this affects the sharing of knowledge also. For example, sometimes we discuss some topic among our colleagues in Urdu and suddenly a Pakhtoon or some other language speaking person starts talking in between the running discussion in his own language which others fail to understand. In this way the purpose of knowledge sharing tends to be diluted and the participants fail to take the advantages of discussion on the topic. Because of this problem, many times I have observed that when a Pakhtoon shares knowledge, then a Punjabi does not pay any heed to him and when a Punjabi shares something, a Sindhi may not pay attention and this hampers knowledge sharing. Female Nurse, (SNFC11) Case#1*

Extending the above issue, according to the interviewees, sometimes it applies to running educational classes also when a teacher or professor, while delivering a lecture in English in a medical college or nursing college, *suddenly starts speaking in Punjabi or the Pashto language* and that *embarrasses other students who don't speak that language*. In the following extract, a doctor shares his personal experience in the class education that embarrassed him:

*I think cultural diversity is a hurdle for knowledge sharing. I have seen many times Punjabi professors talking in Punjabi in a running class in our PIMS medical university which consists of the Post Graduate medical students of all ethnicities of Pakistan. Now you tell me how we Balochies, Sindhies and Pakhtoons can understand that lecture if a professor instead of English talks in Punjabi. PG Doctor, (PDMB58) Case#3*

#### **7.4.5. Racial Differences and Discrimination**

It may be interesting and surprising to some readers to read such negative and biased remarks of the interviewees regarding cross-cultural knowledge sharing. Although to some it might be viewed as a curse and bad luck for the people of Pakistan, and to others it might be seen as a normal and natural cross-cultural phenomenon, it is important to understand the reasons for

such grave biases in the process of knowledge sharing. In order to understand the reasons for cross-cultural biases of knowledge sharing, it is better to have some idea of the nature and *extent of ethnic differences* and issues of the people of Pakistan. Cultural differences don't remain only confined to biases, rather they lead to *racial discrimination and victimization*. Few respondents reported a very high or extreme level of victimization, some respondents reported a moderate level of ethnic victimization, while some reported a low level of ethnic bias and the vast majority; whereas majority of the respondents replied that they neither believe in ethnic differentiation nor do they feel any ethnic issue. It is also interesting that all ethnic groups are against each other, like one group is against some and another group is against another. Minority provinces complain about Punjab regarding factors of federal policies on development work/expenditure and the distribution of resources among various provinces. The following extracts can help understand this issue in the light of serious ethnic differences among the respondents belonging to different ethnicities:

*In our Medical College, out of 25 departmental heads, there is only one Sindhi and one Pakhtoon head of department and the rest, 23, are Punjabies. Now you tell me what kind of discrimination is this? Is it not shameful if a Punjabi professor says that Pakhtoon looks good in KPK and Baloch looks good in Balochistan? This means they don't tolerate and accept our presence in the capital of our country. PG Doctor, (PDMB58) Case#3*

The same respondent further said:

*A particular ethnic group dominates in our medical university. Here I have seen a very high level of biased attitude towards knowledge sharing wherein people favor their own people and undermine weBalochies in knowledge sharing. People make fun of us, they taunt us, Balochies and Sindhies, on our pronunciation of English and Urdu, they undermine our degrees, they undermine our knowledge and they even make fun of our dress also. One of my professors, who is a very racist person, treats we Balochies so badly that I went to the Supreme Court against him complaining against his racist behavior, because he destroyed the career of many doctors. This professor is not only*

*against Balochies but also against Sindhies. A few months ago, he victimized a Sindhi doctor so badly that he made him a patient of depression. I wrote letters to the president and prime minister and I won the case and that racist professor was removed from his position of Deanship, because six other doctors, who were victimized by him on racial ground, testified against him in court. But shamefully, even then, this racism did not stop and later on two Baloch house officers were removed and the management decided that they will not appoint any person from Baluchistan saying that Balochies only create problems and then they go to court. I am so disappointed by the behavior of that person that I hate even this city of Islamabad and I don't want to live here. PG Doctor, (PDMB58) Case#3*

*The dominance of ethnic groups also varies from time by time in the light of political changes in the top management. If any ethnic group's people occupy higher positions in the organisation, then they try to hire their own people. For example, currently, Pakhtoons are the emerging dominant group since they have some of their people sitting on key organisational positions here in our hospital. Nursing Superintendent Male (PNMS64) Case#3*

One clear evidence of racial discrimination is linked with ***appointments and promotions based on ethnic*** and a political basis violating the principles of merit and transparency. One-third of the respondents complained about this issue. In the following comments from the interviews, two doctors complain about the racially biased appointments of the employees:

*Pakhtoons are very biased and I have fought with them many times. Pakhtoons are very violent people; they always create ethnic conflicts and show their rough attitude that is why I fight them. The last administrator in our hospital was a Pakhtoon and he appointed Pakhtoons to most of the posts. PG Doctor (PDMS51) Case#3*

*All are biased and group oriented. I failed two candidates in the exam but they were appointed by their political party people. In this way, they destroyed the career of two other deserving candidates. Registrar and Senior Consultant Female Doctor, (PAFH56) Case#3*

#### 7.4.6. The Other Side of the Picture: Cultural Diversity is Blessing and Exciting

Contrary to the above mentioned details of cross-cultural biases and differences especially in knowledge sharing, the majority of the respondents believe that *cultural differences have nothing to do with knowledge sharing*, because they think that the *people of Pakistan have a mixed culture*. Moreover, according to respondents, since the majority of the people of Pakistan can speak both Urdu and English languages, which are the languages of communication, *'there is neither the presence nor should there be any need for any issue or tension on the basis of language or ethnicity'*. Many of the participants not only disapproved and disliked believing in ethnic terms, they showed their clear-cut hatred and indifferent attitude towards ethnic issues and cultural biases. They clearly condemned ethnically biased thinking and attitudes and emphasized *cultural harmony and coherence*. The following extracts from the interviews can be quoted in this regard:

*Since Islamabad is the capital and we have a mixed culture here, we don't have these kinds of ethnic issues here. PG Female Doctor, (SDFP19) Case#1*

*If you have made the country, then why do you remain in your groups and in biased thinking? If you consider the differences only, then you will not be able to live even in one house, what to talk about a country? Female Nurse, (FDFP41) Case# 2*

*We promote ethnicity ourselves whenever we appoint or promote the people we favour our own people. We need to be impartial, honest and fair with regard to appointments and promotions. We need to bring a common system, common language in the whole country. Principal Nursing College, (PAFP66) Case# 3*

In the view of one-fourth of the respondents, cultural diversity is both facilitating as well as a contributory factor for knowledge sharing and according to another one-fourth respondents, it is only a harmless, *facilitating blessing and a contributory factor* towards knowledge sharing, since different people belonging to different cultural backgrounds bring their *diversified knowledge, experiences and insights*. According to respondents, this can result in much better, broader and refined knowledge especially in this *globalized world*. Some respondents view ethnic differences and biases in knowledge sharing as deliberately and intentionally done and others treat them as *natural and free from the deliberate biases or bad intentions*. These respondents believe that the *'difference of casts, colors and creeds are only meant for identification, not for creating differences and indulging in conflicts and biases'*. According to one respondent, *'it is only a mind game whether to see it positively or negatively'* and to another *'it is like a beautiful vase containing the colors and fragrances of different types'*. Some feel that it helps in *learning new languages* also and others think of it as a *source of broadening one's vision and exposure*. The following extracts can be quoted in this connection:

*Even if some people 'apparently' show discrimination regarding knowledge sharing based on cultural factors, it might not be done through bias or intention, but due to natural or unintentional factors. Assistant Executive Director, (FAMR47) Case#2*

*To me, cultural diversity is rather an exciting thing for knowledge sharing because you have people of different cultural backgrounds; their varying experiences, observations, languages and dialects gives you a special feeling. I personally feel that if you have a little information and respect for the cultures of different people who work with you, then it can never become a hurdle in knowledge sharing. Specialist Female Doctor, (FDFR43) Case#2*

*The issue of cultural diversity is your mind game. If you think that cultural diversity is good and provides an opportunity for listening, sharing and receiving the insights and experiences of different people, then it will lead to a positive and healthy interpersonal relationship and knowledge sharing will flow in a very smooth and effective manner. Male Nurse (SNMC9) Case#1*



*Instead of taking cultural differences a hurdle, we should take it as a blessing and contributing factor towards better understanding and better knowledge transfer. It should be perceived like a beautiful vase which contains the flowers of various colors and fragrances each one having its own attraction and pleasure. On the other hand, this is the world of diversity; everywhere we see the trends of diversified workforce. We see in the USA, in Canada, Australia and in UK there is a diversified workforce and this is the reason for their success. Senior Consultant Female Doctor, (PAFS65) Case#3*

## 7.5. Section Five: Organizational Antecedents to knowledge sharing

This section aims at analyzing the findings of the interviews regarding organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing, and the next section contains the details of individual antecedents to knowledge sharing. In the current study, the respondents mentioned numerous themes and concepts in the context of organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing. However, based on the findings of this research, *organizational culture, cultural similarity, motivation and organizational rewards, organizational justice, management support, employee empowerment, organizational resources and time factors* have been recognized by the participants of this study as the most important organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing.

### 7.5.1. Cultural/Language Similarity

Based on the interviews conducted for this research, after trust, cultural similarity has been the most important organizational antecedent to knowledge sharing. In the light of the findings of the current study, it can be established that knowledge transfers across cultural boundaries, regardless of being intra or inter-organisational, might be more complicated, since they involve different cultures, which influence how people receive, process, interpret and utilise knowledge. A substantial number of interviewees mentioned cultural similarity as a very significant determinant of knowledge sharing. The previous section was exclusively allocated to the analysis of culture as a very important determinant of knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment. The influence of culture on knowledge sharing is discussed in detail in the previous section. The analysis includes the impact of culture on knowledge

sharing, the biases and issues of cross-cultural knowledge sharing, the practical complications in the transfer of knowledge among members belonging to varying backgrounds and ethnicities and the impact of language difference on knowledge sharing.

## 7.5.2 Organizational Culture

According to the findings of the current study, organizational culture has been the most frequently mentioned and discussed factor that influences organizational knowledge sharing. In fact, in the discussion of organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing, perhaps no any other factor is more influential than organizational culture since it determines beliefs, values, attitudes and work systems that can encourage or impede the process of organizational learning or knowledge sharing. Probably no any aspect of organizational working can be free from the influence of organizational culture and so is the case with knowledge sharing. Thirty-seven (58%) respondents emphasized various aspects of organizational culture while throwing light on the factors that promote knowledge sharing in organizations. The participants of this study discussed a number of factors/facets of organizational culture especially focusing on the *culture of professionalism, culture of learning, culture of merit and culture of mutual trust* etc. Others have used the word *environment*, e.g. *stress free environment and conducive environment* etc. Some have mentioned *learning culture* and others referred to *facilitating culture*. The following extracts from the interviews shed light on the above:

*Professional organizational environment is an essential element for effective knowledge sharing. It includes initiative and interest to learn and share, it includes willingness to learn, receptive and positive attitude towards learning and also physical facilities. Senior Consultant Female Doctor, (FSFR44) Case#2*

*Facilitation from the organization is very significant for promoting knowledge sharing. This facilitation can be in terms of allowing and giving time and space to employees to learn and share the knowledge. GP Doctor, (PDMB58) Case#3*

Despite emphasizing the need for an organizational culture that facilitates and promotes knowledge sharing, most of the respondents talked about the absence of a stable, constructive

and professional organizational culture. Although the situation seemed to be better in Case#1 organization, Shifa International, a private hospital, in the remaining two case organizations of the existing study, the situation of organizational culture did not look impressive, keeping in view the feedback of the respondents. During the interviews, a large number of interviewees especially junior doctors from Case#1 Shifa International hospital, reported a **high level of stress** and recommended a **tension free and conducive working environment** or knowledge sharing. For example, in the following extract, a senior consultant very beautifully explains the need and impact of a *conducive and systematic working environment on the facilitation of knowledge sharing*. Along with some other possible measures for improvement of knowledge sharing, he suggests use of some coercive measures also:

*Knowledge sharing cannot be possible in a casual manner. It needs a structured and systematic approach. It needs a particular environment wherein people might be motivated and facilitated to share knowledge. You need to create an environment free of any kind of tension or stress, because knowledge sharing cannot be efficiently implemented in an environment of stress and uncertainty. You also need to reduce the workload of the people so that they may get the time to conduct research and share knowledge. Moreover, you need to change the mind-set of the people. Some people tend to be stingy in knowledge sharing, they need to be guided, trained, encouraged or coerced to share knowledge. Deputy Executive Director (PAMU53) Case#3*

In case#1 organization, one-fourth of interviewees/doctors complained about the **issue of paper work** regarding writing the details of the patients' history while examining them. For example, in the following extract, a female doctor wants to get rid of paper work. Moreover, she complains that she wants to write books on house officers, but she is not facilitated by the management. She also says that they don't have any common room to share knowledge with colleagues:

*We are asked to do a lot of paperwork while taking the history of patients and it wastes a lot of time. I want to write a book on house officers but the management does not facilitate me. Moreover, the ethics committee which deals with all research activities does not cooperate and facilitate conducting research. We don't have any lounge for discussions and meetings. We only can sit in cafeteria and how can knowledge be shared in cafeteria? PG Doctor (SDFP19) Case#1*

One of the most important reasons of the malfunctioning of most of the Pakistani institutions especially government owned ones, is the factor of merit. In the discussion of organizational culture, ***culture of merit*** was emphasized a lot and the respondents directly linked it with knowledge sharing. Almost one-third respondents from all three case organizations complained about the killing of merit and emphasized the culture of merit. While discussing the need for a culture of merit, a male doctor and a female doctor explained their views in the following words:

*Merit-based selection is very important to improve the process of knowledge sharing as you can imagine that incompetent people cannot share knowledge. I firmly believe that people who come on merit, their mind-set tends to be totally different from those who get appointed on political grounds. PG Doctor, (PDMS51) Case#3*

*Our management does not support a knowledge sharing and learning environment. Moreover, they appoint incapable people based on favoritism. I failed some candidates in interviews for some jobs here at our hospital but the management appointed them and in this situation, what kind of knowledge will they share if they are incapable. In another example, my most brilliant student who topped the written test was not appointed. Senior Female Doctor, (FDFP41) Case#2*

Knowledge sharing and training and development go side by side. That is why; at-least one-third emphasized ***learning culture/learning orientation*** and the ***need for training sessions***,

*seminars and lectures* for creating a learning culture. A few extracts are presented as an illustration:

*Our organization does not organize the programmers, which promote knowledge sharing, e.g. seminars, lectures, etc. For the last 13 years of my service, I have not seen any programs like these nor have I been informed. Dispenser (FDMP33) Case#2*

*There should be some seminars, training programs and knowledge sharing sessions. Employees should be facilitated to prepare for those seminars and training sessions. There should be question answer sessions. These kinds of seminars will enhance the image of the organization also. For example, there is the difference of sky and earth among local doctors and foreign qualified doctors and if the management organizes frequent lectures of these foreign qualified doctors then the local doctors will learn from them. I have observed that these foreign qualified doctors tend to be very cooperative and open minded in sharing their knowledge. Junior Doctor, (FDMP40) Case#2*

Moreover, while focusing upon the *creation of learning culture*, some interviewees emphasized the ***compulsion of acquiring new knowledge*** in order to make knowledge sharing more efficient and productive. Some interviewees mentioned ***eliminating male female differences and biases in the process of knowledge sharing*** and some others emphasized ***adopting a professional organizational culture*** as mandatory for effective knowledge sharing.

### **7.5.3. Management Support**

One-third of the interviewees pointed out management support as a critical factor for organisational knowledge sharing. Organisational support in the context of knowledge sharing includes participants' beliefs relating to the extent that the management promotes a *conducive environment* for knowledge sharing, and *provides leadership for knowledge sharing* and the view of the organisational members that management values knowledge sharing and facilitates

knowledge transfer among employees. In the view of the respondents, management support covers lots of things including: *interest, focus and emphasis of management on promoting knowledge sharing and facilitating and motivating employees in terms of time resources and financial incentives*. This also includes *creating a conducive environment* which might improve knowledge sharing making it more efficient, effective and productive. Many interviewees especially highlighted the role of the *organizational leadership*, particularly top management, in creating a culture of knowledge sharing and facilitating employees both intrinsically and extrinsically since it is the management that can determine the work methods and value systems, set up priorities about everything and allocate the resources according to the perceived significance of various things. In the following extracts, respondents share their opinion about organizational support for facilitating knowledge sharing:

*Facilitation from department is very significant for promoting knowledge sharing. This facilitation can be in terms of allowing and giving time and space to employees to learn and share the knowledge. PG Doctor, (PDMB58) Case#2*

*Management's role is very important in facilitating knowledge sharing. For example, in my department, the head of our department interacts a lot with juniors, always shares knowledge with us and encourages us to share knowledge and pretends that he does not know, and that gives us confidence and we share more and more knowledge. This is how he promotes a culture of knowledge sharing. PG Doctor, (PAMU75) Case#3*

*Organizational leadership counts a lot because the organizational environment is very important for successful sharing of knowledge and that organizational leadership shapes the organizational environment. It includes the focus of management and in this context organizational leadership is a critical factor. Just as leadership counts in any country and nation's success, in the same way no organization can succeed without capable leadership. Assistant Executive Director, (FAMR47) Case#2*



A large number of respondents reported the *lack of a trust-based relationship* between management and employees and hence stressed creating a trust-based environment between management and employees. Some interviewees emphasized visionary management. From the above-mentioned comments of the participants, one can understand the importance of the support of management for knowledge sharing. However, despite some very good comments of the participants that highlight the importance of management support, most of the participants showed discontent and displeasure regarding their management's role in knowledge sharing. The respondents especially mentioned the *lack of structured learning, lack of interest and focus of management and a non-supportive attitude* while commenting on the attitude and role of their management towards facilitating and promoting knowledge sharing. A few extracts from the interviews are quoted below:

*Management has no interest in facilitating knowledge sharing. If someone wants to learn him or herself, then he or she can learn because there is no structured learning here, and as far as the management is concerned, they have no interest in it. Junior Doctor, (FDMP40) Case#2*

*The attitude of management is very discouraging regarding knowledge sharing. They neither allow nor facilitate us to get new degrees, nor do they facilitate us with respect to knowledge sharing activities. They even don't allow us to compete for higher posts despite us passing the test and qualifying. Junior Female Nurse (FNMR29) Case#2*

#### **7.5.4. Motivation and Organizational Rewards**

Since knowledge sharing, in most cases, tends to be a voluntary kind of activity, according to the respondents of the current study, *it needs to be linked with some kind of reward, motivation, inducement or incentive*. Based on the above fact, the importance of organizational rewards and motivation is generally recognized for facilitating and promoting knowledge sharing in

organizations. The respondents argue that as motivation can trigger the inducement and action of anyone towards the achievement of a particular goal, so it is the case with knowledge sharing as organizations, which can efficiently promote a knowledge sharing culture *by modifying employee attitudes and behaviors to promote the willingness to share knowledge among them*. In the current study, a twenty-seven respondents linked motivation and another thirty-one linked organisational rewards with knowledge sharing. Twelve respondents mentioned *monetary rewards* for promoting knowledge sharing and another ten mentioned any appreciation like *recognition certificates or promotions* based on knowledge sharing. Six respondents in particular nurses, emphasised *getting scholarships and paid leave* in order to enhance their knowledge by getting higher degrees. The following extract demonstrates the importance of organizational motivation and rewards for promoting and facilitating knowledge sharing:

*Acquiring knowledge is not easy. To me, getting knowledge, opening and reading books and doing study especially in a practical time of life is one of the most difficult and challenging things, even more difficult than physical labor. Because you need a lot of stamina, patience, persistence and sacrifices for studying, reading and getting knowledge, and for this challenging thing organizational motivation and incentives are very much essential. Deputy Registrar, (FAMS30) Case#2*

*If you don't motivate employees, you cannot enhance their performance. Even a simple patting on the back from the boss may trigger the motivation of an employee. For knowledge sharing for example, giving certificates of punctuality or regularity and dutifulness will motivate others also to do good work to get appreciated. Senior Female Nurse, (PNFP54) Case#3*

Motivation has both *extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions*. The intrinsic dimension is also very important. It includes employees' inner inclination and spirit to share knowledge. Intrinsic motivation refers to participating in some activity out of interest, experience or satisfaction. A

very senior consultant doctor, while throwing light on the need for motivation for knowledge sharing and sharing his personal observations, emphasizes: *'those who share knowledge generally seem to be satisfied with their jobs' and those who don't share seem to be dissatisfied with their jobs.*

In the following extract, a senior doctor talks about some of the details of the motivation plans and provision in his organization including employee of the month and employee of the year awards etc.:

*Management here is supportive regarding knowledge sharing. Firstly, they share knowledge with employees. In our organization an employee of the month award is awarded to at least one employee in the nursing department and one in allied services. That employee is given a certificate and cash prize. Secondly, employees who complete their 10 to 15 years of service are given certain awards and shields and the management organizes a big ceremony for this. Senior Doctor, (SDMU24) Case#1*

It is interesting that out of three case organizations only one organization's employees have shared positive feelings towards motivation and rewards etc., otherwise there seems to be general ***dissatisfaction of employees*** regarding the issue of motivation. The participants discussed various issues and dimensions of organizational motivation and appreciation from their point of view. Some of them pointed out *promotions* and others mentioned a *stress free and encouraging environment*. However, as mentioned earlier, most of the participants showed their dissatisfaction regarding the motivational side of their organizations. The respondents frequently used words such as: *lack of satisfaction, lack of incentives and rewards, rewards, lack of job security, lack of appreciation, lack of equality and fairness, lack of facilities for doctors, lack of professional training, lack of merit, lack of vision in management, tuff duties, lengthy working hours, negative approach, non-professional attitude, lack of any proper*

*system and support for employees, nepotism and flattery, etc., and then linked these things with high employee turnover. Both doctors and nurses shared their resentment with regard to promotions and facilitation for further studies and gaining knowledge. For example, the following extracts throw light on this fact:*

*There are no incentives for doctors. Management has a grudge against doctors. In management, people are promoted quickly, but in medical department doctors are not promoted for several years. I am working on the same pay scale for the last seven years despite being a specialist doctor (FCPS). They keep doctors working on the same salary scales for even a period of 30 years. That is why competent people leave and incompetent people are left here. Now what kind of knowledge can incompetent and incapable people share? However, management is least bothered about these things. Senior Specialist Doctor, (FDFR43) Case#2*

*There is no job enrichment and job rotation, no job motivation and no appreciation. The management's attitude is discouraging and negative regarding knowledge gaining. For example, I am doing a course in our nursing college and I perform my duties with full diligence but the management never facilitates me. Rather they always create hurdles for me by frequently changing my duty schedule. Management needs to motivate employees by rewarding them like with certificates and awards of employee of the month etc. These things will definitely motivate the employees for more knowledge sharing. Deputy Nursing Superintendent (Female), (PNFR72) Case#3*

### **7.5.5. Organizational Justice**

Organisational justice is a term applied to define the presence and impact of fairness in the work place. This might look strange to present organizational justice as an antecedent of knowledge sharing, but according to the findings of the current study, organizational justice and knowledge sharing are directly linked, although researchers have not discussed organizational justice and knowledge sharing frequently. A large number of interviewees pointed out various dimensions of organizational justice while sharing their views about the salient factors of organizational knowledge sharing. Therefore, based on this, it can be said that

organizational justice is an essential factor for facilitating knowledge sharing in an organizational set up. Organizational justice includes many things, for example, ensuring fair distribution of organizational resources, transparency in appointments, promotions and fairness in assigning organizational duties and assignments. In other words, organizational justice means the implementation of merit and absence of nepotism and favoritism. In the light of the views of the respondents of the study, organizational justice also includes eliminating the feelings of any kind of discrimination including exploitation and victimization, based on cost, color and creed, because according to the respondents, *injustice creates grievances and conflicts that damage interpersonal trust and that lead towards the damage of knowledge sharing behaviors in organizations*. The participants from all three case organizations during the interviews in the current study mentioned almost all of these dimensions of organizational justice and linked them with knowledge sharing. Some of them complained about *killing merit and talent in appointments* and others grumbled about *injustice in promotions*, and still others condemned the trends of *employee exploitation, favoritism and nepotism in the assignment of job duties*. On asking the reasons for this, respondents reported *political influence, lack of a strong organizational culture and organizational system*. For example, the situation of justice can be seen in the light of the following extracts of the interviews of a senior consultant female doctor and a male doctor:

*Incompetent people are appointed based on influence. How can they share knowledge? Fifty percent of our employees are below their required educational level. How can they share knowledge? Moreover, people are involved in things they are not supposed to be involved in. There is a lack of proper administration. No HRM, improper job placement is common here. People are concerned with their own benefits but not with the care of patients. All are trying to weaken others and strengthen themselves. Dr. Deputy Registrar and Senior Consultant Doctor, (PAFH65) Case#3*

*Here some people are drawing salaries despite not working and coming to the hospital for the last five years, since they have gone on long leaves, whereas there are many doctors who are asked to work the duties of 3 or 4 doctors. GP Doctor, Case#2*

The importance of organizational justice increases many times more when it is analyzed from a cross-cultural working environment point of view, since many people become touchy and sensitive regarding **organizational justice when it is seen from a cross-cultural point of view**.

The researcher, during the interviews, found that participants from almost all ethnicities complained about **ethnic victimization** and *discrimination at the hands of other ethnic groups*.

About one-third of the participants complained about ethnic discrimination and nineteen (29%) among them complained about the use of political influence for accommodating favored people. For example, in the following extract of an interview, a Sindhi doctor complains about

Pakhtoons:

*Here, reference works in every aspect, starting from appointments up to duty allocations, promotions and other organizational aspects. If you have some reference in upper management or your boss belongs to your ethnicity, then you can be assigned easy job duties. For example, in the neurology department, since the head is a Pakhtoon, 90% of doctors in neurology are Pakhtoons, and the hostel warden is also Pakhtoon, therefore he is allotting rooms to Pakhtoon doctors more than their allocated quota. PG Doctor, (PDMS51) Case#3*

Another doctor, being very much disappointed because of injustice and lack of equality, shares a very disappointing and displeasing case, which very clearly shows the height of injustice and killing of merit:

*Our hospital opened a liver transplant department and they advertised posts for six medical officers to be appointed to the department. They required MBBS plus house job and two years' experience as the eligibility criteria for the*

*appointments. We six doctors applied for the job. Each of us had four years' experience but they did not appoint a single one of us and all successful candidates were appointed on a political basis. We all passed written exams for recruitment with very good marks - I even got third position - but none of us was appointed and those who were appointed, they had no experience at all. They even had not completed their house jobs and had never seen an operation theatre, but they were appointed in the liver transplant department. When our head of the department cried that how will he be able to run his department in this condition only then he was given a favor by the appointment of two medical officers on merit. Afterwards all of them were confirmed in the job whereas I am MBBS plus house job plus three years' direct liver transplant experience, but I am not still confirmed in my job yet. On the other hand, those who have never seen an operation theatre were confirmed in their jobs. Due to this slaughter of merit, all competent and capable doctors have left our organization and others are planning to leave soon. All my colleagues have settled abroad and I have also received an offer from Dubai with 20 times higher salary than here and I am about to leave. Here, only those people who have political backing are happy. PG, (PDMU70) Case#3*

### **7.5.6. Organizational Resources**

The participants of the study frequently mentioned the critical role of organizational resources in the context of knowledge sharing, and according to the majority of the respondents, organizational resources are a critical factor in implementing knowledge sharing activities. In the interviews, a number of participants emphasized the importance of organizational resources for effective and efficient knowledge sharing but at the same time they complained that ***they don't have sufficient resources that can facilitate knowledge sharing.*** More than one third of the interviewees associated the issue of organizational resources, including IT, with organizational knowledge sharing. The interviewees threw light on different types of organizational resources including *financial resources, technological resources, physical resources, time resources, knowledge resources* etc. as important for knowledge sharing. For example, they reported that *'they did not have the resources to arrange training programs,*

*comfortable seminar rooms, computers, multi-media projectors and other audio-visual aids that can facilitate knowledge sharing*'. One consultant female doctor painfully shared the bitter fact that she *'got some donations from an NGO for constructing a seminar room for arranging seminars and lectures for the junior doctors and nurses, but she is struggling to get the required equipment such as computers, multimedia projectors and other audio-visual aids to arrange lectures and seminars for the training purpose and sharing of knowledge*'. The following extracts from the interviews throw light on the importance of organizational resources for effective knowledge sharing:

*You need resources and a knowledge sharing environment in terms of both individual as well as organizational resources point of view. You need a stress free environment. You need comfortable seminar rooms equipped with multimedia projectors, computers and printers which can facilitate knowledge sharing. Male Nurse, (SNMC9) Case#1*

*We do not have resources essential for knowledge sharing for example, seminar rooms and audio-visual aids, etc. I think if our organization wants to improve knowledge sharing, they need to focus on manpower, methods and materials. This means focusing on people, resources, systems and processes, which can bring improvements in knowledge sharing. Male Nurse (FNMS31) Case#2*

*Our hospital was built 30 years ago and now the population has grown six times more, whereas the facilities have only been doubled. Now you can imagine what can be the situation of facilities and resources. PG Doctor, (PDMU70) Case#3*

With regard to the issue of resources, twelve interviewees shared their *helplessness* that they don't even have separate rooms for sharing knowledge. The researcher was surprised when the respondents told him that in many medical wards there *is more than one patient on every bed*. In the above extracts, some participants seem to complain about the issue of physical facilities for knowledge sharing while comparing them with some other advanced countries in the world. The following extracts are eye-opening regarding the extreme dearth of resources:



*The lack of resources is a very big issue regarding knowledge sharing. We don't have resources. I arranged multimedia for a seminar room for clinical meetings by requesting from outside donors. I need many other items and I don't know where I can arrange to get them from. In Pakistan, we have one doctor for every 1,500 people, but in other developed countries there is one doctor for every 200 people. Moreover, the patient load is four times more than the available resources. So how can it be managed? This is the main reason of the shortage of resources. This hospital was built for the people of Islamabad but the patients from about 20-25 cities come here for treatment. We have two or three patients on every bed. Senior Consultant Female Doctor, (FSFR44) Case #2*

*In our burn center, we have 25 beds but if you go at any time you will see more than 30 patients at any time and I have seen other public hospitals even worse in terms of facilities and resources. In the UK, there are ten times more doctors than Pakistan. Their health budget is more than the entire budget of Pakistan. We have two patients on every bed and in many cases we have even three patients on every bed. Senior Consultant Female Doctor (PAFS65) Case#3*

### **7.5.7. Time Factor**

In the light of the findings, time allocation has also been recognised as an essential element for organisational knowledge sharing. According to the opinion of almost one-fourth of the respondents in the current research, the need and importance of time cannot be underestimated in the process of knowledge sharing, since knowledge sharing from start to end is a time consuming process. In the views of respondents, *'you need time to share knowledge with someone. Sometimes you may need time to prepare your topic to share with someone in the form of a lecture or group discussion or even in the case of one to one conversation and sometimes you may need to record or codify the gained knowledge'*. In the view of the respondents, *'although time should be a factor of high significance for knowledge sharing in every field or profession especially in the medical profession, the time factor becomes extremely important for knowledge sharing since doctors mostly remain very busy, especially*

*senior doctors tend to be extremely busy, since they are paid against each minute. Most of the doctors argued that they mostly remained busy in their duties and could not find any time to share knowledge with their colleagues nor do they have any time to attend the seminars and lectures. The following extracts from the interviews of one senior female doctor and one male doctor exemplify the importance of time for knowledge sharing and also justify the above mentioned statement of the researcher:*

*The time factor is a big hurdle in knowledge sharing. People don't have time, in particular, doctors throughout the world tend to be very busy and committed. Knowledge sharing is of two kinds. One is compulsory sharing of knowledge while performing your duty, and the other is the voluntary sharing of knowledge. Voluntary sharing of knowledge requires many things, it requires preparation, it requires sacrifice and it requires patience, tolerance and much more. PG Female Doctor, (SDFP5) Case#1*

*The time factor is important for knowledge sharing. As a doctor, I have to share knowledge with patients, but how can I share knowledge with my patients if I have to see 100 patients in 100 minutes? Here I get one minute only to see the patient. How can I get the history, discuss and teach a patient in one minute and how can I discuss the case of some patient or share knowledge with any of my colleagues? Deputy Registrar, Case#2*

Some senior doctors mentioned that they do **multi-tasking** and that result in *being overly committed*. Junior doctors complained about the senior consultant doctors *that they remain extremely busy*. They are **paid against each minute** and as a result of this, they *fail to get time to share knowledge*. That is why many junior doctors complained that they generally are *not properly guided by their senior consultants* with regard to their training needs:

*Our senior doctors and consultants are money making machines. They hardly find any time to share knowledge with us. PG Female Doctor, Case#1*

*Here most people have time issues. Here we tend to do multi-tasking. I have to go to OT. I have to take rounds of wards. I have to see patients in OPD. I have to see emergency cases also. Three days before I received a telephone call at my home, at 11 pm, from a government officer who told me that he was from a government ministry and asked to consult me about his wife's illness. I asked him to look at the time, it was 11 pm, and if my husband were to call his wife at this time how would he feel? Senior Consultant Female Doctor (FSFR44) Case#2*

*In duty you have to take care of lots of things, that is why you don't get much time for knowledge sharing. Being a senior nurse, I have to take care of everything. I can't overlook a small thing. I spend a lot of time doing administrative things also including some paper work and because of this, I don't find extra time for knowledge sharing. For the normal routine sharing of information it is ok and that I already do. But for some specified knowledge sharing, one needs a little researching and preparation which needs time. For example, when I was in Agha Khan Hospital, we were given two hours every day from our official time to spend on knowledge gaining and knowledge sharing and in that way it was easy to gain new knowledge and to share also. Male Nurse (SNMC9) Case#1*

During the interviews, some interviewees complained that they are **overburdened** and because of that they fail to share knowledge. That is why they urged getting a free day, a free slot every week or month, to be able to share knowledge by attending some seminars or lectures. Many doctors complained that in many cases, they have to work **continuously for 36 hours** and others said that they have to **examine 200 or 150 patients a day**; and in that kind of duty schedule they argued, *how can they share knowledge with proper peace of mind?* The following interview extracts depict the painful overburdened state of mind of the doctors:

*Overburdening of work is the most serious hurdle in knowledge sharing. We don't find any time to share knowledge. Our management needs to allocate at least one day a week or a month so that we may be able to get time to share knowledge with our colleagues. That is why hospitals should not be more commercial because if you become more commercialized, then you will not allow your employees to indulge in any special activities like knowledge sharing. Senior Specialist Doctor, (SDMG22) Case#1*

*We are asked to work 36 hours consecutively at least three or four times a month. Moreover, in foreign hospitals a doctor examines 20 patients a day and we examine 200 patients daily. Now you tell me how can we read anything to update our knowledge and how can we get the time to share knowledge? In one minute, I have to see one patient now you tell me should I see the patient in one minute or suggest medicine for him or her? Due to these organizational and cultural issues, knowledge sharing is not good at our organization. Senior Specialist Doctor, (FDFR43) Case#2*

Contrary to the above mentioned views, a senior foreign qualified doctor denied the issue of time was a factor in the discussion of knowledge sharing:

*I don't think there is an issue of time. Actually, there is an issue of sincerity. People are not sincere with others; they are not even sincere with themselves. They are selfish. They don't take pain for others. They run only for those things where they see money. They don't manage their time well. When I was in the US I was supposed to be there in the hospital at 6:30am and we were supposed to be there till 8pm but here people come late and leave very soon at 2 or 3pm so how can they say that they are overloaded? Senior Consultant Doctor (SCMR21) Case#1*

### **7.5.8. Employee Empowerment**

In the interviews, participants from all three case organizations emphasized a lot the importance and role of employee empowerment for promoting knowledge sharing. Twenty-one respondents linked employee empowerment with organizational knowledge sharing. They argued that empowerment is one of the important organizational factors that trigger *employee job satisfaction* and results in overall better organizational performance, and so has been the case with organizational knowledge sharing since empowerment implies autonomy, and knowledge workers signify *autonomy* more than any other job aspect. Respondents perceive

empowerment being a significant element of learning culture that promotes learning both at individual as well as group level. Some respondents while sharing their views about empowerment, used words like *delegation of authority, freedom, legitimate organizational authority* and *sharing of important organizational information with employees*. Others referred to *open sessions of accountability, an open door policy and regular employee surveys to find out employee's feelings about empowerment* etc. The respondents were of the view that without employee empowerment it is very difficult to implement knowledge sharing in any organization. For example, the following extracts exemplify the importance of employee empowerment for knowledge sharing:

*I believe in the views of John Hawking who said that knowledge increases with sharing. You can empower the people through knowledge sharing. Unless you share knowledge with your employees you cannot empower them. If I share knowledge with my employees, it will empower them. Senior Consultant Female Doctor (PAFS65) Case#3*

*Employee empowerment is very important for knowledge sharing and one way of empowerment is to share the organizational information with the employees. If the organization does not take its employees in confidence then the employees will not feel empowered and one way of that is to inform employees about financial data, revenues and profits. If the organizations don't share this important information, how will its employees feel motivated and enthusiastic in their work? Director Nursing (SAMH16) Case#1*

In the following two extracts, respondents from Case#1 organization give practical examples of how the concept of employee empowerment is implemented in their organization:

*Open house is arranged after every three months in which every employee is allowed to ask questions about anything and this thing is like employee empowerment. This also seems to be an accountability session, wherein every employee is allowed to ask any question to anyone. Moreover, every department organizes a session with all employees of the department in which they review the department's performance and discuss the issues and get suggestions from the employees and we tend to have a short meeting of 30 minutes every day in*

*the morning in which problems of the employees are discussed. Senior Specialist Doctor (SDMU24) Case#1*

*Our organization strongly believes in employee empowerment and employee engagement. We tend to have a daily morning meeting with the CEO with all senior executives in which sometimes lectures and presentations on management and leadership, HRM and OB topics are given. In these meetings, we also discuss organizational issues and policies in the presence of the CEO. I have conducted a survey on employee engagement in which I asked the employees about the issues and problems and took their suggestions. Through these surveys, we try to understand the level of employee engagement. Sometimes we even celebrate the birthdays of the employees bring cakes and give them birthday cards. Nursing Director, (SAMH16) Case#1*

However, despite acknowledging the importance of empowerment, the majority of the respondents in all three case organizations reported that they did not enjoy empowerment. Since Case#2 and Case#3 are government organizations, the respondents from these organizations pointed out issues such as *inequality among employees, diplomacy, nepotism and grouping, fearfulness, lack of job security, lack of freedom and lack of appreciation, etc.* And in Case#1, which is a private organization, respondents complained about a very stressful environment. For example:

*We don't have more employee empowerment. Management is very strict. We don't have much liberty. We don't have job security here and that is why many employees in our organization remain in pursuit of finding jobs elsewhere. Senior Specialist Doctor (SCMS14) Case#1*

*I formed a forum for general knowledge sharing and information sharing or a kind of coordination among the employees of the hospital but the management stopped us working on that project despite the fact that we told the management that we don't have any hidden or political intentions. Junior Technician, (FNMU28) Case#2*

## 7.6. Section Six: Individual Antecedents to knowledge sharing

Participants in the current study shared a long list of individual factors that facilitate or impede knowledge sharing. However, the most important among them are: *trust, attitude and intention, organizational commitment, self-efficacy, ethnicity, reciprocity, helping others, and religiosity*. Section one of the current chapter is exclusively allocated to analyzing the findings of the current research regarding trust, the importance of trust and the development of trust in a cross-cultural working environment.

### 7.6.1. Reciprocity

Reciprocity is one of the essential factors of knowledge sharing. In the findings of this research, reciprocity is the most frequently pointed out antecedent to knowledge sharing. Anticipated reciprocal relationships were perceived as a significant aspect of benefit in social exchange (Chua, 2003), and it is believed to be a critical factor in knowledge sharing. Hence, the norm of reciprocity relates to mutual knowledge exchanges that are perceived obligatory and fair among the two parties. In the current study, the respondents shared their views that they share knowledge *with the hope of getting knowledge in return*. More than half of the interviewees (reported that they consider the factor of reciprocity in knowledge sharing. Some interviewees said that it could help them in their career development, others said *it could help them in the testing and clearance of their ideas*, some said that it was a *source of awareness*, still some others said that it was *a source of getting new ideas*. In the words of a nurse, *'the more you share knowledge, the more you will gain in the shape of further knowledge'*. And according to a senior doctor, *'it is a generally known fact that almost everything is consumed by spending, but, it is inverse when it applies to knowledge sharing, since knowledge does not consume by*

*spending, rather it increases by sharing'. 'How can you survive without knowledge sharing? 'I can get solutions to my problems through sharing', 'it increases operational efficiency by sharing since I get new knowledge'. 'It is a process of self-learning'. The following extracts validate the above-mentioned points:*

*We have learned everything from here by knowledge sharing. They taught us how to talk and how to walk. We were raw stones. We did not know anything before coming here because I belong to a very backward and remote area. Here they polished us and made us what we are today through the sharing of knowledge. Female Nurse (SNFC11) Case#1*

*With knowledge sharing I can get new knowledge, my knowledge can be refined and I can become solid and professionally sound. Senior Nurse Female, (PNFP54) Case#3*

The reciprocity results either in an immediate increase in knowledge or in refining the knowledge by correction of one's own ideas. In the views of the respondents, *'if we hoard the knowledge and stop sharing due to a fear of losing our power, then the question arises as to how will we be able to know whether our knowledge is correct, the latest or is obsolete? Obviously, this will be possible only if we share our knowledge with others'*, as illustrated by the following extracts:

*Many people don't share knowledge due to the fear of losing it, but they don't understand the fact that by sharing knowledge actually they increase their own knowledge. If they don't share, how will they be able to understand the flaws or weak aspects of their knowledge? PG Female Doctor, (SDFP5) Case#1*

*Through knowledge sharing you can correct your own knowledge, because if you are sharing with a person who is more educated than you, then he can correct your knowledge and as a result of that your knowledge becomes recalled and refreshed. On the other hand, when you stop sharing, you will forget your own knowledge. Female Nurse, (SNFG10) Case#1*



### 7.6.2. Organizational Commitment

In the perception of the respondents, in most of the cases, *the employees who share knowledge tend to have a strong sense of **organizational commitment*** and a common observation may also justify this perception of the respondents of the study. The importance of organizational commitment can be seen from the words of a senior consultant interviewee of this research: *‘organizational commitment generally tends to be the driving force behind most of the organizational activities especially those which are not rewarded for. On the other hand, lack of organizational commitment tends to be one of the biggest reasons for avoiding organizational duties, especially those which are not coerced for.’* Almost half of the interviewees reported that they consider the aspect of organizational commitment being the most important factor of knowledge sharing. The interviewees used labels like *organizational duty, professional duty and moral duty* while discussing organizational commitment. Some interviewees highlighted *institutional development*, some mentioned *patient care*, some justifying *their earnings* and some *guiding the juniors* while throwing light on the various aspects of organizational commitment for knowledge sharing. For example, the following extract exemplifies organizational commitment as a driving force behind one’s spirit of knowledge sharing:

*A proactive approach, proactive listening, proper knowledge on the subject area and enthusiasm is very important for effective knowledge sharing. But organizational commitment is the most important factor for knowledge sharing because to me, a lack of organizational commitment is a big reason behind most of the organizational problems. Nursing Superintendent, (Male), (PNMS64) Case#3*

Since knowledge sharing in many cases tends to be a voluntary activity, it needs a lot of *sacrifice: sacrifice of time, sacrifice of money, energy and even comfort*. According to participants, knowledge sharing is of two types: **compulsory and voluntary**, and they were of the opinion that for compulsory sharing of knowledge, they *considered the factor of*

*organizational duty*, and for voluntary sharing of knowledge, they considered the factor of *organizational commitment*. Voluntary sharing of knowledge requires the sacrifice of many things. The following two extracts from the interviews of senior doctors justify the above mentioned idea:

*To me, organizational commitment is one of the most important things in the discussion of knowledge sharing, because you know that there are two dimensions to knowledge sharing. One is the compulsory sharing of knowledge and the second is the voluntary sharing of knowledge. Compulsory knowledge sharing might occur as an organizational duty but voluntary sharing of knowledge needs a lot of commitment. It needs sacrifice. It needs the sacrifice of time, sacrifice of temperament and many things. That is why I think that without organizational commitment, no one can share knowledge. Principal Nursing College, (PAFP66) Case#3*

*Organizational commitment is an essential element of knowledge sharing because, in most cases, knowledge sharing takes place voluntarily and one has to sacrifice a lot for knowledge sharing. Moreover, for knowledge sharing, especially in a field like medicine, you need to read something and gain some new knowledge to impart to others. If you ask me, reading books and then remembering the things from the books for further transmission is one of the most difficult things and these things can be done only by those people who possess organizational commitment of a very high level. Deputy Registrar and Doctor, (FAMS30) Case#2*

The voluntary sharing of knowledge demands the *sacrifice* of many things including the ***sacrifice of temperament***. As argued by a GP, ‘*it is very possible that you may share knowledge with someone and the other party may not take an interest and even may test your patience and persistence by making fun of you and you may get irritated and embarrassed due to the non-serious and immature attitude of the other party*’. In the light of the above mentioned facts, it is not difficult to estimate the importance of organizational commitment for knowledge sharing and to understand the fact that only those people, according to participants, who ***have a big heart*** will share knowledge. In the following extract, a senior female doctor shares the same viewpoint:

*Voluntary sharing of knowledge can be a test of your temperament. Sometimes the receiver may not be serious and may waste your time by showing a non-serious attitude while you share knowledge. That is why organizational commitment is so important for knowledge sharing and you need to have a big heart to share knowledge. Senior Specialist Female Doctor, (FDFR43) Case#2*

### 7.6.3. Self-Efficacy

A majority of respondents in this study highlighted various aspects of self-efficacy as a very important antecedent to knowledge sharing. Self-efficacy includes constructs like *recognition*, *self-achievement*, *self-worth* and *self-confidence*. One-fourth of the respondents mentioned *sense of achievement* as a very strong motive for sharing knowledge. Ten interviewees pointed out *sense of self-worth*, which includes the concept of intrinsic motivation for knowledge sharing which is based on self-determination theory. *Gaining recognition or acknowledgement* tends to be another motive for knowledge sharing. Hence, intrinsic motivations for knowledge sharing relate to the degree to which participants enjoy recognition and appreciation through knowledge sharing and this is based on human psychology. Twenty-three interviewees referred to the factor of recognition while sharing their ideas about knowledge sharing. The motivational theories of Frederick Herzberg (1966) and McClelland (1965) also tell us about the concept of gaining recognition. The following extracts from the interviews describe the importance of recognition in the process of knowledge sharing:

*I have observed that people who are active in knowledge sharing tend to have a sense of achievement because if you don't have a sense of achievement you cannot go for knowledge sharing. You want appreciation and you want recognition. We have a senior consultant in our department who is qualified*

*from the USA. He generally shares knowledge with others because I see that he has keen sense of achievement. PG Female Doctor, (SDFR17) Case#1*

*I share knowledge with the intention of getting acknowledgement because in your job you need to live with honor and prestige and by sharing knowledge you can get acknowledgement and it gives you confidence and enhances the overall image of your personality among your colleagues. Male Nurse, (FNMS31) Case#2*

Furthering the above mentioned idea of ***gaining recognition***, the respondents were of the view that by sharing knowledge not only can one gain acknowledgement from her or his colleagues and build up his or her image among colleagues, but he or she can achieve the status of benchmark as a knowledgeable person by excessive sharing of knowledge. The following extract from the interview of a doctor validates the above-mentioned idea of gaining recognition. His viewpoint is typical of understanding the role and importance of self-efficacy for knowledge sharing:

*If I share knowledge with my colleagues, they will know new things, they will apply that knowledge, it will enhance their confidence and if my knowledge proves beneficial and result oriented then it will develop my trust in them and by repeatedly sharing knowledge, I may emerge as a benchmark for them with regard to imparting knowledge. Male PG (PAMU75) Case#3*

The following extract from the interview of a senior female nurse is very important in the running discussion of gaining recognition and the sense of achievement as an underlying hidden motive of knowledge sharing. She perceives knowledge sharing as an important and essential factor *for preserving the sagacity and prestige of her job and nursing profession*. In her words, it is quite visible as to how she considers the factor of recognition and also relates it with her job while sharing her viewpoint about knowledge sharing:

*I need to share knowledge with my colleagues, because I think it is my duty to keep the sagacity of my organizational uniform. I need to be knowledgeable in a way that it may justify my role and duty. People should know that if I am in this profession, I am because of knowledge. I have read the books, I have gained knowledge and I know how to perform my duty. Senior Female Nurse (PNFP54) Case#3*

An underlying motive behind gaining recognition is to extend the **social ties** by impressing others through knowledge sharing. Eleven interviewees said that they want to extend their social ties by sharing knowledge. For example, the following extract throws light on this aspect of self-efficacy as an antecedent to knowledge sharing:

*As far as my observation of my colleagues is concerned, they mostly share knowledge with the intention of extending their social ties and gaining recognition from others that they are knowledgeable or qualified. I feel, up to certain extent, this is a natural and psychological factor also that people want recognition in every profession. Junior Tech, (FNMU28) Case#2*

Self-efficacy, according to the findings, includes another dimension and that is of **self-confidence**. Some interviewees referred to self-confidence as an important aspect of knowledge sharing. It is generally observed that people who possess a high level of self-efficacy tend to be confident and risk takers. Most of the people who are active in knowledge sharing need to be initiative takers. For example, the following extracts validate the above viewpoint:

*Self-confidence is very important for knowledge sharing. I think many people avoid sharing knowledge only due to a lack of confidence. I recall my initial days in the job when I used to avoid sharing knowledge because I used to be victim of lack of confidence. I always thought what will happen if I fail to answer the questions, but later on as I started gaining confidence I shared more and more knowledge. PG, Doctor, (PAMU75) Case#3*

*Those who are active in knowledge sharing tend to have very good speaking power and confidence, because many people fail to share their knowledge due to a lack of communication skills and confidence. They tend to be extroverts in their personalities. Male Nurse, (PNMS68) Case #3*

#### **7.6.4. Attitude and Intention towards Knowledge Sharing**

In the domain of research on the individual antecedents to knowledge sharing, attitude and intention towards knowledge sharing has been one of the most recognized antecedents to knowledge sharing and the findings of this study are in line with the existing findings of studies on the said subject matter. More than a third of the interviewees discussed attitude and intention of both sharer and receiver being important in the process of knowledge sharing. The importance of attitude and intention in knowledge sharing increases multi-fold when it is seen from a cross-cultural point of view, since people belonging to different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds might include their personal biases and differences in their attitude and intention towards knowledge sharing. According to the respondents, intention can tell us whether a person is *willing and sincere in sharing knowledge or not* and attitude can tell us *how serious, motivated, prepared, focused and committed* an individual is in sharing knowledge. In the view of the respondents, it also includes the *temperament* of a person regarding the sharing of knowledge, since some people, according to the participants, tend to be *helpful, enthusiastic, responsible and sincere*, and others tend to be *stingy, selfish, biased, jealous, non-professional, rude, mocking, emotional and offensive* in terms of their knowledge sharing behaviors. While discussing various dimensions of the attitude towards knowledge sharing, some interviewees mentioned the factor of *jealousy*, some mentioned the *factor of selfishness*, and some referred to *lack of communication skills*, some pointed out *fearfulness* of the sharers, *shyness, stinginess* and *non-cooperativeness*. Apart from these, some interviewees, while throwing light on the

issue of attitude and intention towards knowledge sharing, used the words like: *carelessness, being disheartened, close mindedness, defensiveness, hesitation, negative thinking, being introvert, insecurity, laziness, over commitment, dishonesty, fatigue*, etc. This is very much possible and as it has been observed that *one party might be serious and sincere* in sharing knowledge, whereas another person might be *just killing time* or even may be *showing a non-serious attitude* towards receiving knowledge, and a senior doctor in her interview has pinpointed the same. In the following extracts she has explained the attitude and intention towards knowledge sharing in such beautiful words that it really seems worth reading:

*I think attitude counts more importantly than other factors including trust in knowledge sharing, because you need a big heart to share knowledge. There are some people who take pride in their work, if they have reached some higher position, then they realize that they have not reached that position without hard work so they want to teach others and help others. They want to contribute to their relevant field by bringing some change and innovation. These kinds of people enjoy knowledge sharing and this all includes the attitude of the person towards knowledge sharing. Senior Specialist Female Doctor (FDFR43) Case#2*

She further says:

*To me, the attitude of the person towards knowledge sharing is important because it tells you about the sincerity and seriousness of a person towards knowledge sharing. While sharing knowledge, I will see how much that person is serious in listening to me and getting my knowledge. I will also try to see if my knowledge will benefit him or not. If I see that he cannot grasp the ideas, then I will not share with that person. Some people don't feel comfortable in asking their colleagues for any help in professional work, others don't feel comfortable in speaking due to multiple factors including fear, lack of confidence, jealousy. That is why attitude towards knowledge sharing counts a lot. Senior Specialist Female Doctor (FDFR43) Case#2*

Some respondents reported that seriousness and sincerity are essential factors for knowledge sharing. According to another fourteen respondent's *positive intention and*

**positive thinking** is one of the pre-requisites towards knowledge sharing. Additional to positive intention, few respondents emphasized enthusiasm and interest of the person for knowledge sharing, and others voted for *temperament*, and some others for *cooperativeness* of the other party involved in the process of knowledge sharing, as is highlighted in the following extracts:

*Positive intention is also important for knowledge sharing. Those who tend to be active in knowledge sharing think that they possess positive intentions and positive thinking that they will be rewarded if they share knowledge. On the other hand, many people avoid sharing knowledge or they share only limited knowledge with others. Senior Female Nurse, (PNFP54) Case#3*

*In knowledge sharing, attitude is important. If I am rude and my behavior is hard and non-cooperative, then nobody would like to communicate with me. Your interest also counts in attitude. Many people come to work only for the salary. They work and retire. They don't bother about learning and sharing of knowledge. Nursing Superintendent (Female) (FAFR42) Case#2*

Attitude also includes the **fear factor**, as it has been the common experience and observation that many individuals don't share because of fear of many things including: *fear of losing power or position, fear of deceit by theft of their knowledge by the receiver and fear of the misuse of their knowledge by the receiver*. Five interviewees reported the factor of fear in the discussion of attitudes towards knowledge sharing. This is mentioned in the following extract of the interviews by a senior male nurse:

*The attitude and intention of people is very important. Some people don't want to share due to being selfish, or stingy or shy. Sometimes they think that they may lose their position to others because of transferring their knowledge to others, whereas actually they misperceive this thing. Senior Male Nurse (SNMC9) Case#1*



### 7.6.5. Religious Duty

Although the existing literature on antecedents to knowledge sharing does not present any details of religiosity as an antecedent to knowledge sharing, in the current research, religiosity has been a major individual antecedent to knowledge sharing. This finding is similar to the findings of this research on antecedents to trust development, wherein religiosity emerged as a strong antecedent to interpersonal trust building in a cross-cultural working environment. Twenty interviewees reported that they share knowledge with a religious spirit and feeling it is a religious duty. As far as knowledge sharing is concerned, many Muslims consider it their fundamental responsibility to transfer knowledge, because there is a huge emphasis on the gaining and sharing of knowledge in the religion of Muslims. The sharing of knowledge has been linked with the *earning of charity, gaining the pleasure of Allah and achieving emancipation on the Day of Judgment*. There are lots of sayings of Muhammad (SAW) in which he placed emphasis on the gaining and transferring of knowledge. In one of his sayings Muhammad (SAW) said, ‘Spread to others even if you have one small sentence from me’. In another saying he said, ‘Acquiring knowledge is mandatory for every man and woman’, and in another place he said, ‘Acquire knowledge from cradle to grave’. It is probably because of this that many Muslims perceive knowledge sharing as their earnest responsibility and this has been shared by many respondents in the context of the current study. The forthcoming extracts of the interviews will throw light on most of the above mentioned aspects:

*I always remain proactive in knowledge sharing, because knowledge sharing is important not only for oneself but also for organizational betterment and even for the betterment of society because it is our religious duty to gain knowledge and we are asked ‘to gain knowledge from cradle to grave’. Knowledge sharing is a two-way process: if you share knowledge 1%, you may gain 99% knowledge because of your sharing. Nursing Superintendent, (Male), (PNMS64) Case#3*

*I share knowledge because it is our religious duty. Our religion has told us to help people and share knowledge with them, not only professional knowledge, but also all the knowledge that can benefit others in managing their life affairs successfully. As our prophet (WAS) was nice and cooperative with all, so should we be and we should promote good things through knowledge sharing. Dispenser, (FDMP33) Case#2*

*Knowledge sharing is our religious responsibility. We have reached this position only through knowledge sharing. I am here in this organization for the last 22 years only because of knowledge sharing. Nursing Director Nursing, (SAMH16) Case#1*

*Shia*, a major faction in Islam, gives especial respect to Hazrat Ali (RTA), the fourth caliph of Muslims and the son in law of the prophet Muhammad (SAW). There is a saying of Hazrat Ali (RTA) in which he has elevated the status of those who are blessed with knowledge by saying that ‘wealth consumes with spending, but, knowledge increases with spending’, hence some participants have referred to the saying of Hazrat Ali (RTA) while linking knowledge sharing with religiosity. The following extracts can be presented as examples:

*For me trust is not important for knowledge sharing because it is our organizational duty to share knowledge regardless of trust. It is our religious responsibility also to share knowledge. It is a saying of Hazrat Ali (RTA) to share knowledge with anyone. I would like to share knowledge with anyone whether I trust him or not. Deputy Registrar, (FAMS30) Case#3*

*Knowledge sharing is very important because it is our religious duty to spread knowledge. Hazrat Ali (RTA) has said that those who are bestowed with knowledge are luckier compared to those who are given wealth, because knowledge increases with spending and wealth reduces with spending. Junior Tech, (FNMU28) Case#2*

As mentioned above, some participants perceived knowledge sharing as a source of *spiritual strength, gaining the pleasure of God and an ongoing charity which will reward them on the*

*Day of Judgment.* Others said that those who share knowledge tend to have the *fear of God* etc.

For example, the following extracts exemplify these dimensions:

*I consider knowledge sharing as a 'Sadqa-e-Jarya' (ongoing charity even after death) because it leads towards the betterment of a person and betterment of society. Senior Consultant Doctor, (SCMR21) Case#1*

*Knowledge sharers generally tend to be religious, humble and modest in their behavior. They also try to follow religion. They tend to have a fear of God. That is why they want to help others because they think that by helping others by sharing their knowledge, they can please their God and God will reward them on the Day of Judgment. Principal Nursing College, (PAFP66) Case#3*

*Many people share knowledge from religious spirit. They think that is it their religious duty also to share knowledge. Some people get spiritual happiness by sharing knowledge. They get happiness like one gets happiness while offering prayer. Senior Specialist Doctor, (PDMB58) Case#3*

#### **7.6.6. Passion to Help Others**

Knowledge, in most cases, is shared with the purpose of helping others and the participants of this study have reported this. If individuals believe that the information they possess would be helpful for others, they will be more inclined to share that knowledge. Where neither extrinsic rewards nor disciplinary measures can encourage employees to share knowledge employees' passion to help others stands as a critical factor for knowledge sharing, since this helpful attitude works as an intangible triggering factor for donating and sharing knowledge. Some interviewees, as discussed in the previous pages, believe that knowledge, in the majority cases, is shared voluntarily, and one can understand the importance of passion to help others with knowledge sharing. One-third of the interviewees shared their opinion that they share knowledge with the spirit of helping others. Some respondents mentioned that the driving force

behind their sharing of knowledge is *intrinsic motivation and satisfaction* and others pointed out *institutional development*, while still others referred to it *being their professional duty* and *moral duty to help their colleagues and especially their juniors*. They emphasized that *doctors tend to have a passion for helping and serving others*. Some senior doctors referred to a *cyclical process*, which means that they said that when they were young they were guided by their seniors and now when they are experienced they need to guide juniors. For example, the following extracts seem to be in line with the above statement:

*The people who actively share knowledge with others tend to be helpful. They become happy by helping others. They also tend to have organizational commitment. PG, Doctor, (SDMP13) Case#1*

*I am proactive in knowledge sharing. I share knowledge with the intention of helping someone. It pleases me very much that my knowledge may help in the career development of a person. If I share knowledge with four nurses and if one among them implements it, then I will achieve my objective. Nursing Superintendent (Female), (FAFR42) Case#2*

*Sharing knowledge is a kind of cyclical process. When I was young many people taught me and made me what I am now, by sharing their knowledge and now when I am at the giving stage it is my responsibility to share my knowledge with those who need it, regardless of whether they ask me to do that or not. Senior Consultant Doctor, (SCMR8) Case#1*

A passion to help others has such a strong basis that it keeps on motivating some people to share knowledge despite apparent bottlenecks in the process of knowledge sharing, and this has been pointed out by a senior female doctor in her interview. In the following extract, she seems to be overwhelmed with a sense of helping others. Despite knowing that many people make fun of knowledge sharers by calling them crazy or time wasters, she still thinks that she has the spirit and thirst to share knowledge because she wants to help others:

*The passion to serve others or help others is the driving force behind my knowledge sharing. I know that others sometimes call people who are more enthusiastic in knowledge sharing crazy. I know that but still I am ready to be perceived this way by others, because I have the passion to guide and help others. PG, Female Doctor, (SDFS23) Case#1*

Based on the thorough analysis of data, the main findings of this study are as follows: (1) Trust is the most important factor for knowledge sharing compared with other factors including: cultural similarity, organisational duty, professional relationship, authenticity of shared knowledge and personality factors of the person involved in knowledge sharing. (2) Although, cultural similarity is also an important factor for knowledge sharing, trust is much more important for knowledge sharing compared to culture or common ethnicity. (3) Culture has a tremendous role in trust building. (4) Professionalism, sincerity, length of relationship, commitment, confidentiality/keeping secrets, religiosity and mutuality of ideas, interests and activities are important antecedents to interpersonal trust building. (5) Culture and ethnicity is a hurdle in the process of knowledge sharing and language difference has a negative impact on knowledge sharing. (6) Cultural similarity, organisational culture, managerial support, employee empowerment, motivation and organisational rewards, organisational justice and organisational resources are the major organisational antecedents to knowledge sharing. (7) Interpersonal trust, intention and attitude towards knowledge sharing, self-efficacy, organisational commitment, religiosity and passion to help others are the major individual antecedents to knowledge sharing.

## 6.10. Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the data analysis and findings of the research with the help of the extracts from the interviews of 75 interviewees (doctors, nurses and other administrative staff) representing various ethnic groups of the three case organizations of this study. The chapter discussed the findings on all the research objectives and research questions. Firstly, with respect to the question of the influence of trust in knowledge sharing, trust emerged as the most important factor for knowledge sharing compared to other factors including cultural or language similarity, organisational duty, professional relationship or the personality factors of the knowledge sharer including his or her personality, image, depth of knowledge, credibility and education, etc. According to a considerable number of respondents, “culture” was identified as a very strong factor affecting interpersonal trust building. On the question of antecedents to interpersonal trust building, after culture came professionalism, religiosity, confidentiality, sincerity, and commitment, length of relationship and level of mutual understanding as the most important determinants of interpersonal trust building. Another important research objective was to find out the influence of culture and language on knowledge sharing. Based on the answers of the participants, “Cultural Dissimilarity” and in particular “Language Difference” proved to be an impeding factor for knowledge sharing. The respondents pointed to many complications, issues and biases of cross-cultural knowledge sharing. Language also proved to be an impeding factor in a cross-cultural working environment. The next section discussed the findings regarding the question of “Organisational Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing”. According to the findings, organizational culture, cultural similarity, motivation and organizational rewards, organizational justice, management support, employee empowerment, organizational resources and time factors have been recognized by the participants of this study as the most important “Organizational Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing”. The last section of this chapter presented the results of the data collection on the

question of “Individual Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing”. According to the findings of this research, trust, attitude and intention, organisational commitment, self-efficacy, ethnicity, reciprocity, helping others, and religiosity emerged as the most significant “Individual Antecedents to Knowledge Sharing”.

## **Chapter Eight**

# **DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGERS**

## **8.0. Introduction**

The previous chapter presented an analysis of the findings of this research in the light of the extracts from the interviews of interviewees. This chapter includes discussions on the findings, implications for the managers, and limitations of the study and directives for the future researchers. The chapter has three sections. Section one presents discussions on the key findings against all six sections of data analysis; section two includes implications for the managers and section three presents limitations of the study and offers directives for the future researchers.

## **8.1. Discussions**

The data analysis of this research has been presented in six different sections, keeping in view the six major research streams/themes of study, therefore, in order to save the reader from confusion and intermingling of the various points, discussions are also presented separately in the light of the six major research streams/sections of the data analysis.

### **8.1.1. Influence of Trust and other Factors on KS**

This study empirically supports the assumption that trust is one of the most important factors in knowledge sharing. Although the influence of trust on KS has been investigated previously



in multiple studies, but it is not studied in a cross-cultural working environment and very especially it is not substantially studied in a professionalized field like medical profession. Hence, this study contributes towards the existing domain of the field by providing another more detailed analysis of the mediating effect of trust at a cross-cultural professionalized workplace for the purpose of knowledge management. The significance of trust for KS is commonly highlighted in the existing knowledge management literature (Chowdhury, 2005) for instance, “Trust is, after all, the single most important precondition for knowledge exchange” (Rolland & Chauvel, 2000, p.239). Additional empirical evidence strengthens the positive impact of trust on KS in a number of contexts and settings (e.g., Butler, 1999; Hsu & Chang, 2014; Chowdhury, 2005; Staples & Webster, 2008). Haque and Haque, (2018) found trust as the most significant factor with regard to sharing of knowledge in their study conducted in Pakistani universities. Based on the findings of the study of Guan et al. (2018) conducted on Chinese online community of practice, Identity-based trust proved to be an important indicator of knowledge sharing. Kucharska, et al. (2017) also found trust being a crucial factor for the sharing of tacit knowledge in their study conducted in Poland, as they comment, “Tacit Knowledge Sharing on Project Performance points to the key role of trust in the process of Tacit Knowledge Sharing which is indispensable for Team Creativity. Trust affects Tacit Knowledge Sharing in a direct manner, but it is also an indispensable element which helps build Collaborative Culture which directly affects TKS. From the point of view of effectiveness of knowledge management, soft skills, in light of the presented studies, constitute key managerial skills because of the development through innovations” (Kucharska, et al., 2017, p. 532).

One of the most compelling reasons for showing reluctance in knowledge sharing in the context of this study and in the previous studies (Hsu and Chang, 2014) is the factor of ambiguity

uncertainty and risk involved in the process of KS (Staples and Webster, 2008). The most visible risk is that the sharer may *lose the competitive advantage over peers* as a result of sharing knowledge (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998; Stenmark, 2000, 2002). A commonly observed issue with regard to knowledge sharing is that of cheating (Patrick, Rourke & Phillips, 2000). Dirks & Ferrin (2001) argue that with trust, cooperative or fruitful activity can emerge since trust decreases uncertainty and ambiguity in social perceptions. This is aligned with the “theory of social exchange” (Emerson, R. 1976), in which trust supports the exchange in the absence of other instruments that could guarantee that the commitments are met (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). According to McNeish and Mann (2010), trust can affect KS both directly as well as indirectly through interpersonal relationships and culture. Nelson and Coopriider (1996) in their study, found trust being an antecedent to KS and suggested a causal relationship between KS and trust. They further noted that trust increased through shared knowledge to positively affect the group performance. Some researchers (e.g., Zand, 1972) believe that in the presence of trust, people tend to be more inclined to donate their knowledge. Trust has importance from both sharer as well as receiver of the knowledge. The need of trust for sharer of knowledge is easy to understand since sharer wants the fair use of his or her shared knowledge, but trust is needed by the receiver of the knowledge also. In the presence of trust, the receiver tends to be “more willing to listen to, and absorb other’s knowledge” (Mayer et al., 1995). These properties were found in multiple organizational settings both at individual as well as and organizational levels (McNeish & Mann, 2010).

With regard to cognition and affect based trust influencing KS behaviours, the findings of this research are in line with the findings of the study of Huang et al. (2011) conducted in Chinese context, wherein they found that cognition-based trust had no countable impact on sharing of tacit or explicit knowledge. Since the findings of this research regarding the antecedents to

trust development have also highlighted the influence of affect based trust relatively more powerful as compared to cognition-based factors of trust building, therefore this is logical that in the view of the respondents of this research, affect based trust plays more powerful role in sharing of knowledge. The respondents of the current study frequently linked the sharing of knowledge with helping and assisting the colleagues and especially guiding and motivating juniors. Ng & Chua (2006) have maintained that a higher level of cognitive trust may lead to free riding, since an employee may think that his or her colleague is capable of completing a task successfully without the help of someone. Holste (2003), who reported that cognitive trust leads a person towards using others' knowledge whereas affect-based trust motivates a person towards sharing of knowledge. Based on the findings of this research, this can be concluded that affect-based trust plays a key role in KS compared to cognition-based trust.

According to Khvatova and Block (2017) organizations need to have high level of “desired task-related trust” in order to facilitate knowledge sharing. The question arises as to how desired trust can be created and its existing level increased? It is possible that some individuals being born in a particular environment might be more willing to trust others. They note, “Desired trust is a psychological state or inner world of an individual, his or her readiness and desire for relationships when an individual transfers certain rights, objects and knowledge to other people. Different nations are characterised by a certain level of desired trust, and this is driven by history, culture, habits, and so on. We can conclude that no management can easily encourage an internal desire in people to trust. However, if tuning knowledge sharing in the organisation becomes a priority, it makes sense to select employees already possessing the desired trust to share task-related knowledge. This point emphasises the need to interlink knowledge management and human resource management strategies for the benefit of the organisation. Let us emphasise the difference between actual trust and desired trust” (Khvatova

& Block, 2017, p. 349). Nerstad et al. (2017) emphasize the need of collective organizational trust for the fruitful sharing of knowledge and for the generation of collective trust they highlight the notion of mastery culture. According to Kramer (2010), collective felt trust consists of “a psychological tipping point phenomenon: when sufficient reassuring factors are perceived to be in place, collective trust tends to be present” (p. 83). They further noted that a collective “mastery climate” was tested as a significant predictor of the collective feelings of trust. “Our results underpin these propositions in that the value orientation emphasized in the conditions of a mastery climate (cooperating, helping, sharing, learning, developing, and growing) seem to provide such reassurance. Our study has thereby identified conditions under which felt trust thrives (Kramer, 2010)” (Nerstad et al. 2017, p. 12).

Apart from the importance of trust for KS, the extent of trust required for KS is also significant; which depends upon the type of information being shared (McNeish and Mann (2010). Explicit knowledge as explained by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998). “Can be codified and transmitted in a systematic and formal language, developed through explication of tacit understanding and interpretation of information, stored in hard copy and electronic documents”. On the other hand, “Tacit knowledge is seen as personal knowledge, based on individual experience and values and therefore it tends to be not as easily transmitted” (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Sharing of tacit knowledge may need higher degree of trust as compared to explicit knowledge (McNeish and Mann (2010). Apart from being tacit and explicit, there is an additional dimension of the type of knowledge being shared. Type of knowledge also includes common, specialized or highly personalized type of knowledge. In the view of the respondents, the higher the level of knowledge in terms of its value, the higher the level of trust being applied in the process of KS. This emanates from the value of knowledge factor (Brown & Woodland, 1999; Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2001) and according to Andrews and Delahaye (2000), when individuals

feel that the knowledge they possess is valuable then knowledge sharing becomes a complex process due to decisions about which knowledge to share, with whom to share, and when to share. Shin (2004) endorses the view of the respondents of this research that knowledge sharer may feel apprehension while sharing specialised knowledge. These findings seem in line with the arguments of (Marshall et al., 2005; Dyer and Nobeoka, 2000; Child and Faulkner, 1998). In their work, Child and Faulkner (1998) have adopted a multidimensional concept of knowledge. They argue that sharing of technological knowledge like product specification etc. might be easy to share, but, sharing of systematic or strategic knowledge about the things like organizational processes might be difficult to share and Tsang's (2000) survey of 118 qualitative interviews has found initial support for Child and Faulkner's idea (1998).

An important reason of the importance of trust for KS in the current study is the risk of losing the power gained by virtue of acquired knowledge and the fear of the misuse of knowledge by the other party (Hsu and Chang, 2014). Marshall et al., (2005) maintain that the dilemma to motivate the parties to share their valuable knowledge tends to be more evident when it applies to the type of knowledge being shared; since sharing of tacit knowledge paves way for cheating and opportunistic behaviour (Dyer and Nobeoka, 2000). Thus, a person will be willing to share the tacit knowledge when he or she is sure that the shared knowledge will not be used against his or her will (Marshall et al. 2005). Shin (2004) also argues that knowledge sharers feel the risk and fear of misuse of their shared knowledge and that can result in the loss of the power of sharer. Numerous studies have empirically found that the fear of losing power of knowledge is a key apprehension related to KS, and also one that motivates to hoarding of knowledge (Orlikowski, 1993; Kankanhalli et al., 2005; Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Researchers also argue that absence of sufficient paybacks for sharers for the loss of shared knowledge also becomes a main reason of hoarding the knowledge (Bock et al., 2005; Huber, 2001). Trust is

recommended as an option to avoid unprincipled conduct by those who would abuse professional relationships by using knowledge against the will of the sharer in order to gain power or superiority in organizations (Williamson, 1981). According to DiBella and Nevis (1998), groups can learn as much about each other's success as about failure as a result of shared knowledge and therefore this requires an overall climate of trust to avoid exploitation in the process of KS. Risk in the process of KS is not only related to the sharer of the knowledge, but, it includes the concern of the receiver of the knowledge also, regarding the ambiguity about the authenticity of knowledge, and in this connection again trust plays vital role. According to McNeish and Mann (2010), in structural relationships, trust offers a way to accept knowledge in the absence of the procedures and ways to confirm authenticity and veracity of knowledge. In the light of the above discussion, the commentary of Robert Buckman (1998, p.14-15) is very much relevant:

*“To move from a culture that calls for the hoarding of knowledge in order to gain power toward one that rewards the sharing of knowledge with an increase in power, we need to create a climate that fosters long-lived, trusting relationships. We must be able to trust that we receive the best information that can be sent to us, and those who send it must be able to trust that it will be used in an appropriate manner”.*

An important reason for the need of trust for KS in the view of the respondents of the current study refers to male-female differences, issues, apprehensions and misunderstandings. Like elsewhere, in Pakistan there are considerable differences and biases among male and female colleagues. Due to male-female differences, the extent of trust for knowledge sharing increases. Many female respondents reported that they wanted to share the knowledge with only those whom they trusted. In many cases female workers did not even like to talk to male colleagues except in some serious need. Gender based stereotypes are examined as potential moderators in the process formation of knowledge sharing (Lin, 2008) and according to Burke (2001) they have been a critical factor in the context of knowledge sharing (Burke, 2001). Due to increased

representation of female-workforce in work-place, diversity is increasing in the composition of teams (Buhler, 1997) resulting in the increasing desegregation of male and female workers within organizational job categories (Jackson, 1992). However, researchers have typically observed certain gender-based differences in perceptions and attitudes in work groups with reference to tasks that typify stereotypically masculine or feminine values, interests or contexts (Goktepe & Schneier, 1989; Andrews, 1992).

Personality factors of the other party in the process of knowledge sharing that might be sharer or receiver (Webb, 1998), are also critical. Personality factors might include a big list ranging from the education and experience of the person to his or her cultural background and temperament, including attitude, communication skills, absorptive capacity (Lavanya, 2012; Ko, et al., 2005), people skills, motivation for sharing knowledge and reputation etc. (Lee & Al-Hawamdeh, 2002). In their study, Matzler et al. (2008) have empirically tested that the stable attributes of the individuals, i.e., openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness impact knowledge sharing. Personal reputation and image of the personality of a person is very important. Reputation according to McKnight et al. (1998) refers to attributes of a person based on second-hand information about him or her. Reputation of a person can be an important trust-building factor (Fung and Lee, 1999) and so it applies to KS. Reputation is a “general estimate of a person with respect to character or other qualities and organization with regard to some aspect of its activities” (Misztal, 1996; Karake-Shalhoub, 2002; and McKnight et al., 2003). In the existing literature on trust, reputation has been perceived as a trust building (Dasgupta, 1988) factor, especially when it applies to professionals (Barber, 1983) like doctors and nurses. Depth and breadth of the knowledge and experience of the person are also some of the personality factors highlighted by the respondents in this study. Findings of Constant et al. (1996) validate the outcome of this study. They propose that people with higher degrees of expertise are more

expected to give beneficial advice; and less expected to donate knowledge when they reflect their expertise to be insufficient (Wasco & Faraj, 2000, 2005). Being consistent with existing research findings on communities of practice (Brown and Duguid, 1991), the research findings of Wasco and Faraj (2005) empirically proved that individuals' professional experience is an important predictor of KS.

Han (2018) has evidenced personality factors being important for KS and he has urged the managers and practitioners to identify the personal habits talents and tendencies of individual employees and integrate them with KS. As he highlights "It may also be important for HRD practitioners to help employees shape and self-discipline their perceptions of knowledge ownership to enhance their knowledge sharing based on their personality traits. For example, R&D engineers with high conscientiousness are more dutiful, responsible and dependable to one another. Likewise, the results of this study may indicate that R&D engineers who are highly conscious of the involved jobs are more willing to engage in the effort of sharing their knowledge and to use shared knowledge databases among members of the R&D teams. Hence, such R&D engineers can be assigned the role of documenting know-how and experience, maintaining the databases and enhancing the applicability of shared knowledge" (Han, 2018, P.137).

Influence of professional relationship on KS among doctors and nurses is highly significant. Since doctors and nurses work together as teams and depend upon each other, therefore, it is foreseeable that social and psychological developments might influence KS among professionals; since the organizational duties and the members of groups and teams (Triandis et al., 1988) perform activities collectively. Psychosocial progressions tend to incorporate strong interpersonal relationships, connections and linkages, social interconnection and



cooperative values. It includes the notions of affiliation, fairness and innovativeness” (Bock et al., 2000). Bock et al (2000) note that knowledge sharing best occurs through values of the teamwork, strong interpersonal relations, cohesiveness and cooperative norms. Interconnected groups have already been linked with higher degrees of trust (Myers, 1996) and higher levels of group performance (Levin and Cross, 2004). Stangor (2004) suggests that “a social norm is a way of thinking, feeling, or behaving that is perceived by group members as appropriate” and that “group cohesion is the emotional attachment that the group members have with the members of the group.” Another significant assessment of KS is the necessity for interdependence among the sharers where “the interests of one party cannot be achieved without reliance upon another.” Trust can help in this situation (Gambetta, 1988; and Fukuyama, 1995). Since doctors and nurses depend on each other for performing their duties, therefore professional relationship and team orientation is a crucial factor for KS among them.

Authenticity of the shared knowledge and *credibility* of the sharer or the source has been a critical factor in sharing knowledge (Suchan, 2004; Andrews and Delahay, 2000) and same have been the findings of this research. *Source credibility* relates to the degree to which a recipient of knowledge believes a source of knowledge an expert and trustworthy (Dholakia & Sternthal 1977; Grewal et al., 1994). When the credibility of source is high, knowledge is perceived to be of high value (Mizerski et al., 1979). Attribution theory of Kelly (1973) suggests that knowledge receivers attempt to assess whether the shared knowledge offers real representations and the source of knowledge is credible or not? When the source credibility is low the receiver will discard that knowledge (Eagley et al.,1978) on the contrary if the source credibility is high then the persuasive power of the knowledge will be strengthened (Mizerski et al., 1979).

### 8.1.2. Influence of Culture on Trust Development

Unlike most of the existing cross-cultural studies on dyadic trust development (e.g., Wasti et al., 2007, 2010), this research has found cultural similarity as a very strong antecedent to trust development. A large number of respondents reported that they built their trust on the basis of cultural similarity. According to Zolin et al (2004), the greater the cultural variation in cross-functional teams, the more the fragile level of trust; since organizational members struggle to find mutual ground and search for traces of ability, benevolence and integrity, all attributes whose expressions and manifestations might be deeply impacted by culture. In their study, Zolin, et al. (2004) found that cultural diversity proved to be associated with lower perceived trustworthiness among the organizational members belonging to different cultural groups. This cultural influence was found to be stronger later in the project teams, proposing that it might be a result of cultural misconstructions rather than biases. In the current study, the researcher observed serious biases and differences with regard to trust building based on cultural and ethnic issues. A considerable number of respondents reported that they did not perceive the people of other ethnic groups to be trustworthy and therefore preferred to trust the colleagues belonging to their own ethnic group. This was also observed by the researcher that most of the trust related biases among the members were not based on misunderstandings, rather mainly based on cultural biases and differences.

Secondly, the findings of this research revealed that apart from cross-cultural influences on trust building, there are certain cross-functional or cross-disciplinary influences also on trust development. The building of trust in cross-functional work environments may be hindered due to departmental or disciplinary characteristics and differences (O'Hara-Devereaux & Johansen, 1994). According to Zolin, et al. (2004), each discipline and department tends to have its own culture shaped under the influence of the shared values, work patterns,

professional values of the respective departments and its members. Hence, trust may be relatively more difficult to cultivate in cross-disciplinary work teams since members tend to be less familiar with the objectives, world-views, work values, problem solving approaches, delicacies, and constraints of the members being from other disciplines (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967). In the context of current study, the respondents from cross-functional or cross-disciplinary teams like nurses, junior doctors and senior consultants seemed to exhibit discipline-based cultural differences and being seriously biased with regard to trusting their colleagues outside their profession and discipline. The findings of this study seem in line with the findings of the study of Zolin et al. (2004) that members of each discipline reported that they would trust the members of their own discipline more than those of the other departments, supporting the idea that building trust might be more challenging in cross-disciplinary teams. In the current study, most of the nurses seriously alleged the doctors on the grounds of non-cooperation and exploitation of nurses at the hands of doctors and they reported that they preferred to trust nurses as compared to doctors. Doctors also criticised nurses being negligent and disrespectful. On the other side, GPs showed lack of trust towards the senior consultants and frequently complained against them on the grounds that they neither gave them proper time and guidance for training nor they motivated them.

### 8.1.3. Antecedents to Trust Development

The growing interest in the study of trust has spurred the focus of researchers towards the investigation of trust building especially in a cross-cultural working environment and this research is an extension to existing work on interpersonal trust development. Trust building involves dyadic interactions over a period of time. With the help of qualitative interviews, it was attempted to study the antecedents to dyadic trust development in a cross-cultural working environment in the medical services department of Pakistan. The outcome of this research has found antecedents to trust development from both types of trust i.e., cognitive based and affect based trust (McAllister, 1995). However, like the findings of other studies being conducted in Asian context (e.g., Ng and Chua, 2006; Wasti et al, 2007, Wasti et al, 2010, Tan & Chee 2005; Chen, & Meindl's, 1998), this research too, has found affect based trust antecedents being much stronger and more frequent in terms of number of themes generated and the frequency of responses of the respondents being shared in interviews in this research. Based on this, it can be inferred that the psychological state of trust development is context driven and cannot be generalized across different contexts and cultures. This is also found that the building of trust does not merely depend on a general set of particular attributes as proposed in mainstream western literature on trust development (e.g. Butler, 1991; Mayer et al., 1995). In practical terms, organizational members in an Eastern context may place an especial emphasis on the affective conditions in trust building. For example, it was found that the feelings of same community orientation, care and concern, openness, sincerity, truthfulness, compassion, empathy and mutual help would facilitate the cultivation of trust in the work context. Based on this explanation, it is not to propose a sole dependence on affect-based factors for the building of trust, rather these affect based factors might be emphasized over cognition-based factors in the process of interpersonal trust development.

In the light of the findings of McAllister (1995) that cognitive-based trust is forerunner to the development of affective based trust, this study has found *Professionalism, Dutifulness, Job Commitment Honesty and fairness, Efficiency, Responsibility, Reliability, Professional ownership Regularity and punctuality, Dedication, Goal orientation, Performance orientation Dependability* as antecedents to trust development which come under the list of the antecedents to cognitive-based trust. This list of antecedents to cognitive based trust also includes *Education, Aptitude, Broadmindedness and Straightforwardness* etc. On the other side, antecedents to affect based trust as found in the current research, include *Cultural similarity, Commitment, Mutual Understanding, Common Values, Confidentiality, Sincerity, Candor, Loyalty, Truthfulness, Fairness, Helpfulness, Purity, Supportiveness, Cooperativeness, Compassion and feeling pain for others* etc. Moreover, although the findings of this research are generally in line with the existing studies, but still the outcome of this study offers some different findings also.

Cultural similarity has been a strong determinant of interpersonal trust in the context of this study. A number of respondents highlighted this in their responses. A number of researchers and scholars have discussed the influence of culture on the development of trust (e.g., Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006; Doney et al., 1998; Chen, Chen & Meindl, 1998; Elangovan and Shapiro, 1998; Fukuyama, 1995) and similarly a number of trust cross-cultural research studies have empirically tested the significance of cultural similarity in the development of trust (e.g., Wasti et al., 2008; Wasti et al., 2010; Ng and Chua, 2006; Tan & Chee, 2005). Culture has been Houjeir, R., & Brennan, R. (2017, p.506) in their Gulf-based cross-cultural study between Arabs and Non-Arabs evidenced culture as a strong antecedent to interpersonal trust. As they note “Emiratis and non-Emiratis have very different perceptions of the antecedents of trust in banker-client relationships. The antecedents have different salience for Emiratis and non-

Emiratis. One of the strongest factors is culture, which has been forged through centuries of desert survival into social culture, tradition and lifestyle. This is characterized by patriotism, a strong love of the nation, sheikdom and the ruling tribes” (p.506). They further argue that “Emirati bankers deal with other Emiratis on the basis of trust as a means of demonstrating mutual support for both the individual and the society: patriotism is one of the antecedents of this trust relationship, tribal traditions form another. Trust is contextually determined by the high-context culture in which Emiratis have, historically, come to trust only other Emiratis. They predict the behavior of others not by experience but in the belief that they will follow the same rules and values that they follow themselves. A non-Emirati banker or client finds it difficult to establish trust with an Emirati counterpart. Emiratis therefore have a very different perception of relationships, affective approaches and behaviours, temporality, risk aversion and trust-building behaviours, to name but a few variables, when compared to their non-Emirati business counterparts. Emirati perceptions are so bounded by these variables that they may find it difficult and uncomfortable to try to understand or modify their perceptions to accommodate non-Emirati or western business practices. In developing banker-client relationships, it is therefore expected that non-Emiratis will adapt to Emirati cultural practices” (Houjeir, & Brennan, 2017, p.506). They observed “Wasta” prior reference or relationship as a very strong factor of interpersonal trust among Arabs like Gaunchi has been identified as a strong factor with similar meaning in Chinese culture. Dilmaghani (2017), in his Canadian study found culture and ethnicity as a strong predictor of interpersonal trust development.

Professionalism has been one of the strong antecedents to interpersonal trust development in the context of this research. This is interesting to note that professionalism comes under one of the basis of cognitive trust (McAllister, 1995). Past research includes competence (Butler,

1991; Cook & Wall, 1980), Reliability, Consistency and Integrity (Whitener et al., 1998) and Responsibility (Whitener et al. 1998), Reliability and Dependability (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982; Rempel et al., 1985) as central measures of trust in organizational settings. According to Zucker (1986), expectations of reliability and dependability must usually be met for the development of trust-based relationship and lacking of the same provides a rational basis for withholding trust (Luhmann, 1979; Shapiro. 1987, 1990). The role of professionalism in the field of medicine is documented by Adams et al. (1998) especially in emergency situations. As educational institutions, professional organizations and credentialing agencies generate trust by providing guarantees to individuals through certification that the 'would-be-trustees' meet standards for professional acceptability in a larger professional community (Zucker, 1986); same applies to medical field. While talking about professionalism, the respondents of the current study mentioned the terms like *sense of duty, dependability, reliability, responsibility, regularity, punctuality, efficient working and cooperative attitude towards performing organizational duties etc.* Therefore, it is not unlikely that professional individuals like doctors and nurses who highly depend on each other while performing their duties, might get impressed by professional working of their colleagues and as a result of that they may consider professionalism as a very significant and crucial factor for the development of mutual trust. This is also endorsed by McAllister (1995), who argues that "in professional or organizational working environment which involves high level of interdependence, peer performance leaves a drastic impact on individuals' performance, and the evidence that peers perform role responsibilities reliably will enhance fellow workers' perception towards their colleagues' trustworthiness". (McAllister, 1995). Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) have empirically found professionalism as a strong predictor for interpersonal trust development in educational sector and Brown et al. (2015) have identified have found the same in their healthcare-based study based on the values and behaviours of nurses towards doctors.

Although religiosity has not been frequently discussed as an antecedent to trust development, this research has found the same as a strong antecedent to trust development. According to Begue (2002), trust and religiosity has a positive association and religiosity can be predictor of trustworthiness. In an experimental study by Tan and Vogel (2008), it is empirically tested that religious people tend to be more trustworthy and they also generally trust others more and this level of trust increase when religious trustors trust religious trustees. In another study conducted by Tarn et al. (2005) among Japanese and Japanese Americans; religiosity, acculturation and autonomy preference, were strongly related to trust in one's physician; also, this study found lower level of trusting being reported by non-religious respondents. In a Cross-cultural study conducted on Chinese, Malaysian and UK students conducted by Chuah, Gächter and Hoffmann (2016) found trust religion as a significant factor of interpersonal factor of trust development, whereas Dilmaghani (2017), in his Canadian study could not find religiosity as a strong predictor of interpersonal trust however language and ethnicity was evidenced as a much stronger factor for interpersonal trust.

According to Tang and Vogel (2008), trustworthiness increases with religiosity and a possible justification for this is that spirituality has been linked with a sense of justice, especially amongst the youngsters (Engebretson, 2002; Chile & Simpson, 2004) and it has a positive correlation with rejection of negative side of reciprocity in interpersonal relationship (Tan, 2006). Based on this, Tan and Vogel (2008), suggest that religion, by disseminating moral values (through social learning) can serve a practical role in society. However, this is notable that many respondents in the current study reported that they trusted religious colleagues, but, not being religious *as per se*, rather religious in real sense; which means speaking truth, being honest and thinking and doing good for the society. This finding of the current research is in line with the view of Fehr et al., (2002) and Tan and Vogel (2008) that only relating to some



religion like being Catholic or Protestant is not a guarantee of being trustworthy; rather it is the extent of religiosity (not merely appearance, but, by truly practicing religion) that makes a person trustworthy. Another important dimension of the impact of religiosity on trust building is that religious people mostly trust those who are religious which means that being a religious trustor and then trusting a religious trustee is very likely. Moreover, the extent of trustworthiness goes higher and higher when it applies to analysing the status of mutual trustworthiness of the people belonging to the similar faction of a religion. For example, in Islam, there are two commonly known major religious factions: *Shia* and *Sunni* and in the context of this research, many *Shia* respondents reported that they trusted those colleagues of theirs who were *Shia* and in the same way other religious group fellows showed the similar trends. This outcome of the current study supports the findings of Tan and Vogel (2008) that the members of the same religious cult seemed to have a strong sense of belongingness towards the members of their religious faction.

In the discussion of commitment, many respondents have associated the concepts of being bold and courageous to fight the status quo, which again has not been found among the existing research studies on antecedents to trust development. In the study of Tan and Chee (2005), respondents maintained that a trusted fellow was not one who merely fulfilled the promise but was one who showed a strong determination in honouring his or her words. In this context, a trusted fellow is expected to commit his or her words even in adverse conditions (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). The construct of commitment has gone beyond the normal expected/underlying dimensions of fulfilment such as *meeting expectations, fulfilment of promise or obligation or being reliable while standing alongside the trustor in difficult times*, in the context of current study. Some respondents mentioned that *'they trusted those individuals who were bold and courageous and the ones who had the passion to show*

*commitment with regard to fighting the status quo, within the organizations as well as outside the organizations'* i.e., in the society which means fighting the bad things within the organizations and society. This dimension of commitment has been a new addition towards the antecedents to trust development, since it has not been found in the available literature on antecedents to trust development. Comparative analysis of US and Latin Americans (Barra, Pressgrove & Torres, 2018) focused on donors trust towards charity organizations found positive relationship of trust and commitment. As they posit, "Significant to future work exploring the formation of loyalty, the cross-national data collected here demonstrate not only that trust and commitment are significant in loyalty's formation, but also that the path to behavioral loyalty is mediated by cognitive and affective loyalty" (p.371).

Existing research has signified the role of *confidentiality* (keeping secrets) for the development of trust and related exchange processes (Bailey & Pearson 1983; Hunt, Chonko, & Wilcox 1984). For instance, the perceived confidentiality of the disclosures enhances individuals' level of counsellors' credibility (Corcoran 1988), enhances the likelihood to engage in social support group settings (Posey 1988), and tends to be a critical element of social interaction and trust amongst community members (Aguilar 1984). Tan and Chee (2005), in a research conducted in a Confucian society (Singapore) have found confidentiality as an antecedent to individual trust development. Confidentiality not only relates to *keeping secrets*, but it also includes *openness*, which refers to informing someone about the most personal things like family related things (Tan & Chee, 2005).

Friendly relationship and *mutual understanding* develop emotional ties leading towards affective foundations for dyadic trust. General feeling among the respondents of this research

is that interpersonal trust in a professional working environment is nurtured through personal interaction or friendship, a precondition that is fundamental to establish mutual trust. The participants further shared that the primary development of trust depends upon the formation of mutual understanding of ideas, interests and activities. As much as the working relationship permeates through shared insights and experiences, trust develops within the working parties (Tan & Chee, 2005). People generally like those who tend to have understanding with them and build up trust based on their understanding with others. According to McAllister (1995), mutual understanding tends to be a big factor of affect based trust and usually, trust built on affect tends to be stronger and unshakeable over time, across favourable or unfavourable situations and even after small misunderstandings and trust abuses (McAllister, 1995; Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). In a study conducted by Wasti et al. (2010) in Turkey and China ‘Common Values’ was one of the antecedents to interpersonal trust found both in China and Turkey. Common values denote interests, lifestyles and activities that are shared by two parties involved in trust building process. Gillespie and Mann (2004) have highlighted common values as one of the strongest antecedents to overall trust in a team leader. Social capital and social trust cultivates through various attributes, which have been collected into three facets: structural, relational, and cognitive. The *structural* dimension (Granovetter, 1992) refers to social and network relations among the actors including who and how can be reached and network pattern, connectivity, density and hierarchy (Tichy et al., 1979). The *relational* dimension involves the level of trust between the two parties, norms, obligations, identification and awareness of actors toward their collective ideas and goals. The *cognitive* dimension describes level of understanding between the actors (Chow, et al., 2008).

Lai, Singh, Alshwer and Shaffer (2014) found social exchange as a strong predictor of interpersonal trust development in cross-cultural setting as they note, “In the development of cognitive trust, co-located employees, who enjoy closer and more visible connections, can

more accurately assess the trustworthiness of their fellow employees. Based on frequent interactions, co-located employees are able to seek validation of trustworthiness before deciding to put their trust in fellow colleagues. Reciprocal support also provides a reliable mechanism through which both co-located and cross-border employees can validate trustworthiness before putting their cognitive trust in their colleagues. Therefore, in support of social exchange theory, we found that among cross-border and co-located employees, social exchange variables are highly instrumental in generating interpersonal trust. These findings further strengthen the claims of SET in both co-located and cross-border settings. According to SET, healthy social exchange knows no boundaries, and as long as employees have healthy exchange relationships with their fellow colleagues, care for each other, exchange resources and favors, trust gets established, irrespective of geographical location” (p.322).

Sincerity has been a strong factor of interpersonal trust development in the findings of this research. Taormina and Sun (2015) have found co-worker support and a feeling of sincerity as a significant factor of developing interpersonal trust. As they note, “In the other hand, Interpersonal Trust was positively correlated with and a significant predictor of Coworker Support. Indeed, one should at least be able to trust that one’s colleagues or teammates will complete their assigned tasks. Thus, when people trust their coworkers those coworkers are more likely to reciprocate, and work teams are more likely to succeed” (p. 184). Lai et al (2014) have also found sincerity as a significant factor for the development of trust. Caza, Zhang, Wang and Bai (2015) also found leader sincerity towards the subordinates being positively correlated with trust. Hoogervorst et al (2016) evidenced altruism as a significant determinant of interpersonal trust.

#### 8.1.4. Influence of Culture on KS

On the influence of culture on KS, this research corroborates the views of the experts that effective sharing and transfer of knowledge among the employees of any organization, is not free from challenges (Holden, 2002; Edwards & Kidd, 2003), keeping in view the sticky nature of knowledge, which means that knowledge tends to reside in the human mind (Von Hippel 1994). Bhagat et al. (2002) and Simonin (1999) endorse this when they emphasize that dissimilarities between social environment and the mind-set of employees in the organizations may influence employees' capability to acquire new knowledge, which can create extra challenges for the diffusion and sharing of knowledge. The findings of this study have strongly supported the idea of cultural differences being detrimental towards sharing of knowledge. Results of the latest work on the adverse impact of surface-level dissimilarity within traditional project teams could be used as reference to help understand as to why hybrid or imbalanced team-structures are so disadvantageous to teams (Staples and Webster, 2008). Briefly, surface-level diversity within teams has been evidenced to result in process losses that can decrease the performance and satisfaction level of the workers (Lau & Murnighan, 1998; Hambrick et al., 1998). These process-oriented losses include communication difficulties, misunderstandings, decreased interconnection and increased clashes among organizational members. Theories of "Social identity" (Turner, 1987), "Social categorization" (Hogg, 2006) and the similarity/attraction paradigm (Graves and Powell, 1995) recommend that the surface-level diversity related negative effects emerge due to in-groups and outgroups phenomenon (Carte & Chidambaram, 2004; Salk & Brannen, 2000). People intentionally or unintentionally, categorize themselves within subgroups in the light of certain common identity-based characteristics and tend to feel naturally much closer with those individuals who belong to their group. Consciously or unconsciously people do this to attain and maintain their positive self-

identity. As the degree of variation between in-group out-group increases, people start being biased against other groups (Staples and Webster, 2008).

Based on the recommendation of (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003), who have conducted a rigorous review of the methodological aspects of the cross-cultural studies, the researcher has studied cultural analysis of the sub-cultures within a single country, i.e. Pakistan, which is a very diversified country consisting of multiple culturally heterogeneous ethnicities. According to (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003), many researchers while conducting cross-cultural studies, make a fundamental mistake by considering a country as a separate unit for analysis, ignoring the within country sub-cultural differences based on ethnicity, language or religion. The application of research title on the sub-cultures of Pakistan is a distinctive contribution of this research. By taking this initiative, the researcher has reinforced and invited the researchers to consider sub-cultural differences being critical while conducting a cross-cultural study in an ethnically heterogeneous country like Pakistan. The details of the cultural diversity of Pakistan are discussed in second chapter of this dissertation. Although country could be a convenient and suitable indicator of measuring culture, adopting it as the sole basis for operationalization for cultural analysis carries certain limitations. The two constructs may be incompatible with one another due to multiple reasons, such as political boundaries, political differences and presence of multiple subcultures within a single country (Peterson & Smith, 1997). In certain research contexts, some specific intra-country differences might be greater than inter-country differences (Samiee & Jeong, 1994). Japan and Korea for example, tend to have similar cultures, but, many other nation states like Switzerland or India might have more distinct subcultures within their borders (Peterson & Smith, 1997). Ryan et al. (1999) confronted this problem when they studied 20 different countries' HR selection practices: "A concern is that the use of nation as a basis for examining cultural differences can be criticized as not attending

to subcultural differences” (p.388). The inferences of this possible incongruence between a country and its culture are notable and using country as an operationalization base for cross-cultural could be risky.

Based on above facts, Schaffer & Riordan (2003) argue that “the researcher must be aware of the potential difficulties involved in using country as a proxy for culture or as a proxy for Hofstede’s values. If the cross-cultural samples in the study come from countries with relatively homogeneous populations, then this issue might not be as pressing. On the other hand, when the countries have heterogeneous populations, researchers need to be aware of other cultural determinants and must recognize the within-country differences may be inconsistent with pre-established national categorizations” (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003, p.181). They further argue, “To ensure the integrity of their cross-cultural research, researchers should pay attention to whether their treatment of culture is appropriate. We discuss here two related best practices. First, researchers should minimize the use of country as a proxy for culture. The specific constructs or variables in a study should be carefully examined to assess the appropriateness of using other delimiters of culture (besides country). For example, in using samples from both Australia and Sri Lanka, Niles (1999) recognized that both settings were multicultural societies and that ethnicity could be a confounding factor. As such, the samples were drawn not on the basis of national boundaries alone but also on the basis of ethnic groups within each country (see also Lenartowicz & Roth, 2001)”. Peterson and Smith (1997) have suggested a comprehensive list of cultural bases, other than a country, that can guide researchers to conduct cross-cultural research. These factors according to them comprise language, climate, proximity and geography, ethnicity, religion, political boundaries, economic prosperity and technological advancement etc. For instance, variation based on language, splits cultural groups since it provides ease of communication among individuals through common

symbols, meanings and interpretations (Peterson & Smith, 1997). Religion according to (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003) can also be a base of cultural dissimilarity among the groups of people within a single country due to unique religious customs and traditions.

The findings of this research justify the recommendation of (Peterson and Smith 1997; Lenartowicz & Roth, 2001; Schaffer & Riordan, 2003) to conduct cross-cultural study in a single culturally diversified country. A vast number of participants of the current study despite belonging to a single country have identified cultural differences as a big hurdle in the way of smooth sharing of knowledge. The findings of this research have identified multiple problems, issues, complications in the process of KS among the organizational members belonging to various ethnicities of Pakistan. Majority of the participants labelled the difference of language as an impeding factor in the process of KS (Siakas et al., 2010). These results of the current research seem to be consistent with the view of Wasco and Faraj (2005), Voelpel and Han (2005) and Li (2010) that engagement in a meaningful conversation requires at least some level of common understanding between the two parties, such as a common language and vocabulary (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Orr (1996) also argues that language offers the means through which people communicate. It conveys a frame of reference to interpret the environment and its mastery is typically indicated by an individual's level of expertise. Individuals need to understand the environment in which their knowledge is relevant and meaningful (Orr 1996). The study of Li (2010) on a comparative analysis of Chinese and American's trends towards KS reported a negative outcome of the lack of a common language on KS, which is aligned with the empirical findings of the study of Peltokorpi, (2006) and the current study. The participants repeatedly shared their views that the difference of language not only hampers KS, but, it also destroys the overall process of sharing of knowledge, since some people make fun of others based on lingual differences and biases. As the Chinese Participants in the study of



Voelpel and Han (2005) reported in their interviews that many Chinese avoid sharing knowledge in English with their foreign colleagues for 'face saving' the researcher observed the same trend in the current research. Kim (2018) evidenced geographic diversity being negatively associated with KS and took cultural diversity as an implied factor of geographic diversity as she comments, "Therefore, physical barriers and national diversity may have jointly influenced knowledge-sharing outcomes. Although the current study did not delve into whether members perceived cultural differences as a significant obstacle for knowledge exchange, potential effects of national diversity should be taken into account. Cultural diversity leads to process losses through task conflict and decreased social integration (Stahl et al., 2010), which may bring about more adverse influences in the context of organizational restructuring" (p.22). She further notes, "When members are required to handle ongoing changes that significantly affect their task, knowledge sharing with intimate ties can be more efficient, whereas communicating with weak ties may increase complexity and ambiguity. Moreover, closer relationships are likely to already have a shared language that is a fundamental condition for effective knowledge exchange (R. A. Weber & Camerer, 2003)" (Kim, 2018, p.21).

Many respondents in this study belonging to remote and rural areas of Pakistan reported that only due to cultural and language issues they felt reluctant to share their knowledge or even communicate; except when it seemed inevitable to perform their duties. Not only from the point of view of KS, but also from the point of view of trust development (being an important objective of this study), sub cultural similarity has been one of the most critical antecedents to trust development. As many respondents reported that, they built their trust on no any factor other than the ethnic or language similarity.

An important cultural facet that could negatively affect KS behaviour is the strong in group and out-group variation among members of an organization. In Pakistani culture as Triandis (1989) mentions, “relationships tend to be very supportive and intimate within [in] group and there is little trust and often hostility toward out-group members” (Triandis, 1989, p.516). Consequently, individuals are more willing to share knowledge with their in-group members. Cross-cultural literature on KS maintains that members belonging to collectivist societies like Pakistanis, tend to be willing and enthusiastic to share the knowledge with colleagues of their in-group (Chow et al., 2000; Wilkesmann et al., 2009; Ardichvili, et al., 2003; Voelpel and Han, 2005), being strongly distrustful of out-group members. As literature suggests, this research clearly identified in-group and out-group differences and biases in KS among the participants belonging to various ethnic groups by preferring their own people for KS and hiding important knowledge from out-group members based on ethnic biases and language differences. This leads to an important managerial implication that a strong trust based organizational culture and strict cross-divisional interaction need to be adopted in order to overcome the tendency of in-group and overlooking other individuals or departments as outgroups to change KS behaviours and foster KS (Voelpel and Han, 2005). This is consistent with the finding of Politis (2003), who recommends that the dimension of “faith” in interpersonal trust among colleagues in general, tends to be a significant factor for acquisition and sharing of knowledge.

Another notable effect of cross-cultural variances on knowledge sharing in the current study was linked with respect to the flow of knowledge via formal and informal communication networks. A considerable amount of dissimilarity between knowledge flows across cultural groups was reported by the respondents. The main observed difference and as reported by many respondents, was that knowledge between culturally heterogeneous groups seemed to flow

through formal channels, and was only profession related. In other words, since both doctors and nurses needed and depended on cross-cultural flows of knowledge to perform their jobs, formal knowledge flows were developed to fulfil this requirement. However, cultural biases were much more visible while sharing knowledge in informal settings. This was observed where the knowledge sharing was more consistent with cultural norms and mind-set. Thus, the bulk of knowledge sharing across cultural groups seemed to be formal, whereas it was found informal within culturally similar groups. Some respondents in this study reported that their colleagues belonging to other cultural groups used hidden codes while sharing the knowledge and while sharing official or work related knowledge. They reported that their colleagues talked in common language of communication like Urdu or English and when some informal or specified information was to be shared, they either stopped communication or started talking in their local languages so that others might not be able to understand. These findings concur with the findings of Ford and Chan (2003) in which they found similar trends regarding flow of knowledge within homogeneous and heterogeneous cultural groups while comparing the KS behaviors of Japanese and North Americans.

The capacity of an organization to acquire knowledge is directly linked to its processes of monitoring, collecting and applying that knowledge to existing knowledge base. The findings of this research suggest that such absorptive capacity (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990) can't escape the influence of cultural restraints (Kedia & Bhagat, 1988). Knowledge absorption capacity of an organization towards knowledge is eased when the actors involved in knowledge sharing may show devotion to understand and develop mechanism for transforming knowledge into action. It is argued that if the knowledge contents are consistent with the prevailing cultural pattern, then knowledge transfer can be effective and if the cultural patterns are dissimilar then the knowledge transfer becomes problematic (Bhagat, et al., 2002).

### 8.1.5. Organizational Antecedents to KS

One of the main objectives of this study is to analyse the individual and organizational factors that are critical for effective KS in the medical profession. Prior research on antecedents to KS has been conducted in fragmented manner by mixing individual antecedents to KS with organizational or contextual factors (Liu & Phillips, 2011). As discussed in the literature, some of the organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing can relate to the characteristics and underlying aspects of the knowledge being shared (Birkinshaw et al., 2002; Zander & Kogut, 1995), for example, the specificity and complexity of the underlying knowledge to be transferred (Reed and DeFilippi, 1990). Others relate to specific organizational characteristics such as the age and size of the organization (e.g. Dhanaraj et al., 2004; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000), decentralization (Damanpour, 1991) and the absorptive capacity of the firm (Lane et al., 2001; Mowery et al., 1996). Still others relate to the social relations and networks of organizations (Wijk et al., 2008), such as social ties, trusting relationships and value systems (e.g. Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). This research is an effort to separately study, analyse and discuss the individual and organizational antecedents to KS. Taken together, the findings of the current investigation seem to be consistent with prior research on certain organizational antecedents to KS including; cultural similarity, organizational culture, reciprocity, time allocation, empowerment, motivation, organizational rewards and managerial support. Some antecedents found in the current research are not frequently found or discussed in the existing literature on KS; e.g., organizational justice and organizational resources.

Organizational culture has a strong dimension of learning orientation in the context of the current study. In fact, in the discussion of organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing, perhaps no any other factor is more influential than organizational culture (e.g., Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Oliver & Kandadi, 2006) since it determines beliefs, values, attitudes and work

systems that can encourage or impede the process of organizational learning or knowledge sharing (Kettinger & Grover, 1995; Schein, 1985). The overarching impact of organizational culture can be analysed from this note of Wei and Mraglia (1971. p. 582) “Furthermore, our empirical evidence suggests that organizational culture can play a far-reaching role in determining not only (1) which knowledge can be transferred, but also (2) the conditions under which either sharing or hoarding are to be preferred, and (3) the extent to which it is acceptable to share or hoard one's knowledge”.

The participants in the study have discussed various aspects of organizational culture and highly emphasized upon organizational cultural change while sharing their views on organizational KS. Alvesson (2002) emphasizes upon cultural change and the need of KS as part of that change and links organizational culture with ideas, beliefs and values of organizational members. Myers (1996) notes that “if knowledge is to provide a company with sustainable competitive advantage, such knowledge must be independent from any given individual and must have been captured by an organization’s systems, processes, products, rules and culture.” In fact, that process emerges through KS. Some researchers believe organizational culture is important for knowledge sharing (Bock et al., 2005; Chow et al., 2000) while others have placed it as an unconditional requirement, “organizational culture is crucial for facilitating knowledge sharing” (Wang, 2004).

Moreover, “managers should help employees identify ambitions and vision and increase their mutual interaction and trust at work. When employees pursue collective goals and missions, relational capital and structural capital also accumulate, thus increasing the effectiveness of exploitative learning” (Liu, 2018, p.268). Organizational learning is also very important for the effective and fruitful sharing of knowledge within organizations. Firms need to create a

learning environment. “it is important to design HRM policy combinations that are not only helpful for accumulating internal and external social capital but that also promote inter- and intra-organizational learning. Efforts on the part of top managers and HR personnel to develop these learning environments will enhance organization members' feelings of belonging, trust, and participation” (Liu, 2018, p.268). Managers need to facilitate and ensure learning of employees within organizations. According to Liu, (2018) organizational learning needs constant support from management and HR managers and an appropriate mechanism for KS. For instance, management can provide possibilities of indirect learning for workers through discussion forums, informal gatherings and parties to elevate the level of mutual friendship and interpersonal trust among organizational members to exchange new ideas and foster self-directed learning to cultivate a pleasant environment to ensure the effective knowledge sharing among organizational members. Chang et al. (2017) have also evidenced the organizational learning being directly linked with effective organizational KS.

An important aspect in comprehending the influence of organizational culture on the individuals is that there are possibilities of negative attitude of some individuals towards KS (Truch, 2001). According to researchers, a very visible barrier in the way of effective KS is the basic fear and insecurity among the organizational members that they may lose their worth by transferring their knowledge to others, since knowledge tends to be the source of power, influence and guarantee of their jobs. Keeping in view these issues, organizations need to create conducive environment backed by persuasion, motivation and incentives to encourage the individuals to share their knowledge. Constant et al., 1994; Huber, 2001 and Bock et al., 2005). An organizational culture of learning and knowledge sharing can address and manage the negative attitudes and behaviours of employees towards KS. The participants of this study have highlighted learning orientation. According to Matzler and Mueller (2011), learning orientation

and performance orientation tend to draw a momentous impact on behaviour. Existing research has established a significant positive relationship between KS behaviour and learning orientation. On the opposing side, there is a significant negative relationship between KS and performance orientation (Matzler & Mueller, 2011). Moreover, performance orientation can lead to behaviours including outperforming others (Button et al., 1996) and withholding the knowledge (Matzler & Mueller, 2011). An important dimension of organizational culture as mentioned by the participants of this study relates to the issue of work stress. A number of respondents especially junior doctors in the interviews complained against a high degree of stress (because of excessive and lengthy work duties and less support from management and peers) and emphasized upon creation of stress free environment. The existing research does not provide any empirical evidence of the positive or negative relationship of the employees work stress and employee KS behaviours. However, Noe and Wilk (1993) established a positive relationship between social support from peers and managers and in carrying out organizational duties in terms of the amount of work, type of work and efforts needed in completing the work.

According to the findings of this study, employee empowerment is an important organizational factor for facilitating KS. These findings are consistent with (Lin & Joe, 2012; Ryan et al., 2010; Lee & Choi, 2003; Carebra et al., 2006). Lin and Joe (2012), in their study, have found a positive relationship between employee empowerment and KS. They argue that satisfaction of individuals' sense of autonomy and control is critical for their inclination towards KS. Management needs to understand how to empower their employees by delegating them authority and giving proper control of their work and resources (Lin and Joe, 2012). Ryan et al. (2010) argue that when knowledge workers are not delegated with decision-making authority, they become less likely to share their knowledge with others. Carebra et al. (2006)

have found a positive relationship between employee empowerment and KS. While emphasizing on empowerment, they argue “it is a two-way communication between the employee and the organization – informing employees but also listening to them and even encouraging them to speak – positively contributes to employee self-efficacy (Parker, 1998). This kind of practice may also be instrumental in order to create the type of supportive environment that, according to our data, is so important to foster knowledge sharing” (Carebra et al., 2006, p.260). Srivastava and Bartol (2006) emphasize that an empowering leadership is a significant facilitator of KS since empowering leadership tends to have a direct impact on employee performance and the presence of empowering leadership leads to better team efficacy and KS, both of which are essential for effective team performance. Hence, they urge organizations to emphasize on selection and development of organizational leadership so that empowering behaviours may be prominent within organizations (Srivastava & Bartol, 2006). Since knowledge sharing cannot occur without certain costs at the front of the sharer, therefore individuals’ personal beliefs that expected benefits of sharing knowledge would outweigh the associated costs can likely be a critical antecedent to KS behaviours. Because, KS not only require time and effort (Gibbert & Krause 2002), but in organizational settings, it can result in traditional “public good dilemma” (Marwell & Oliver 1993; Barry & Hardin 1982); which means that a knowledge asset donated by an individual for the betterment of an organization can be accessed by other members of the same organization, whether or not they make a contribution in return (Dawes 1980). This dilemma tends to intensify when donor’s knowledge, expertise and personal standing is highly signified in a firm; but his or her mentoring is not given importance (Leonard & Sensiper 1998). By sharing the knowledge, not only an individual chooses to lose his or her exclusive value within his colleagues, but any shared



knowledge that is justly or unjustly judged to be sound or unsound; relevant or irrelevant might damage his or her position. Resultantly, a lack of adequate motivation through some intrinsic or extrinsic compensation to reward the organizational members against the possible losses of sharing their knowledge becomes one of the most obvious barriers to KS (Constant et al., 1994, 1996; Huber, 2001). Dasi et al (2017) also recognize the importance of this matter and argue that empowerment is essentially needed for encouraging the individuals to share their knowledge. They also suggest a remedy by arguing, “We observe that reduction in the individual’s sense of control introduced by organizational boundaries can be compensated for by the deployment of extrinsic rewards, by ensuring that there is a perception of result-oriented organizational values and by initiating corporate employee development programs. By moving the locus of control from the individual to the organization, such interventions enhance the psychological security for sharing knowledge” (p. 442).

Employee motivation has also been an important factor to encourage the employees for KS. While recognizing the importance of motivation for KS, Kim and Park (2017) for instance note, “Specifically, Human Resources (HR) practitioners should consider either creating or modifying HR-related policies (e.g., creative culture, incentives for innovative work behaviour) to link employee innovative behaviour (i.e., human performance) to economic performance to create sustainable organizations. For instance, if employees have innovative and realistic ideas and high degree of enthusiasm for developing them into real services and

products, organizations could consider providing employees with substantive opportunities so as to improve organizational performance levels (e.g., new patents and business projects)” (p.12). They further argue, “Given that the human dimension entails the processes of generating social health and improving employee well-being (i.e., employee engagement at work) within an organizational context, the current study attempts to investigate employee work engagement as a key component of the human dimension and its relationship with three organizational variables (i.e., organizational procedural justice, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behavior), which are assumed to be relevant both conceptually and empirically to work engagement and the human dimension of organizational sustainability. The results of the study show that all of the direct and indirect effects that exist among work engagement, organizational procedural justice, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behavior are statistically significant” (Kim and Park 2017, p.11).

The application of organizational rewards to improve KS is extensively argued in the existing literature. Some researchers indicate it being productive (e.g., Holton et al., 1997) and others suggest it negatively effects KS (Pfeffer and Langton, 1993; Bock et al., 2005). Davenport and Prusak (1998) propose that KS can be improved through incentives like goal setting, performance assessments, feedback and monetary rewards etc. However, there is cost to be incurred on monitoring performance, rewarding or punishing behaviour through organizational measures. That is why, many researchers have emphasized on the factor of trust for KS, instead of organizational rewards. Higher degree of trust is linked with reduced controls, and result in lower transaction costs for the organizations (Lau and Lee, 1999; and De Wulf and Odekerken-Schroder, 2003). Nooteboom (2000), an eminent writer on trust, risk and opportunistic attitude,

builds linkages between individuals' knowledge and the reasons for exchanging that knowledge. He argued that the economic argument of material incentive was inconclusive to analyse interactions among individuals, groups or organizations. He emphasized that the "shared norms and trust-based dealings" were desirable to structural preferences (McNeish & Mann, 2010).

Wu, et al. (2011) also could not find the positive relationship of external rewards and KS. Their findings support earlier findings of other studies that revealed that extrinsic rewards have no relationship with KS within organizations (Dixon, 2000; Lin, 2007). This is notable that the respondents in the current study, very frequently linked organizational rewards with KS; however, most of the existing studies have not found a positive relationship of organizational rewards and KS (Pfeffer & Langton, 1993; Bock et al., 2005). On the other side, there is a huge emphasis of respondents of this study on the intrinsic motivational factors like religiosity, sense of self-worth, sense of recognition; organizational commitment and a passion to help colleagues etc. for KS and these results are consistent also with the existing research findings (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; McNeish & Mann, 2010; Nooteboom, 2000). This means that KS is basically an intrinsically driven phenomenon. It includes a person's attitude and intention towards sharing knowledge, personal willingness, self-efficacy, religiosity as found in this research. This means that if organizations want to improve KS, they need to address intrinsic factors more seriously as compared to organizational or extrinsic factors. Zhang et al. (2017) in also in their health-sector based study recognize the worth for intrinsic incentives, "intrinsic motivation has a stronger influence on the knowledge sharing intention of health professionals than of normal users. Health professionals often have confidence in their ability to help others and thus contribute their knowledge to health Q&A communities voluntarily and altruistically. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation has a stronger influence on the knowledge sharing intention

of normal users than of health professionals. Normal users are more eager to gain external returns by sharing their knowledge with others” (p.557).

Although organizational justice has not been frequently linked with KS, but in the current study, it has emerged as one of the strong antecedent to KS. The extant literature links fairness with KS. According to Bock et. al. (2005), fair treatment, which echoes the perception that organizational policies and practices are just and neither discriminatory nor whimsical, both builds trust among organizational members and serves to mitigate the public good dilemma generally associated with KS. Fairness, therefore, can be projected to encourage organizational members to go out of the way to share knowledge with their colleagues (Kim and Mauborgne 1997). Flood and his colleagues argue that the “perceived fairness of an organization’s reward and recognition practices plays a very critical role in encouraging employees to part with the value-creating knowledge” (Flood et al., 2001, p. 1155). Moreover, organizational justice is directly linked with creating interpersonal trust in organizational set up (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002; Frazier et al., 2010) and in the current study, a strong relationship of trust and KS (e.g. Andrews & Delahay 2000, Penley & Hawkins 1985) has been proved. In a Korean-based study, Kim & Park (2017) have found positive relationship between organizational justice and KS. As they note “organizational procedural justice has a stronger impact on work engagement and secondly, because the direct and indirect effects of work engagement on knowledge sharing and innovative work behaviour are stronger than those of the other variables examined” (p.12). Cui et al (2018) also emphasized that (p. 399) where organizational culture is branded by higher ethical values and standards, organizational members tend to develop a greater level of social trust and that translates into improved extent of KS within the firms.

In the current study, a number of respondents complained against the unjust and biased organizational practices, with respect to hiring, firing, assigning of organizational duties and even in the process of KS, by preferring own people, etc. and linked these unjust practices with KS. The participants of the study emphatically talked about creating culture of merit and transparency arguing as to which kind of knowledge could be shared by the employees who were appointed on the basis of political influence. According to Lin and Joe:

*“The significant relationship between work skills and flow experience reveals that selection of organizational employees should be done with caution. An organization recruiting employees who have insufficient work skills for example, inter-organizational communication, resource-seeking, and dispute-solving, can ultimately ruin its own operation and activities. Even if the correct people are hired by an organization, they may still become unqualified later, due to insufficient training and mentoring. Management should help strengthen members’ skills periodically according to individuals’ needs, and thus flow experience can be well maintained or increased to a substantial level” (Lin & Joe, 2012, p.447).*

This study has found a positive relationship between managerial support and KS and the results are consistent with the findings of Lu et al. (2006) and Zboralski (2009), who have found a positive relationship between managerial support and KS. In their view, the positive effects of perceived organizational support in terms of managers’ attitude, emphasis and endorsements towards KS and training tend to have drastic impact on organizational KS (Lu et al. 2006). Zboralski, (2009) argued that organizational members can be motivated for KS by an efficient and capable leadership and an appropriate managerial support that takes into consideration that the organizational members are motivated to share the knowledge, but they require an encouraging and conducive environment and culture to promote KS (Zboralski, 2009). Wu, et. al. (2012) could not find a positive link between supervisor support and KS at work. Existing research has tested the effect of peer and supervisory support on creativity. Amabile, et. al. (1996) examined the effects of managerial and work group support and found that in both cases, higher levels of creativity and better performance were directly correlated with

managerial support. Similar findings were arrived at in research studies on voluntary learning and development projects (Leibowitz, et. al., 1983) and it was found that these activities positively influenced employees' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and behavioural patterns (Leibowitz et. al., 1983).

Organisational support in the context of knowledge sharing includes participants' beliefs relating to the extent that the management promotes a *conducive environment* for knowledge sharing, and *provides leadership for knowledge sharing* (King & Marks, 2008; Uday et al., 2006) and the view of the organisational members that management values knowledge sharing and facilitates knowledge transfer among employees (Witherspoon et al., 2013). Han (2018) suggest, "The feeling that the individuals belong to a company and are valuable members of a working team eventually leads to tacit knowledge sharing among the individuals. Developing an identity is a key and unique factor to motivate individuals to share their tacit knowledge. While individuals should be encouraged to seek new sources of tacit knowledge, the knowledge-sharing practice can eventually be a reference for their performance. For example, an R&D engineer who interacts with the same interpersonal exchange relationships may provide benefits up to a point, and increasing interactions with the same exchange partners builds a positive identity of a valuable membership. Persistent efforts to foster and build a collective identity for human-interaction-based knowledge sharing constitute another assignment for HRD professionals" (p. 24).

With regard to allocation of time for KS, the findings of this research support the study of Wu, et. al. (2012) wherein time and effort needed to share the knowledge were negatively related to KS behaviours. O'Dell and Grayson (1998) labelled lack of time as a common barrier in KS,

arguing that despite being aware of the benefits of sharing knowledge, managers mostly fail to implement it due to time constraints. Time constraints can also be a significant reason of potential hoarding of knowledge (Riege, 2005) and instead of KS, organizational members may focus on those activities that they may deem more beneficial (Michailova and Husted, 2003). The results of this research also support the past research findings that found time and effort as barrier to knowledge sharing (Hew & Hara, 2007; Kankanhalli et al., 2005). These results suggest that allocating time for and prioritizing KS activities could be a mandatory step toward increasing KS at work (Wu, et. al., 2012).

With regard to organizational resources, unlike most of the existing studies, this research has identified organizational resources as one of the significant organizational antecedents to KS. This might be due to the reason that most of the existing research studies on organizational antecedents to KS are conducted in Western countries, which are financially rich, or at least better than Pakistan, the context country of the current study, which is a developing country with very low per capita income and GDP. Perhaps this is the reason that many respondents have emphasized on organizational resources being very critical to KS. Existing research studies have highlighted IT or technology being important for KS, but not overall organizational resources, being critical to KS as it has been the case with the findings of this study. Wu, et al. (2012) have found that accessibility to KS resources will be positively related to KS at work. According to them, very limited empirical evidence is available on this topic. Therefore, this finding is noteworthy for those interested in knowledge management. Ryan et al. (2010) emphasize that ensuring the availability of appropriate tools to facilitate the creation and dissemination of organizational knowledge is important. As per their findings, intranets, workgroups, extranets and knowledge repositories etc. fall into this category. They urge the organizations to carefully consider the acquisition of these tools (Ryan et al., 2010).

Veer & Rowley (2017) recognize the significance of organizational resources by arguing, “As part of this initiative, consideration should be given to investment in a dedicated KM office, interactive web portals and knowledge repositories, collaborative and multi-disciplinary and inter-institutional research projects, rewards and incentives, access to data and databases and increased collaboration with private sector” (p. 375). Lekhapiwate et al. (2018) also recognize the importance of organizational resources especially technological resources and warn the organizations that lack of technological resources can be detrimental for effective sharing of knowledge within organizations, “technological barriers have direct effects on employees’ beliefs with regard to perceived low ability, and have indirect effects through perceived lack of effort. They can cause technophobia, meaning that employees naturally resist the need to use new methods and technologies for sharing knowledge because of their unfamiliarity with these systems (Lin et al., 2012). Therefore, the establishment of information systems and communication mechanisms is the basis for the implementation of effective knowledge management. Building an easy-to-use and efficient information system will help enhance employees’ self-efficacy and drive their knowledge sharing behaviours” (p. 440).



### 8.1.6. Individual Antecedents to KS

Based on the findings of this research, trust, intention and attitude towards KS, self-efficacy, reciprocity, passion to help colleagues, religiosity and organizational commitment have been the salient individual antecedents to KS. The researcher believes that each of these factors represents a noteworthy contribution to existing body of knowledge and our overall understanding of why employees especially in medical profession, select to or not to engage in KS behaviours. In particular, following findings provide especial insights.

In the existing literature on antecedents to KS, intention and attitude towards KS (Brock, et. al., 2005) has been one of the strongest predictors to KS. In the light of the ‘Theory of Reasoned Action’ (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) an individual's choice to involve in a specified action tends to be determined by the intention to perform that particular behaviour, which in turn is determined by the combination of attitude towards that action and the subjective norms regarding (beliefs and motivation to comply with these beliefs) the behaviour (Brock, et. al., 2005). In the context of knowledge sharing, this functions as a link between intentions, attitudes and subjective norms regarding knowledge sharing and actual sharing of knowledge (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). The results of the study of Matzler et al., (2008) clearly mention that stable attributes of the individuals, i.e., openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness, impact knowledge sharing. Consistent with Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977), Lin (2007) in his study found employee attitude towards KS as a strong predictor of KS. Employees with strong KS intentions had also more positive attitudes towards KS. These findings were consistent with other studies of KS using theory of reasoned action (Brock, et. al., 2001). Based on the findings of Huang et al. (2008), loss of one’s knowledge power is a crucial factor which has a negative effect on one’s attitude towards knowledge sharing. This suggests that many

employees thinking that knowledge is power tend to be unwilling to share their experience and knowledge with others.

In the discussion of self-efficacy, sense of recognition and acknowledgement from the colleagues and sense of self-worth have been repeatedly highlighted by the respondents of this research as very strong drivers for KS. Self-efficacy refers to one's spirit, interest, ambition, determination and intrinsic motivation towards achievement of some particular goal (Bandura, 1977). In the context of knowledge sharing, self-efficacy takes into account an individual's perception of her or his knowledge about any subject and his or her ability to make useful contributions towards the existing body of knowledge about the subject or to guide someone by sharing knowledge on that subject (Lu, Leung & Koch, 2006). Getting positive feedback or appreciation from the receiver of the knowledge is an important individual antecedent to knowledge sharing, since it increases mental satisfaction.

In continuing collaborative settings, such as KS in an organization, proper feedback is a critical factor. When others reply in the manner that we have expected, we conclude that our line of action and thinking is correct and at the same time, role taking advances as the exchange continues (Kinch, 1973) based on the role-theory, which is the foundation of the 'symbolic interactionist perspective' on 'self-concept formation' (Gecas, 1982; Kinch, 1963). This process of reflection contributes towards the development of self-worth (Gecas, 1971), which is intensely influenced by a sense of competence (Covington and Beery, 1976) and closely tied to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1978). Hence, individuals who get feedback on past contributions of KS are more likely to appreciate how such engagements have contributed to the work of their colleagues and improved the overall organizational performance. This feeling would increase their sense of gaining recognition, acknowledgement and self-worth

accordingly. In return, this would solidify these individuals' favourable attitudes toward KS than those who are unable to find such linkages. Wasco and Faraj, (2005) have empirically tested that building of reputation is one of the strongest individual antecedents to KS by linking it with social exchange theory (Blau, 1967) that individuals engage in social activities with the expectation that the particular act will benefit them by increasing their image or status in the social circle (Wasco and Faraj, 2005). Results from the previous research also corroborate that building of reputation tends to be one of the most important underlying motives of individuals' indulging into some social activities (Donath, 1999). Huang et al., (2008) found that image, sense of self-worth and anticipated extrinsic reward have a significant effect on attitude towards KS. In their study, Lin et al., (2009) empirically tested that self-efficacy, positively influence knowledge sharing behaviour. Their findings revealed that the individuals, who perceive KS an efficient, superior, and effective way of achieving personal objectives, show a high enthusiasm to share their knowledge. Singh, Chandwani, and Kumar (2017), Zhang, Liu, Chen and Gong (2017) in health care-based studies and Mallasi, H., & Ainin, S. (2015) in a Malaysian study have empirically evidenced the importance of self-efficacy for KS.

However, Bock et al., (2005) in their study, could not find a positive relationship between sense of self-worth and KS. In the current study, self-efficacy has the dimension of employee's self-confidence as a strong predictor of KS. According to Cabrera et al. (2006), a sense of employee competence and confidence can be a prerequisite for a person's engagement in knowledge exchanges. Prior findings on role-breadth and self-efficacy (Parker, 1998) have identified multiple ways to increase self-efficacy of employees including high cognitive aptitude, high self-esteem and being motivated intrinsically towards performing some task.

Employees' dedication or passion to help others is another critical factor for KS; since it facilitates intangible knowledge collection and donation. This research provides robust evidence for the inter-employee help for KS and supports the findings of Lin and Joe (2012). Inter-employee help is based on the concept of altruism (Organ, 1988), which refers to discretionary behaviours that believe in helping and assisting colleagues by the use of relevant tasks and measures. Extant literature has documented that inter-employee helping and KS are correlated (Siemsen et al., 2007). Where neither extrinsic rewards (e.g. Ellis, 2001; Finerty, 1997;) nor disciplinary measures can encourage employees to share knowledge (Gibbert & Krause, 2002), employees' passion to help others stands as a critical factor for knowledge sharing, since this helpful attitude works as an intangible triggering factor for donating and sharing knowledge. Research studies prove positive relationships between conscientiousness and organizational citizenship behaviour, i.e., the individuals that tend to possess high degree of conscientiousness go out of the way to help out their colleagues to guide them in performing their jobs (Organ & Ryan, 1995). Singh, Chandwani, and Kumar (2017), Zhang, Liu, Chen and Gong (2017) in health care-based studies found a positive relationship of KS and a sense of helping others. Singh, Chandwani, and Kumar (2017) note "The positive relationship of self-efficacy and enjoyment in helping others with knowledge sharing confirms prior research findings that self-efficacy and enjoyment in helping others are significant determinants of knowledge sharing (Lin, 2007; Hsu and Lin, 2008) (p.34)". These findings confirm that health care professionals share their knowledge on Web 2.0 platforms as long as it provides them with the pleasure of sharing their knowledge. Based on this, it could be argued that individuals with higher degrees of conscientiousness can be more willing to share their knowledge (Matzler, et al., 2008). Individuals who engage in intellectual pursuits and enjoy assisting others tend to be intrinsically motivated to share knowledge with others (Wasko and Faraj 2000, 2005). In other previous studies, it has been mentioned that agreeable colleagues tend to be altruistic,

compassionate, and eager to help their colleagues; and that they look for cooperation instead of competition (Liao & Chuang, 2004). Wu et al., (2012) in their study, have also found that co-worker support for KS will be positively related to KS at work; whereas Wasco and Faraj, (2005) have provided weak evidence that individuals who enjoy helping others provide more helpful advice. According to Matzler and Mueller (2011), this has a learning dimension also. In their study, they found that there is a strong positive linkage between KS and learning orientation of individuals. Learning-oriented individuals believe that theirs and others' capabilities are reshape able and developable (Matzler and Mueller, 2011).

Reciprocity has been strongly associated with KS behaviours by the respondents of the current study. The norm of reciprocity that usually refers to a kind of give and take relationship in social exchange (Wu, et. al., 2012), has been highlighted as a strong driving force behind individual's engagement in KS activities. Sharing of individual knowledge is an exchange process in which possessor of knowledge voluntarily decides whether to share the knowledge or not with unclear rewards (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Davenport, et. al., 1998). Sharing of knowledge is only one aspect of the exchange process and what the sharer wants in return is what motivates him or her in initial act of KS. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) as noted by Hall (2003), has been linked with KS to help understand the underlying assumptions and intentions of individuals' regarding KS (e.g. Bock & Kim, 2002; Tiwana & Bush, 2001; Constant et al., 1994). The norm of reciprocity infuses a sense of shared obligation, so that the two parties involved in KS may respond with the same sincerity and sense of duty to jointly avail the benefits of knowledge sharing (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984). Prior research (e.g., Wasko & Faraj, 2000; Wellman & Gulia, 1999) documents that KS is eased by a strong sense of reciprocity. However, Chen and Hung (2010) and Lin et al. (2009) in their studies could not find a positive relationship of reciprocity and KS. Zhang, Liu, Deng, and Chen (2017) and

Caimo and Lomi (2015) in their healthcare-based studies in Chinese context empirically found reciprocity being positively correlated with KS.

Organizational commitment in fact is an important determinant of KS, specifically of knowledge donating. Keeping in view the medical profession and its sensitivity, it is not difficult to estimate the impact and role of organizational commitment for KS. Despite the fact that most of the doctors in the current study reported that they remained very busy and overloaded in many cases, but, even then if they preferred to share the knowledge, then it could be substantially attributed to organizational commitment. As Meyer and Allen (1997) noted that affect-based commitment towards organization is positively linked to employees' readiness to render extra effort to their job duties, which actually motivates an individual towards KS, since knowledge donating mostly tends to be a kind of voluntary activity. Commitment has been a strong antecedent to trust development (Wieselquist et al., 1991). In the study of Tan and Chee (2005), respondents maintained that a trusted fellow is not one who merely fulfils their promise, but it is one who possesses a strong strength of character with respect to honouring his or her words. In this context, a trusted fellow is expected to commit to his or her words even in adverse conditions (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994). Previous research explains that the nature and extent of human behaviour is deeply impacted by the warmth of relationship between individuals and their commitment towards their organizations (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). An employee keeping higher degree of commitment toward organization, tends and have more trust in his colleagues and is more likely to share his or her expertise. Built on this, Jarvenpaa & Staples, have concluded that "greater commitment may engender beliefs that the organization has rights to the information and knowledge one has created or acquired" (2001, p.156). Numerous studies (e.g., Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2001; Kelloway & Barling, 2000; Smith & McKeen, 2002) posit organizational commitment as a

critical factor in explaining KS. Van den Hooff & Van Weenen (2004) have empirically demonstrated a strong positive relationship between organizational commitment and KS and Wasco and Faraj (2005), have found a weak correlation between commitment and KS.

Unlike most of the existing studies on antecedents to KS, religiosity has been a strong antecedent to KS in the current study. In the existing literature, there is no discussion of religiosity as an individual motivator towards KS. This might be because of the reason that many Muslims consider knowledge sharing as their fundamental responsibility, since Islam places huge emphasis on gaining and sharing of knowledge. Sharing of knowledge has been linked with the earning of charity, gaining the pleasure of God and achieving emancipation at the Day of Judgment. It is probably because of this reason, that many Muslims perceive KS as their earnest responsibility and the same has been shared by many respondents in the context of the current study. Religiosity keeps connotation of altruism, sincerity and compassion in the context of KS as mentioned by respondents in the current study. Considering knowledge being a source of organizational power, many individuals avoid to share the knowledge. Apart from losing the power, it carries the factor of risk i.e., the shared knowledge may be misused by the receiver and it demands sacrifice of time and effort also to share the knowledge. Number of theories offer explanation for withholding knowledge. Based on these facts it is only possible to share the knowledge if one has compassion and concern for others, or one is willing to contribute something without any material benefit and religiosity as reported by the participants of the study, can be one of the selflessly driving forces for KS in these kinds of cases. Religiosity as a strong hidden motive for KS was proved in a cross-cultural study of Malaysians Indians and Chinese conducted by Mallasi and & Ainin (2015). As they note, “this study enriches the area of knowledge sharing behaviour and contributes to the literature by highlighting the significant role of religiosity as a moderator in the relationship between non-monetary factors and knowledge sharing behaviour, which has not been studied before in the

context of knowledge sharing behaviour. Moreover, the interaction effects of religiosity with Malaysian ethnicities and different gender group on knowledge sharing behaviour can be considered as an extension to the literature review in this field” (p. 14).

A sense of recognition with regard to underlying motives of KS has been a key finding of this research. Many professionals share the knowledge with the intention of getting recognition and applaud from their colleagues and therefore, apart from creating a learning organizational culture, firms are also supposed to create a culture of mutual recognition and respect. For example, Han (2018) while emphasizing the need of this notes, “This finding suggests that when individuals recognize themselves as valuable members of a working team, they focus more on trying to share their tacit knowledge and finding implies that a feeling of belonging to an organization can affect whether the individuals act in good faith. It also confirms that the perceived organizational support leads to intentions of the individual for knowledge sharing. (Han, 2018, p. 136). Singh, Chandwani and Kumar (2017) in their health care related study highlight the need for recognition by noting, “Health care professionals are driven by the belief in the competence of their knowledge and pleasure in helping others when they share their knowledge on Web 2.0 rather than through extrinsic rewards like financial incentives and reciprocity. Hence, managers should design and implement systems such that they reinforce the self-efficacy and pleasure of sharing knowledge, for example, by recognizing and highlighting useful contributions and encouraging users to acknowledge the contributions of other members. Thus, we extend the previous literature that have underlined that non-punitive institutional structures enhance knowledge sharing amongst health professionals (Kim et al., 2012). Our study calls for focus in the building of an organizational culture of sharing and recognition” (p.376). Barachini (2009) also endorse the above mentioned findings of by arguing they first of all seem to reflect that information is exchanged for free. However, a



deeper analysis shows that the main motivations to share information and in its last consequence knowledge in online communities are the desire to help, striving for recognition from others, and deriving enjoyment from interaction. These factors in turn create satisfaction, which is of personal value to individuals. In this case the sole purpose of goal setting is fun (p.108).

## 8.2. Implications for Managers and Recommendations

This study offers several key implications for HR managers and business practitioners. First, trust is very critical and crucial factor for knowledge sharing especially in the professional field like medical. Managers need to understand that KS can only take place when organizational members are eager to share. Trust helps disregard barriers to KS. Without the presence of trust, the collaboration required for effective KS might not occur. Therefore, when deciding to promote KS, managers should develop appropriate mechanisms that may improve the quality of interpersonal relationships among members characterized by mutual trust and cooperation. This means that the HR managers should try to ensure and increase the level of interpersonal trust among organizational members and make efforts to create a culture of mutual trustworthiness within the organisations, founded on social interaction ties and a vision for shared knowledge-sharing vision. Additionally, managers can create better trust-based relations among employees through facilitating the norms of reciprocity, teamwork, dialogue and confiding the shared personal information within organizations or communities, etc. Prior literature maintains that structural ties could be strengthened through frequent social interactions, which may cultivate a shared vision through hands-on experience over time (Wasko & Faraj, 2005). The role of organizational culture is very vital in fostering interpersonal trust among organizational members. Issa and Haddad (2008) claim that proper OC will enhance mutual trust in the organization. Ling (2011) finds that both culture and trust acts as elements that needs to co-exist in facilitating KS. Thus, to create a culture that shares,

it is therefore essential to enhance trustworthiness among employees, making it as a part of the social norm that is being practiced on a daily basis (Tan et al. 2009). Besides, Jo and Joo (2011) argue that organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) turned out to fully mediate the relationship between organizational commitment and KS intention. Making an example of Taiwanese semiconductor industry, Chang et al. (2015) find that KS has a partial mediating effect on the organizational commitment–OCB relationship. Several quantitative reviews also have documented the negative relationships that role stressors have with task performance (Eatough et al. 2011). Therefore, the exploration of the role of employee’s behavior in this measurement model is expected” (Chang et al., 2017, P. 483). Managers within organizations can play significant role to create an overall trusting environment is very vital. Available trust literature highlights numerous key factors like delegation of authority, employee empowerment, collaborative problem solving, participative decision making, access to organizational information and as crucial factors to foster interpersonal trust (Lau et al., 2014). “Thus, managers in organizations need to be aware of the fact that they play the important role of “climate engineers,” i.e., they send the signals to employees to develop the behaviours and attitudes that are valued and how the organizational working environment defines success and brilliance (Kramer, 2010). These signals and cues from organizational managers, e.g., expecting, nurturing and rewarding helping behaviour towards knowledge sharing, institute a particularly powerful sense of feeling trusted by organizational management that, in return,

encourages the employees' willingness to exchange knowledge (Wang & Noe, 2010)” (Nerstad et al. 2017, p. 12).

For achieving this objective, managers may invite knowledgeable professionals and expert instructors to share their experiences of knowledge sharing with organizational members to enhance social connections and to develop a set of common perceptions, values and goals for knowledge sharing (Chiu et al., 2006). For this goal, they need to understand the perceptions of their employees regarding the factors, which increase or decrease the level of interpersonal trust and then try to promote traits and behaviours that lead towards building and enhancing the level of trust and discourage those trends and traits that deter interpersonal trust. Moreover, in terms of practical implications, HR managers need to place a higher level of emphasis on affect based trust as compared to cognitive-based trust since most of the respondents in the current study while sharing their views about antecedents to trust development, have emphasised on factors which come under the fold of the antecedent to affect-based trust as it was mentioned in the findings that the factors of sincerity, loyalty, truthfulness and commitment etc. are important basis of trust development. However, this does not mean to suggest a complete focus on the factors of affect-based trust; since many respondents have pointed out professionalism, reliability and responsibility also which are the antecedent to cognitive based trust.

According to the findings of this research, professionalism, cultural similarity, sincerity, ethical soundness, commitment, religiosity and trustworthiness are some of the most important factors that nurture interpersonal trust. Based on these recommendations from the respondents of this research, the HR managers can get insights as to which factors are more relevant and precarious

for their organizations to foster interpersonal trust in order to facilitate KS in their respective organizations.

Second, culture or sub culture has direct influence on knowledge sharing behaviours of the members of an organization who work in a cross-cultural working environment and the difference of language is an impeding factor for KS. Previous research studies have been focusing on the national culture, while analysing KS from cross-cultural point view, ignoring the impact of sub culture which can be very much considerable and critical, as the findings of this research have proved. The respondents of this study have shared lots of problems and complications of KS in a cross-cultural working environment and based on those issues, it is indispensable for the HR managers to understand and analyse this matter instead of seeing it from surface. Managers require frameworks to describe the links between knowledge and culture so that they may be able to design the systems and processes required to create employee behaviours that will promote their objectives regarding KS. They need to go into depth and try to understand the problems and difficulties of the employees as a result of KS in a multi-cultural environment. They also need to understand the extent of ethnic differences and biases; the reasons of the same and then try to fix them up or at least minimize their impact; otherwise these ethnic differences (in the light of this research) can be very much detrimental towards effective KS in organizations wherein employees belonging to different cultural groups work together. The managers need to be emotionally intelligent to drive out the racially based feelings, biases, differences and negative thoughts from the minds of employees and inculcate a feeling of unity, cooperation, cohesiveness, pulling the rope together in the same direction and bridging differences. This is the road to success while working in an environment consisting of different ethnicities and cultural identities. For achieving this objective, Li (2010) suggest that organizations need to provide a suitable mix of communication channels and cross-

cultural KS networks in order to augment the KS process since different KS channels can supplement each other. Like other cross-cultural studies (e.g., Ardichvili et al., 2003), the participants of this study have also emphasized on relying on personal networks for KS. Keeping in view the important role of personal networks in promoting KS, firms should make efforts to build and strengthen professional networks. Particularly, they should help develop fairly strong interpersonal relations among organizational members from different ethnicities in order to facilitate cross-cultural KS (Li, 2010).

This research calls upon the managers and particularly HR practitioners and managers to manage cultural diversity and instead of leaving it as an impeding factor they need to convert it into a facilitating and encouraging factor towards KS. They need to create such kind of organizational culture that may encourage knowledge exchange among culturally dissimilar employees by giving them proper coaching and instilling the ethos of trust, collaboration, coordination, respect for other cultures, unity, common vision and common (Finestone & Snyman, 2005) Here, the role of organizational managers is very crucial; since without their thoughtful attentions and involvement, it is very hard to achieve the goal of the management of cultural diversity. Kim (2018) is very much right when she notes that “Positive benefits accrue once team members figure out how to jointly overcome the challenges associated with diversity. Thus, it is crucial to create and maintain an organizational climate in which members embrace diversity to capitalize on members’ knowledge, expertise, and different viewpoints. Executives and managers may consider offering workshops to promote the understanding of workplace diversity and its implications. Also, managers should overhaul their day-to-day communication channels and activities to identify a way to improve cross-boundary exchanges” (p.23).

Hajro et al (2017) in their empirical study found cultural diversity to be an encouraging factor for KS. In order to mitigate the detrimental effects of cultural diversity on KS, they suggested the concepts of “cooperative and assertive knowledge exchange”. “A process for doing so is to develop both assertive and cooperative knowledge exchange in an organization’s teams. Companies may not be fully aware of this connection. We were astonished that most, if not all, companies emphasized in their self-documentation that they valued diversity, but did not allow for both assertive and cooperative knowledge exchange. The companies in our sample achieved these successful knowledge exchanges by highlighting the defining characteristics of each process, reiterating in team training the value of both and how both contribute to team functioning, and using evaluation and rewards that recognize teams that engage in both processes. Careful selection of team members, especially leaders skilled in using and encouraging a combination of both assertive and cooperative knowledge exchange is critical. Although some members may be culturally predisposed to prefer cooperation over assertiveness or vice versa, our findings show the importance of demonstrated cultural agility” (Hajro et al., 2017, p.74).

Hajro et al (2017) also call upon “engagement-focused diversity climates” within culturally diversified firms. As they note “Our narratives revealed that such processes were encouraged by “engagement-focused diversity climates” that used diversity to inform and enhance core work processes. Such climates drew upon diversity for mutual learning, change, and renewal. This climate contrasted with both “policy-focused” and “awareness-focused diversity climates”. The policy-focused climates emphasized the implementation of non-discriminatory diversity policies and standardized procedures; the awareness-focused diversity climates emphasized diversity only as a means to gain access and legitimacy with diverse markets, and so were unable to best learn from the diversity within teams” Hajro et a, 2017, p.73). Ahmed

(2017) in order to foster knowledge sharing in the multi-cultural organizations urges the managers to ensure and increase the level of diversity within organizational units where there is less diversification, because in his research conducted in a multi-national firm of Finland, he found multi-culturalism even better for KS. In his research he found that the employees who were multi-lingual were more effective and enthusiastic in KS as compared to those who were mono-lingual. As he notes “For the language diversity of personal knowledge networks, it means that organizations should pay attention to the diversity level in smaller units, such as departments and even teams. Units that have low or no diversity at all should be exposed to more linguistically diverse colleagues through meetings and interdepartmental projects, to support multilingual personal knowledge networks at the individual level and to counter any possible linguistic isolation in the knowledge network at organizational level. Moreover, employees should be made aware of the benefits of having connections with people from linguistically diverse backgrounds that range from diverse sources of knowledge and information to higher performance” (Ahmed, 2017, p. 24). Actually Ahmed (2017) refers to the factor of “openness to cultural diversity” which has been highlighted by a number of researchers who have conducted research on knowledge management and cultural diversity. In fact in the view of researchers, openness to diversity is not only important but the most important factor for making KS effective and productive within multi-cultural organizations (Fong et al., 2013; Luring & Slemer, 2012; Mitchell, Nicholas & Boyle, 2009).

Creation and exchange of knowledge is predominantly a social process, grounded in social connections and this progression is exceedingly developed by social capital (Nahapiet & Goshal, 1998). Social identification is known as a critical aspect in teams labelled by diversity and interdependence, when it comes to sharing knowledge. The idea of “social identification” is particularly significant for seeking cooperation within diversified groups (Fiol & O’Connor,



2005), since it is less expected to feel a sense of mutual cooperation for sharing of knowledge with team members without a feeling of social identification with the team (Rosendaal, 2009). Transfer of knowledge involves the willingness of organizational members to contribute toward team's success. Not to wonder, social identification can function as a block for intermediating complex nexus between information sharing and cultural diversification. Similarly, task-interdependence among members of diversified teams, is expected to create feelings of cooperation and cohesiveness. In order to perform duties effectively and achieve the desired goals and targets task interdependence forces the organizational members to interact and collaborate. This mandatory interaction and collaboration reduces the feelings of strangeness and leads toward rapport building and consequently provides a sound base for effective teamwork knowledge sharing (Rosendaal, 2009). The research outcome of Rosendaal (2009) strengthens the findings of Ellemers et al (2004) that information sharing tends to be deteriorated by value-diversity and is enhanced by social identification and task interdependence. As Rosendall notes, "The question to what extent social identity neutralises the problematic relation between diversity and knowledge sharing has received a differentiated answer. Our results bear the inconvenient message that value diversity has a negative effect on knowledge sharing. The good news, however, is that support has been found for the second hypothesis: the partial mediation of social identification means that a potential negative influence from value diversity can be reduced by the positive effect of social identification on knowledge sharing". He further comments: "Clear evidence is found for the hypothesis that the more team members identify themselves with their team, the more they are inclined to share their knowledge with other team members" (Rosendaal, 2009, p.12).

Managing cross-cultural differences for KS has been a great challenge for organizations. However, Ado, Su and Wanjiru (2017) have presented some very important and notable

insights regarding the management of cross-cultural KS their comparative study of Africans and Chinese, as they note, “From a cultural difference perspective, informal interactions through meetings and gatherings served as a means for Africans to socialize with the Chinese employees in order to learn. Our data suggest that these interactions are embedded in a context of informality and clandestine exchange structures where boundaries are porous. According to Inkpen and Tsang (2005), knowledge is shared through formal exchanges facilitated by established rapport and friendships on an individual basis. However, our empirical results indicate that Africans used more informality—in its various forms—through diverse informal communication channels and clandestine mechanisms to learn from the Chinese, including the adoption of cultural tactics” (p.177).

Apart from the differences and biases based on ethnic basis, there are certain gender based issues with regard to KS as mentioned by some participants in the interviews in the current study. Although gender issues are commonly observed phenomenon almost everywhere in KS, but in Islamic countries (like Pakistan) these biases might be observed on some higher scale due to some socially and religiously based restrictions on male female interaction. That is why, some female interviewees and few male interviewees discussed the gender based biases that become an obstacle in the sharing of knowledge among the colleagues. The role of gender stereotypes is examined as a potential moderator in the formation of knowledge sharing (Lin, 2008) and gender stereotypes have been a critical factor in the context of knowledge sharing (Burke, 2001). The HR managers need to fix up this issue so that it may not be able to hamper the healthy sharing of knowledge.

The findings of this research has evidenced three types of differences in the process of KS within the three case organizations: cross-ethnic, cross-gender and cross-functional. In this

study cross-functional differences have been identified between nurses and doctors and among senior consultants and junior doctors and therefore, addressing and successfully managing cross-functional differences are also significant. For successful management of cross-functional teams Nguyen et al (2017) suggest “the results suggest that large business organizations need to manage cross-functional coordination to enhance cross-functional knowledge sharing between departments. Attention should focus on three cross-functional coordination mechanisms that significantly determine cross-functional knowledge sharing: lateral relations, informal networking, and shared vision. Lateral relations and shared vision in particular have greater value for cross-functional knowledge sharing. Large business organizations thus should configure their resources and efforts with a view to building strong, lateral linkage devices and cultivating a shared vision throughout the organization” (p.10). For further important tips in this regard they further suggest, “The findings suggest that lateral relations, informal networking, and shared vision are important determinants of cross-functional knowledge sharing between marketing and competing departments. These mechanisms also reflect the three dimensions of social capital (lateral relations are structural, shared vision is cognitive, and informal networking is relational), proposed as necessary conditions for facilitating cross-functional knowledge sharing in an intra-organizational network. The study results affirm social capital theory's ability to explain how coordination promotes cross-functional knowledge sharing across organizational departments. In so doing, it extends our understanding of cross-functional knowledge sharing through various coordination mechanisms” (p.10).

Stress free conducive working environment and organizational culture based on the principles of professionalism, merit, empowerment and employee motivation has a drastic impact on KS in any organization. HR practices of open communication, merit based appointments, fairness

in decision-making likely promote an organizational culture that supports knowledge sharing (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005). A number of respondents in this study have complained against the factor of stress as a result of lengthy working hours or over-loadedness of work and have recommended a stress free and conducive working environment for KS. Likewise, many respondents have complained against lack of empowerment, motivation and employee recognition and have recommended organizational employee empowerment, motivation and organizational rewards in order to encourage KS. A number of respondents in this research have emphasized upon injustice and exploitation in organizational decisions regarding employees hiring and firing and directly linked the same with organizational KS. Based on the findings of this research and in the light of the recommendations of this study, the proper understanding and implementation of the concept of organizational justice including transparent and merit based appointments, promotions and duty assignments is indirectly linked with the conducive organizational culture that can promote and facilitate KS.

Psychological safety and complacency is very important for productive working and quality performance. That is why Dasi et al (2017) have highlighted psychologically secure environment and have urged the firms to provide a psychologically secure environment to their workers. As they note, pOur results indicate that the notion of “locus of control” is of key importance for knowledge sharing. We argue that when contextual conditions allow for the locus of control residing in the individual – i.e. within the business unit – the informal drivers of intrinsic motivation, job autonomy and innovativeness values are more suitable for knowledge sharing, since individuals can exercise control and follow-up under conditions of transparency. It appears that knowledge sharing within the business unit can take place without the need for overt interventions by the organization, while knowledge sharing across units

requires more active intervention. When it comes to sharing knowledge across business units the locus of control needs to lie with the organization” (p. 441).

In order to foster KS, organizations need to create learning environment within organizations. According to Han (2018) HRD managers need to consider the relationship between learning initiatives and workplace applications. Continuous and conscious efforts to promote and develop “human–interaction-based knowledge-sharing” practices posit another assignment for HR practitioners. Organizations that are built to foster continuous learning environment provide a climate for organisational members to participate in knowledge-sharing initiatives (Watkins & Kim, 2017). Razi, et al., (2018) recommend the involvement of managers in knowledge management. They note “from the practical point of view, the managers could make an environment where the executives believe that if they involve in KM it would lead to increase in their performance. Perhaps they could make an awareness of how the involvement in KM process will improve their performance and their productivity. At the same time, the managers could make it clear how the involvement in KM can lead to better pay; i.e. salary increment, bonus or promotion” (P.130). They further suggest that “the more respondents perceive that KM is useful in doing the job, lead to better pay and improves their productivity; the more likely they are to be involved in KM. Similarly, the more they perceive that involving in KM processes is easy, clear to understand and easy to learn; the more likely they are to be involved in KM” (P.130).

While throwing light on the role of organizational management in the discussion of learning organizational culture, Liu (2018) noted, “Second, developing organizational learning among employees requires the support of both the CEO and HR professionals, as well as a good design

mechanism. In the first instance, CEOs and top managers can provide a source of vicarious learning activities for employees, such as holding entertainment activities monthly to enhance mutual trust and personal friendships, talking about and sharing new ideas with colleagues, encouraging self-directed learning or exploring the potential of virtual learning, to build an effective and pleasurable environment to attain the best knowledge transfer results in the organizational learning process” (p.268). They further urge, “From the organizational learning perspective, these findings suggest that managers should encourage employees to consolidate their current cultural and creative knowledge and skills and gradually search for existing solutions to customer problems in order to increase productivity and creativity” (Liu, 2018, p.268).

According to Chang et al (2017) learning organizational culture is the best treatment to bridge the culture and capability gap. As they suggest “a culture encouraging change is a critical feature of organizational learning (Chang et al. 2008). Culture is alleged to have influence on the knowledge-related behaviors of individuals, teams, units, and also organizations as a whole because it influences the purpose of workers in terms of identifying which knowledge is appropriate to be shared, whom to share it with, and when is the right time to share it (King 2007). An organization can be viewed as a learning entity while it is made up of individuals. Individuals must learn first before organizational learning can occur. Without a learning organization, there can be no continuous improvement” (Chang et al., 2017, p. 482). They further argue, “Organizational culture, a certain norm of behaviour, is a set of shared values and beliefs within an organization and is shaped by the interactions between its members. Its existence within an organization will directly or indirectly affect members’ behaviour and the implementation of change (Liao et al. 2012). In this study, we find that KS has mediating effects on the relationship between organizational culture and individual culture, meaning that

the traditional innovative thinking existing within automobile manufacturers presently needs complete rethink and adjustment” (p. 482).

This is notable that although a learning organizational culture is very important for fostering KS, but, an important warning is that only a positive organizational culture may not be sufficient to promote knowledge sharing. Research findings suggest that designing and implementing KM initiatives, systems and processes that are aligned with the working habits, routines and organizational goals and values are essential for facilitating organizational KS (Hickins, 1999; McDermott & O'Dell, 2001). These initiatives and measures in the light of this research include training and development of employees, seminars, workshops and symposiums; facilitation of employees from time and resources point of view; implementation of state of art technology that facilitates KS and employee motivation and facilitation through organizational rewards, long leaves for studies and scholarships, promotions and other possible types of motivation and teamwork. Another significant implication for HR managers is to analyse, understand and correct the thoughts and perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of the employees regarding KS especially when the employees work in a multi-ethnic and cross-cultural working environment. These initiatives are very much essential because implementation of a knowledge management system or a new strategic emphasis on KS involves asking both management and employees to adopt and incorporate new behaviours, attitudes and values related to knowledge sharing (Wang and Noe, 2010). In order to implement all these initiatives a change management strategy needs to be considered by HR to change the status quo, and include policies and activities, strategies and initiatives to ensure that employees are satisfied with the process of change management and the KS is being promoted at all levels in the organization (Taylor & Wright, 2004).

Existing research findings have proved a positive relationship between managerial or supervisory support and KS and the findings of the current research have also proved that management support is a critical factor for the successful implementation of KM and knowledge sharing initiatives. Based on this, organizations need to train, coach and reward managers to provide necessary support to their subordinates to inspire and encourage them towards knowledge sharing. The role of HR managers can be significant for achieving this goal. Management support for example, may be shown by emphasizing sharing “lessons learned” instead of “mistakes made” (Teo, 2005). Han while highlighting the importance of organizational support notes, “a feeling of belonging to an organization can affect whether the individuals act in good faith. It also confirms that the perceived organizational support leads to intentions of the individual for knowledge sharing. Furthermore, this finding supports the results of Lin and Lee’s (2006) study that an organizational support climate affects the level and quality of knowledge sharing. This is effectuated by influencing the employee commitment to a knowledge management system” (Han 2018, p. 136).

During the interviews many respondents complained regarding the shortage of resources including seminar rooms, audio-visual aids etc. which can facilitate the process of KS. Based on their recommendation, it is essential to provide a room for informal discussions or sharing of ideas and also state of the art technology based seminar/conference rooms for training seminars, workshops etc. This supports the views of Bengona et al. (2012) who based on the recommendations of the respondents, in their study, have suggested the organizations to provide discussion rooms as a knowledge creation area where sessions of joint work, brainstorming, questions and answers, explanations and understanding of procedures, discussions about interesting topics, experimentation and sharing of ideas and feelings can flow freely on constant basis. Provision of this kind of space/seminar room according to Bengona



et al. (2012), can not only facilitate knowledge sharing but can also result in the creation of new valuable knowledge for the organizations. Moreover, the organizational culture needs to be conducive and encouraging to provide a motivating atmosphere which significantly contributes towards the acceptance and sharing of new knowledge. As reflected by the interviewees, it is part of human nature that knowledge produces fear with regard to use of the same, therefore, they asked for a secure and supportive environment to drive out the fear of sharing knowledge and encourage the employees to accept higher risks in new adventures or making innovative decisions. Especially when the employees work in a cross-cultural setting, creation of a conducive and encouraging working environment is very essential. Kaser and Miles (2002) suggest that when the workers might be belonging to different cultural groups and implying lower levels of trust, “management has to provide opportunities for workers to interact with others to develop high levels of trust, conversation, co-operation for knowledge sharing”. After providing the seminar rooms and audio-visual aids, it is also important that the organizational members should have the aptitude and they possess the time to reflect on their knowledge, in order to improve and re-design their knowledge on continual long-term basis.

Based on the recommendations of many doctors and nurses, in the current study, lack of time is one of the reasons why they fail to share the knowledge and potentially hoard it (Michailova and Husted, 2003). Hence, time can be treated as a cost factor in KS (Grant, 1996). Moreover, as demanded by many doctors, this is suggested to provide/allocate some time on daily, weekly and monthly basis for knowledge sharing sessions, seminars and lectures etc. (Bengona et al., 2012). Chen (2005) notes that if some organisation fails to promote KS due to a high growth or an especial focus on markets and customer demands or a perceived lack of time, very valuable knowledge and experiences will be wasted as recommended by respondents of this study, who already mentioned the fear of misuse of knowledge, the lack of organizational

resources and facilities; the complexity of languages, and mainly the lack of emotions being involved in KS. Subsequently, it is essential that work processes offer enough time and space to enable people to share knowledge. Gold et al. (2001) note that an absence of formal and informal processes and spaces where organizational members can interact and share ideas often creates fences towards KS. Several scholars urged that informal environments trigger employees' chances to share knowledge and receive new information but unfortunately tend to be a rare commodity in organizations, because of a long lasting perception of many managers that employees are not working productively until and unless they are not constantly "busy doing something" (Probst et al., 2000; Skyrme, 2000).

An important practical implication of the findings of this research is that firms could foster KS through employee screening. According to Matzler et al. (2008), selection and retention of employees is a critical function of management and in the light of the findings of this research, many respondents have complained against overriding the merit with regard to the appointments and assignments of job duties which according to them make the process of KS ineffective and unproductive. Based on this, it is essential that the recruitment and selection of the employees should be based on the criterion none other than merit. Moreover, the personality traits of the employees should be properly monitored (e.g., Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001). Research tells that the individuals who score high on openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness, generally tend to be more inclined to share knowledge (Matzler et al., 2008). The managers also need to identify the employees who show reluctance in KS, since this can influence KS within and across teams.

For example, Han (2018) in a South Korean study evidenced employee openness being positively associated with KS as he noted "the results for openness suggest that the individuals

with a willingness to accept and consider other opinions are more likely to share knowledge with others regardless of the knowledge type. Consistent with the findings of Zhao and Seibert's (2006), the openness to experience is a significant positive predictor of knowledge sharing. This evidence confirms the idea that individuals who focus on intellectual curiosity are more likely to achieve positive work outcomes by sharing knowledge" (P. 137). Similarly, she recommended employee conscientiousness also being important attribute of the employees who were found active in KS in her study, as she notes "The results for conscientiousness suggest that the individuals who are purposeful, strong-willed, hardworking and ambitious with regard to employment are more likely to share tacit and explicit knowledge with others" (Han 2018, P. 137).

In the light of the findings and recommendations of Matzler and Mueller (2011) individuals' personality traits are directly related to their propensity to share knowledge and eagerness to engage in organizational exchange processes. Furthering the idea of Matzler and Mueller (2011), Han suggests "It may also be important for HRD practitioners to help employees shape and self-discipline their perceptions of knowledge ownership to enhance their knowledge sharing based on their personality traits. For example, R&D engineers with high conscientiousness are more dutiful, responsible and dependable to one another. Likewise, the results of this study may indicate that R&D engineers who are highly conscious of the involved jobs are more willing to engage in the effort of sharing their knowledge and to use shared knowledge databases among members of the R&D teams. Hence, such R&D engineers can be assigned the role of documenting know-how and experience, maintaining the databases and enhancing the applicability of shared knowledge" (2018, P.137).

Employee's education is also very important factor in this regard as Le and Lei (2018) argue, "By examining the influences of the control variables, we found that education and working experience have considerable effects on KS. The impact of education on KS behaviour is more important than the impact of working experience. As a practical implication of these findings, leaders should pay attention to strengthening training and retraining activities to improve worker qualifications with the aim of stimulating KS. Employees with a higher level of education will have a greater ability and willingness to meet the knowledge and information demands of colleagues" (p. 10).

In the light of the findings of this research, organizational justice is very important, since many respondents complained against unjust organizational policies and procedures practices and regulations with regard to employees' appointments promotions and assigning of duties. Kim and Parker (21017) while highlighting the importance of organizational justice, urge the firms, "given the positive influence of organizational procedural justice on work engagement, knowledge sharing, and innovative work behaviour, organizations should make significant efforts to improve and maintain the level of formal procedural justice within organizations by not only sharing relevant information and providing useful feedback about their decision-making processes in transparent and fair ways, but also by actively listening to employee opinions and involving employee groups that encompass various work positions and the job areas involved in the process of making decisions. In addition, the results of the study reveal that the effects of organizational procedural justice on employee innovative work behaviour and knowledge sharing are stronger when they are mediated by employee work engagement. It implies that if organizations set up and implement transparent and fair procedures in decision-making, employees are more likely to repay them not only by being more engaged in their work but also by facilitating and encouraging knowledge sharing and innovative work

behaviour. Thus, it is noteworthy that organizational efforts regarding organizational procedural justice would be more effective and efficient when aligned with supporting work engagement” (p.12).

Fururth, HR managers need to have a deep understanding of individual characteristics of organizational members that encourage or discourage them towards KS. Based on the findings of this research, these factors include attitude and intentions towards KS, self-efficacy, organizational commitment, reciprocity, a passion to help their colleagues and religiosity are some of the key individual antecedents that play significant role in the KS behaviours within any organization. It might be a good idea for HR managers to help shape and modify employees’ perceptions towards knowledge sharing and knowledge ownership. And change their attitude towards sharing knowledge. As Le and Lei (2018) suggest, “Employees are the key factor in the KS process of an organisation, and thus changing employee attitudes and behaviours towards KS is likely to be one of the most effective strategies for enhancing KS activities” (p. 9).

Perceiving knowledge, as a source of organizational position and power, many employees don’t want to share their knowledge and therefore, it is essential to find out the reasons and factors which can enhance their knowledge sharing as a result of internal satisfaction driven through sharing knowledge (Wang and Noe, 2010). Existing research suggests the importance of enhancing individuals' confidence in sharing useful knowledge with others. This study delivers evidence that self-efficacy is a significant determinant to employee KS intentions and attitude. Managers need to enhance the self-efficacy of the employees and gain insights about the practices and processes that enhance the self-efficacy of the employees. A staff possessing

high degree of self-efficacy can be acquired and developed by selecting and appointing the individuals who may look proactive and possess a high score on self-esteem, cognitive aptitude and tend to be intrinsically motivated. Additionally, managers can augment the perceptions of self-efficacy among organizational members by signifying to them that their shared knowledge makes a momentous contribution to organization (Lin, 2005). Existing work on role breadth self-efficacy has pinpointed multiple methods of improving employees' self-efficacy (Ajzen, 1991). For example, Bryant's (2005) study establishes that the level of individuals' knowledge sharing can be boosted by accumulating the level of employees' self-efficacy through training. Moreover, managers may make the use of emotions to enhance the self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence and delightfulness of the donor of the knowledge by making compliments and keeping a motivating learning atmosphere. Emotions can be an agent of change since emotions can change something by bringing impulse to real life. This is also good to give appropriate feedback to employees who engaged or not engaged in KS, since such actions not only exert pressure from one's referent groups e.g., managers, peers, supervisors and seniors etc. to engage in KS behaviours but also enhance the sense of the self-worth of individual employees.

The findings of this research suggest that the concept of reciprocity has a direct effect on KS behaviour. From organizational perspective, managers should try to promote a culture of healthy and trust based social ties before introducing KS initiatives. Especially, constructing a climate of knowledge sharing characterized by knowledge community, managerial support, peer involvement, reciprocity, and reward system for KS is likely to encourage both organizational members and management to interact and socialize frequently, thus improving trust building and readiness for KS. Organizational rewards can promote reciprocity for KS. The significant implication of inter-employee helping on KS unveils the fact that management should try to create an environment of altruism wherein organizational members take care and

feel enthusiasm for helping each other before KS can be properly realized. Feeling that knowledge is power, many people may be unwilling to share knowledge and especially if they don't intend to help others in the first instance, therefore, it is recommended that a sense of altruism might be created among the organizational members.

The respondents of the study have frequently recommended organizational rewards for promoting KS. Although the rewards can be both financial and nonfinancial as well intrinsic and extrinsic and researchers have discussed both types of rewards in their studies. For instance, Dasi et al (2017) strongly recommend extrinsic rewards for KS “We account for the importance of extrinsic motivation for individuals engaging in knowledge sharing between business units as a means of compensating for the outcome uncertainty that organizational separateness creates. Hence, our study provides empirical support for Grandori’s (2001, p. 39) observation concerning the underestimated possibilities of “high-powered” incentives for motivating individuals to engage in the sharing and internal exchange of knowledge in large firms (p. 441).

However, most of the existing studies suggest that intrinsic rewards might be more workable than extrinsic or monetary rewards (Voelpel and Han, 2005; Bock. et al., 2005). As regards to health care workers Zhang et al (2017) in their health care based study conducted in China found that intrinsic motivation is more important with regard to sharing of knowledge. They note, “Intrinsic motivation has a stronger influence on the knowledge sharing intention of health professionals than of normal users. Health professionals often have confidence in their ability to help others and thus contribute their knowledge to health Q&A communities voluntarily and altruistically. Meanwhile, extrinsic motivation has a stronger influence on the knowledge sharing intention of normal users than of health professionals. Normal users are more eager to gain external returns by sharing their knowledge with others” (p.557).

Some researchers have even warned that extrinsic rewards instead of promoting may well hinder towards the cultivation of positive attitudes toward KS. For example, Eisenberger and Cameron (1996) suggest that task-dependent rewards can negatively affect intrinsic motivations of employees; such as sense of self-worth and anticipated reciprocal relationships, Kelman (1958) warns that extrinsic rewards can produce only temporary results, and Meyer (1975) argues that mismatches can occur between employees and management's perceptions regarding appropriate application of extrinsic or intrinsic rewards for encouraging the behaviours towards the achievement of a particular goal. This implies that "symbolic incentives" and "career involvement" are amongst the most significant and productive means for boosting employees' willingness to share knowledge. For example, appreciation certificates for delivering a knowledgeable seminar or lecture. Giving impressive titles and labels 'most knowledgeable employee of the year or month' for contributing knowledge and guiding the colleagues can work well. Moreover, support from top management and recognition from colleagues and senior management will further trigger employee inclination towards KS (Voelpel & Han, 2005). For example, a unique symbol or identity mark can be assigned to each employee to encourage them to donate their knowledge to construct their reputation. For example, The BlueShop community web has introduced an innovative system through which knowledge receivers give value-added points to knowledge donors as an appreciation against the favours received. Receiving of value-added points (VAP) as a result of sharing knowledge translates into a kind of immediate reputation symbol that encourages KS and reduces free-riding trends. It also motivates a colleague to interchange the paybacks received from other colleagues. The accumulated total sum of value-added points (VAP) may symbolize knowledge donors' organizational image, status, credibility, expertise or reputation. Through these practices, knowledge donors feel an instant reward against their contributions and this can increase their sharing (Tiwana & Bush, 2001).



The findings also suggest the significance of building a connection between KS and an employee's job related requirements in order to foster KS. The organizations should provide necessary training and development to their employees so that they should be able to perform their duties well and be able to share their knowledge with other colleagues. Organizations also need to provide required support, such as training and coaching on how the KS systems can fit into employees' jobs, and to help them build the connection with the knowledge systems instead of only providing the technical support. The findings of this study also imply that organizations need to attempt to develop KS systems that can be incorporated into employees' daily routine work or design their employees' jobs that involve KS if they want to facilitate KS.

Individual development of employees is also a significant consideration. For instance, Dasi et al, (2017) note "Corporate employee development – formal programs for training, workshop participation and job rotation – can alleviate the reluctance to engage in knowledge sharing across units because it develops a greater sense of corporate overview and citizenship and thereby a greater sense of psychological security when sharing knowledge" (p. 441). They further argue "We observe that reduction in the individual's sense of control introduced by organizational boundaries can be compensated for by the deployment of extrinsic rewards, by ensuring that there is a perception of result-oriented organizational values and by initiating corporate employee development programs. By moving the locus of control from the individual to the organization, such interventions enhance the psychological security for sharing knowledge" (p. 442).

Organizations also need to improve employees' psychological capital in order to improve existing pattern of KS. "Researchers of positive organizational behaviour emphasize that we should develop and value employees' positive psychological resources (e.g. psychological capital) because they will lead to positive outcomes for organizations (Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans et al., 2008; Avey et al., 2010). The results of the current study show that psychological capital is significantly related to knowledge donating and collecting" (Wu & Lee, 2017, p. 486). They further suggest "Managers can start by helping to develop members' positive psychological resources, such as self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. Once members have improved their psychological resources, this improvement, in turn, leads to a higher level of psychological capital, which benefits knowledge sharing. In addition, because psychological capital is considered to be a state-like attribute that can be improved over time, managers can first assess their employees' psychological capital and then use training intervention to assist employees with low psychological capital" (p. 486).

### **8.3. Distinctive Features of the Study and the Contribution of the Researcher**

This study is in response to the calls of numerous researchers (e.g., Haque and Haque, 2018; Guan et al. 2018; Kucharska, et al., 2017; Wang & Noe, 2010; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Lewicki, Tomlinson & Gillespie, 2006; Goudge & Gilson, 2005) to conduct research on constructs like trust, knowledge sharing and cross-cultural working environment, in order to truly contribute towards the cross-cultural organizational literature (e.g., Meyer, 2006; Cheng et al., 2009) and analyze the topic in detail. The study offers many distinctive features and facets that not only make it unique compared to previous studies, but also provide insights about the contribution of the researcher towards existing theory. The study offers several key contributions from point of view of theoretical, contextualized and methodological contributions, which are explained below.

#### **8.3.1. Theoretical Contribution**

Firstly, this research is a kind of consolidated piece of work on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment; since previous studies have been conducted in a fragmented manner, i.e. covering only one or two of the facets being covered in this study. For example, some studies are based only on the investigation of the impact of culture on knowledge sharing (Kim, 2018; Ado, Su, and Wanjiru, 2017; Wilksmann et al. 2009; Luring 2009; Sackmann & Friesly, 2007) and others have highlighted the impact of trust on knowledge sharing (e.g., Le & Lei, 2018; Chang et al., 2017; Mallasi, and Ainin; 2015; Andrews & Delahay, 2000; Tsai & Ghoshal 1998; Srinivas, 2000). Some studies have exclusively studied the impact of culture on trust development (e.g., Meyer, 2006; Doney et al., 1998; Wasti et al., 2010; Tan & Chee, 2005) and still others have explored the antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment (Witherspoon et al., 2013; Janz & Prasarnphanich, 2003; Matzler

&Mueller, 2013; Wijk et al., 2008 Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). But this research encompasses all of the above dimensions in a single work and therefore is a near to complete package of research on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment. By combining various important dimensions of this study, the work of the researcher increased to a large extent resulting in a big challenge. An indication of this is that the researcher conducted 75 qualitative interviews (each of an average duration of more than one hour to ensure clear understanding of various constructs in a detailed and rigorous manner), which is unusual in qualitative studies because most of the qualitative studies tend to be based on 20-40 qualitative interviews. However, the researcher accepted this challenge in order to provide a holistic view of the phenomenon. Despite the substantial number of 75 qualitative interviews, the researcher opted re-interviewing the respondents in order to gain further insights and opinions regarding the research questions.

An important reason for combining these constructs together, as already mentioned previously, is that all three constructs of this study, trust, knowledge sharing and culture, are interlinked and cannot be separated from each other. Without trust, knowledge sharing remains under the shadow of doubts and apprehensions; without sharing no knowledge can emerge, and without knowledge no company can survive. On the other hand, in this world of globalization, no company can avoid the hiring of people belonging to multi-cultural or multi-ethnic backgrounds, and trust cannot escape the influence of culture especially in a multi-cultural working environment. Lastly, without gaining comprehension of antecedents to trust development, it is difficult to create a trusting environment and without understanding the antecedents to knowledge sharing, knowledge sharing cannot be properly implemented especially in a cross-cultural working environment.

Secondly, the researcher intended to contribute towards the existing body of knowledge by integrating the valuable literature on knowledge sharing, culture and trust. The literature about these important components of knowledge sharing is available but in a scattered form. No single study offers such a broad range of literature on knowledge sharing in a single research project. The researcher has done an extensive and thorough survey of the existing available literature on knowledge sharing, culture and trust and also tried to find the research and literature gaps among these three important constructs.

Thirdly, the majority of previous studies on cross-cultural analyses of knowledge sharing based on the comparison of two or more countries have their own merits and limitations (due to ignoring the subcultural and ethnic differences internal to countries). However, this study is unique in the sense that the researcher has studied the sharing of knowledge among the cultural identities of a single country, based on the idea that a single country like Pakistan can offer more cultural variation within itself compared to the extent of cultural variation between two countries like Germany and France or Sweden and Denmark.

With regard to cultural variation, Pakistan, the sixth most populous country in the world, is like a mini continent with a population of around 190 million people consisting of at least 10 major ethnic groups (Sindhi, Punjabi, Baloch, Pakhtoon, Gilgiti, Urdu speaking, Chitrali, Kashmiri, Hindko speaking – linked with dependents of Alexander the Great – and Seraiki). These ethnic groups, which are a considerable number in terms of population, keep their particular territory and are very much culturally different in terms of their language, dress, rituals and traditions (Ali & Rehman, 2001; Samad, 2010; Saigol, 2009; Javaid, & Hashmi, 2012; Behuria, 2005). In many cases, these ethnic groups of Pakistan may exhibit even more cultural diversity than within the European continent, keeping in view the indigenous inhabitants of the continent and

excluding the non-native Europeans. For example, in terms of ethnic appearance, colour, dress, rituals, and traditions and weather conditions, Pakistan is more diversified within the country than for example the entirety of Europe. Just take the example of ethnic appearance; original Europeans throughout the continent look almost the same, but in Pakistan, the native Pakistanis tend to be much more diversified in terms of their look and appearance. In terms of weather conditions, almost the entire European continent has the same moderate weather, but in Pakistan, the weather tends to have all extremes. For instance, the weather of KPK (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Gilgit and Baltistan tends to be very cold and rainy taking the temperature to minus 30 Celsius in winter, while in many parts of Sind, Punjab and Baluchistan the temperature reaches 53 Celsius in summer, whereas in Karachi the temperature remains almost stable throughout the year. On the other hand, the geography of Pakistan is a profound blend of landscapes varying from plains to deserts, forests, hills and plateaus; ranging from the coastal areas of the Arabian Sea in the south to the mountains of the Karakoram Range in the North (Geo, P., 2014; Ahmad & Ford, 1966; Kureshy & Ahmad, 1977). As geographical conditions of a country affect the lives of its peoples (Sachs, 2003; Sanderson et al., 2002) so weather conditions draw impact on the living patterns, mental trends and temperaments of the people (Keller, et al., 2005; Kalkstein, et al., 1989) resulting in more diversity. With regard to dress, the whole of Europe has almost the same attire, whereas the people of the various parts of Pakistan adopt very different dress.

Referring to Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of cross-cultural analysis (Collectivism vs Individualism; High vs Low Power Distance and High vs Low avoidance for uncertainty), Pakistan again presents more diversification compared to the people of Europe. For example, almost the entire European people within Europe are not characterized with many differences regarding individualism-collectivism, power distance and uncertainty avoidance (with an

average low score in power distance and collectivism and high on uncertainty avoidance) but Pakistan offers significant variations on these grounds (Shah & Amjad, 2011). For example, Pathans (the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province), Balochi (the people of Balochistan province) and Sindhies (the people of Sind province) tend to have a higher score on power distance and collectivism than the people of Islamabad (the capital), the Urdu speaking population (mainly settled in Karachi and other big cities of Sind province) and Punjabis (the people of Punjab). The same kind of difference between them can be seen with regard to uncertainty avoidance in which Sindies, Baloch and Pathans tend to have a lower score than the people of Islamabad, Punjab and Karachi (Shah and Amjad 2011). A similar kind of variation exists between the rural and urban population of Pakistan, with 60% of the population being rural and uneducated and retaining a higher tendency for collectivism, power distance and low concern with uncertainty avoidance compared to the urban population. Also with regard to issues like adherence to cultural traditions, ethnic and language biases, the rural people of Pakistan are very much sensitive and biased compared to the urban population of Pakistan. In terms of traditions, especially regarding marriage and funeral ceremonies, the variation might be higher than that of Europe (Ali & Rehman, 2001; Samad, 2010). Based on so many deeper and wider cultural differences within a single country, how can one avoid mistakes, confusions and ambiguities while considering Pakistan as a single country for cultural comparison with other countries?

The comments of (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003), who have conducted a review of cross-cultural methodologies for organizational research, very clearly support the idea of the researcher when he chooses a single country for cross-cultural analysis of knowledge sharing behaviours: “Although country may in fact be a suitable and convenient indicator of culture, using it as the sole operationalization of culture has limitations” (Schaffer & Riordan, 2003, p.175).

According to Peterson and Smith (1997), the two terms country and culture for cross-country cultural analysis may be incongruent with one another for a number of reasons, including certain subcultural boundaries and political differences within a country, and a country possessing more than one subculture. In many research contexts, there might be specific within-country differences along certain dimensions that might be greater than between-country differences (Samiee & Jeong, 1994). For example, although some countries such as Japan have relatively homogeneous cultures, other countries such as Canada and Switzerland may have more distinct subcultures within their borders (Peterson & Smith, 1997).

Ryan et al. (1999), also confronted with the above mentioned problem in their study of examining human resource selection practices in 20 different countries, found more culture-based differences in a single country compared to other countries. They noted, “A concern is that the use of nation as a basis for examining cultural differences can be criticized as not attending to subcultural differences” (p388). It seems that Schaffer and Riordan (2003) have given the following comments in view of the above mentioned drastic cultural and ethnic variation of the different ethnic groups of a single country like Pakistan. They noted,

*“The implications of this potential incongruence between country and culture are important. Researchers who inappropriately use country as a proxy for culture run the risk of not capturing all of the relevant cultural factors that might lend support to (or that might discredit) their theories and hypotheses. Ultimately, the construct of culture should have a theoretical role in the cross-cultural research” (Schaffer and Riordan, 2003 p.176).*

Wasti et al. (2010), after conducting a study on the cross-cultural comparison of trust development in China and Turkey, reached the same mentioned conclusion, as they note:



*“We also recognize that there are generalizability concerns, particularly due to the fact that there is notable within-country variation both in Turkey and China. There is certainly the need to undertake further investigations within each culture. More generally, and ideally, it is important that future studies treat cultural differences as a constellation rather than focus on a single facet” (Tsui et al., 2007) (Wasti. et al., 2010, p.296).*

Clark (2003) also shows his reservations on the analysis of cultures of the countries based on national cultures as proposed by Hofstede. After criticizing Hofstede’s work, he argues, “Many social scientists contend that there is no such thing as national culture, because subcultures in a country can vary greatly in their values and beliefs”. (Clark, 2003, p.1). Another study conducted in 45 countries of the world, by Terracciano and his team of 65 researchers (2005), in order to understand the relationship between mean personality and national character has also challenged the idea of national culture by concluding that a country’s national character does not represent or indicate mean personality traits of individuals (Terracciano et al., 2005).

Based on this logic, as already mentioned above, Pakistan has more cultural diversity within the country itself compared to diversity between many other countries and, based on this, it is quite logical and permissible to conduct any cross-cultural research in a multi-ethnic country like Pakistan.

Fourthly, antecedents to knowledge sharing are a very important discussion of knowledge management and knowledge sharing, but very few studies about antecedents to knowledge sharing have been conducted in a cross-cultural setting, whereas this study is planned to investigate the antecedents to knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment (Huang et al., 2008; Müller & Hinterhuber, 2010; McDermott & O’Dell, 2001), which will be an additional contribution of this study. Furthermore, this study has taken a different approach

to knowledge sharing from previous studies. With regard to the antecedents to knowledge sharing, since the individual and organizational antecedents are very much linked with each other, there is some overlapping of the factors, meaning that some individual antecedents might have been discussed within the discussion of organizational factors. Moreover, since no clear-cut separation of individual and organizational antecedents has been mentioned in the literature, this overlapping results in confusion, and, additionally, it seems quite logical that the individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing should be defined, investigated and discussed separately. This can help individuals as well as organizations be aware of the same and the firms may be able to train their employees in the light of individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing separately. Hence, the researcher has tried to study and discuss the individual and organizational antecedents separately.

Fifthly, trust, despite being very well recognized by a vast number of researchers as a very critical factor of knowledge sharing and many studies having been conducted to study the impact of trust on knowledge sharing (e.g. Penley & Hawkins, 1985; Andrews & Delahay, 2000; Srinivas, 2000; Curral & Judge, 1995; Carley, 1991; & Zand, 1972), little empirical research has been conducted to investigate the impact of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment. This study is different from the previous studies in the sense that it is designed to study the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment and then it is also focused to investigate the influence of culture on the development of trust in a cross-cultural working environment. Therefore, the empirical evidence which will be generated from this research will make a valuable contribution in these highly important areas.

### 8.3.2. Contextual Contribution

Apart from many theoretical contributions, this study offers some key contributions from a contextual point of view also. Firstly, as the researcher has already mentioned, most of the cross-cultural studies on knowledge sharing (Holden & Von Korfleisch, 2004; Chow, Deng & Ho, 2000; Griffith et al., 2006; Zakaria, Amelinckx & Wilemon, 2004) either have been conducted in the USA (Pinjani & Palvia, 2013; Chow, Deng, & Ho, 2000), Europe (Lauring, 2009; Peltokorpi, 2006; Wilkesmann, 2009) or China (Chang, Liao, & Wu, 2017; Wei & Miraglia, 2017; Ardichvilie, 2006) (Ado, Su, & Wanjiru, 2017, Dube & Ngulube, 2012) with no study of such kind has been conducted in Pakistan, the homeland of the researcher; even the literature does not provide substantial evidence of any study being conducted in South Asia, which consists of around one fourth of world population and includes India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Therefore, it seems quite logical and essential to conduct a systematic study on understanding the impact of culture on knowledge sharing and the influence of trust on knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural setting in a South Asian context. Since most business dynamics, management systems and work values are similar in most South Asian countries, including Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, the findings of this research can be very insightful for academicians, researchers and business managers of the said countries.

Secondly, this research, unlike most of the previous studies on knowledge sharing which were conducted in private sector organizations, is based on the medical profession, a sector which previously has not been studied in association with trust. As Goudge and Gilson note:

*“Few detailed investigations of trust have so far been undertaken in the health sector, and most in the USA. Further investigation in other country contexts will be important in allowing wider understanding of the relevance and role of trust in health settings. A gap of current inquiry is the limited investigation of the dynamics of trust in health sector relationships, its evolution over time and the influences over that evolution. Inquiry into health management issues might draw insights from the*

*literature on how trust influences the performance of health organisations” (Goudge and Gilson, 2005, p.1449).*

### **8.3.3. Methodological Contribution**

Firstly, this study is very meaningful and productive in the sense that it is based on qualitative research techniques, unlike many of the studies in the domain of the cultural effects on knowledge sharing or on trust development that have been based on quantitative research techniques, probably because of the ease of data collection and analysis techniques (Descombe, 2003). However, according to some scholars (e.g. Miles & Huberman, 1994; Wang & Noe, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994), quantitative analysis may not be a suitable nor logical choice for the study of socially driven constructs like culture, trust and knowledge sharing. Because although a quantitative approach according to many is linked with rigor, authenticity and soundness of any research project, due to its numerical style, it does not allow extensive discussion and in-depth analysis of any topic (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Wang & Noe, 2010; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Burgess, 1982; Gaphart, 2004). That is why numerous researchers (e.g., Goudge & Gilson, 2005; Van Wijk et al., 2008; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Gaphart, 2004) have called for studying culture, trust and knowledge sharing through qualitative research, since qualitative methods provide rich pools of data for a thorough and in-depth analysis of these constructs. For example, Van Wijk et al., (2008) suggest that there are relatively few studies that have investigated the relationship between culture and knowledge transfer.

“This may be because cultural aspects are rarely ‘visible’ within the quantitative methods that have dominated in published studies, which suggests that if progress is to be made, issues of culture will best be investigated using qualitative methods and case studies. In cases such as when investigating the role of cultural differences or investigating the processes of knowledge transfer, the qualitative studies have more to offer” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p.684-688).

Secondly, this research is based on inductive research methodology, which helps in theory building. Since the researcher aims to study the impact of culture and trust on knowledge sharing, coupled with the investigation of antecedents to knowledge sharing and trust development, the findings of this research can result in theory building and the emergence of some antecedents additional to the existing list of antecedents to knowledge sharing or trust development. Based on this, these additional antecedents can be used for developing instruments to be used in further quantitative cross-cultural research studies (Goudge & Gilson, 2005).

#### **8.4. Theoretical Contributions in the light of the findings of the study**

This research evidenced trust as a very powerful factor affecting KS in a cross-cultural environment and after trust some personality related factors of the individuals like credibility, education, experience, personality image, seniority, official position/ rank/status, level of understanding etc. identified as very important considerations of the individuals with regard to sharing of knowledge. According to the findings of the research, trust is extremely needed for sharing knowledge in a medical context because doctors and nurses directly deal with the lives of the patients and hence authenticity of the shared knowledge is very much needed and for this purpose trust is very much needed for sharing the knowledge among doctors and nurses. The study also tested the influence of culture on KS and found culture having a drastic influence on the development of trust especially in a cross-cultural working environment. Earlier, this kind of research was not conducted in the medical profession especially in cross-cultural working environment and particularly in Asian context. Another significant contribution of the current study is that it has evidenced that although common language

ethnicity and cultural background are essential factors for facilitating knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment; but trust is even more important than these factors.

With regard to antecedents to interpersonal trust development, this research has identified professionalism, ethical soundness, sincerity, commitment, longevity, and confidentiality, mutuality of ideas and thoughts and religiosity as the main determinants of trust development in a professional cross-cultural working environment. Religiosity has not been discussed as a major factor of interpersonal trust development in most of the previous studies focusing on the antecedents to KS; hence this is an additional contribution of this study. The researcher also identified certain antecedents like bravery, fighting with status quo, fulfilment of promise, consistency and reliability as strong determinants of KS which have not been previously found as antecedents to KS. Similarly, this study identified factors like, education, honesty, fairness, good behaviour etc. were also found as the determinants of interpersonal trust.

The current study has found a very powerful impact of culture and language on KS in a cross-cultural working environment while identifying a number of problems, issues and complications of the differences of culture and language on the sharing of knowledge. Especially in medical profession, this research is new addition. Previous studies have empirically tested the influence of culture on KS within different countries, but this study has investigated the influence of sub-cultures on KS in a single country and hence by generating handsome amount of meaningful data, this research has validated the idea that cross-cultural studies cannot be confined to inter-country national cultural differences, but, a single multi-sub-cultural country like Pakistan can be a logical choice for conducting cross-sub-cultural study within a single country. Based on this idea, this is a major contribution of this study.

An important objective of this study was to explore the individual and organizational antecedents to KS in a cross-cultural working environment. This research has identified organizational culture, managerial support, organizational rewards, conducive working environment, employee empowerment, organizational justice, motivation and organizational resources as the main organizational antecedents to KS. Organizational resources have not been discussed in most of the previous studies as a significant determinant for KS. Similarly, organizational justice has not been very frequently discussed as a significant factor of KS sharing within firms, whereas this study has identified organizational justice as a strong organizational factor for sharing of knowledge.

Finally, this research has identified, reciprocity, commitment, recognition, self-efficacy, passion of helping others and religiosity as strong individual antecedents to KS in cross-cultural working environment. Religiosity for example has not been identified as a major determinant of KS, but this research has found it as a strong individual antecedent to KS.

Another worth mentioning contribution has been the insights and understandings being provided in the discussions and implications section of the research. Especially, the implications section provides some extremely important recommendations in the light of the best available old and latest literature on the main constructs of this study including trust, knowledge sharing, culture, antecedents to KS and antecedents to interpersonal trust development. These recommendations can be very much useful and knowledgeable with regard to understanding the salient features of trust, knowledge sharing and culture and the implementation of effective and productive knowledge management systems in cross-cultural work settings. Apart from this, the valuable findings of this research can help the researchers in

developing research instruments and identifying key research areas in the domain of knowledge sharing in a cross-cultural working environment.

Trust, knowledge sharing and culture go side by side. Without trust, sharing of knowledge remains under the shadow of doubts and in the globalized world and era of diversified workforce, no organization can escape the influence of culture both on knowledge sharing and trust and other facets of organizational working. Hence, by integrating the influence of culture on trust and KS, antecedents to interpersonal trust development and individual and organizational antecedents to KS, this research has not only provided the rich old and new and latest best quality literature but also provided a complete package of research on knowledge sharing, trust and culture in cross-cultural working environment.

Finally, due to the vast study and review of the literature on the main constructs of this study and then putting them into practical research, the researcher has gained deep familiarity with and substantial comprehension of the areas of trust, culture and knowledge sharing, antecedents to knowledge sharing and antecedents to trust development. This can turn into a foundation for guidance and motivation for conducting further research and writing research articles in these important areas of knowledge management.



## 8.5. Limitations of Research and Directions for Future Researchers

This research offers some distinctive features and notable contributions from theoretical, contextualized and methodological contributions' point of view. Firstly, the integration and study of the constructs like knowledge sharing, culture, trust and antecedents to knowledge sharing can provide some valuable findings for a better analysis and comprehension of the subject matter. Secondly, the integration of such a valuable literature on knowledge sharing, culture and trust (being almost the most important ingredients of knowledge sharing and knowledge management) can be very helpful for the reader to understand the phenomenon in a holistic manner. Thirdly, the findings of this research can be very much significant and helpful for the business managers and specially HRM managers to understand the most critical aspects of knowledge sharing including: culture and knowledge sharing, trust and knowledge sharing, culture and trust and individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing. Fourthly, since this study was aimed at investigating knowledge sharing in the context of medical profession which tends to be totally based on knowledge sharing, the insights generating as a result of this research would be valuable and insightful for practitioners, doctors, nurses and HR managers of the health services institutions to understand the salient features of knowledge sharing. Fifthly, by merging the important facets and ingredients of knowledge sharing as already mentioned, the findings of this research could open new vistas of thinking and new directions and venues for researchers and academicians. Sixthly, since this research being aimed at understanding the cultural, racial and lingual aspects of the various ethnic groups of Pakistan regarding knowledge sharing, can provide some valuable insights to the decision and policy makers of the country of the research site to understand the issues, problems, complications and hurdles of the process of knowledge sharing as a result of cultural and lingual differences and this could help them to manage knowledge sharing more efficiently

and effectively. Lastly, through this research the researcher has opened a new/overlooked dimension of research i.e., cross-cultural study of a single country and hence the findings of this research, could be useful for such countries which are culturally diversified; consisting of multi-ethnic groups and sub cultural differences, like India, USA, Canada to gain insights about the cross-cultural differences of knowledge sharing and trust development within the sub-cultures in their countries.

However, despite some notable contributions like every other research study, this study also carries some limitations and hence certain directions for the future researchers are presented in the light of the limitations. First, this study is conducted through qualitative approach; future research may be conducted through quantitative approach to compare the results with this research to draw some new insights. Second, this research is conducted in a single country; additional research should pay special attention to conduct this type of research in other countries in order to measure the degree to which the results of this research can be applied to diverse cultures and countries. Third, this study has been conducted in three case organizations in the country of the researcher; more research needs to be conducted in other parts of the country of the researcher and in other institutions with more number of organizations to validate the results of this research. Moreover, the researcher due to time, resources and participants' permission constraints point of view, selected a sample of 75 participants, however, more number of respondents could be added in order to make the findings more reliable. Fourth, this research has been conducted in medical profession, future research might be conducted in other professions and especially in privately run organizations to see whether the results match or not? Furthermore, the generalizability of these research findings may be limited, since it is conducted in a single country, single city and in a single profession, i.e. medical profession. Some aspects of this research might have been influenced by

organizational culture and the working environments and others by moderating factors, therefore, generalizability issues will still remain there and hence future studies may especially investigate the influences of the moderating effects in other settings. Finally, KS sharing involves two parties: knowledge donors and knowledge receivers. This study has put more emphasis on knowledge sharers and less on knowledge seekers; future research may pay more emphasis on knowledge seekers.

One limitation refers to the potential of the respondent bias in the interviews. Although the respondents were well-educated, even then the possibility of biases and personal differences for knowledge management systems, cultural differences and work settings could not be overlooked. Moreover, there is possibility of concealing the actual answers from the respondents due to being afraid of organizational fear or ethnic prejudices. Pakistani society is a high power-distance based society where in many cases people avoid giving correct answers due to fear of the loss of job etc.

A worth mentioning limitation of this research is that due to being very broad with respect to the research objectives and questions, the researcher could not conduct an in-depth analysis of the cross-cultural differences and biases and similarities with respect to knowledge sharing and trust building among the various ethnic groups of the country. Separate studies might be conducted exclusively against each of the five main research objectives of this study, to analyse the sub-cultural differences in knowledge sharing and trust development with an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon.

In addition to possibly valuable research directions that emanate from our limitations, several other general directions for researchers may be drawn.

With regard to antecedents to trust development, the focus of this research has been on peer dyadic trust building, future research can be conducted on trust between employees and organizational management in a cross-cultural working environment. This can also be noted that the current study has not explicitly discussed the role of the institutional context i.e., the current research ignored the organizational factors that moderate the process of interpersonal trust development; future research can consider the influence of organizational factors like organizational justice, organizational culture and managerial support on the development of dyadic trust.

Second, most of the existing investigations have studied knowledge sharing as a unidimensional construct. A visible theme of the current study has been the extent or the *degree* of knowledge sharing. Therefore, future research may examine other dimensions of KS beyond the extent, such as *quality* and *speed* of shared knowledge, in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of its antecedents and consequences. While *quality* of KS refers to the extent the shared knowledge stimulates fresh thinking and offers meaningful insights (Sheremata, 2000), *Speed* refers to how quick and efficient knowledge is transferred (cf. Hansen, 2002; Zander and Kogut, 1995). Likewise, knowledge attributes such as depth and breadth (Zahra et al., 2000) may differentially impact organizational KS. While integrating such dimensions, future research may also include more fine-grained processes of KS, for instance, knowledge ambiguity (complexity, tacitness and teach ability etc.); performance (growth, productivity and profitability) and innovativeness etc. (Jansen et al., 2006). Including several additional categories of antecedents and contrasting their impacts on organizational knowledge transfer would be instrumental in further assessing the relative importance of variables. Another important area of future research is to see KS from gender point of view. Since the findings of this research include some gender based biases in the process of KS,

therefore a full-fledged separate research can be conducted on exploring the gender based biases and differences in KS.

Third, this study is cross-sectional. For measuring the extent of trust on KS, a longitudinal study might be needed, since it tends to be difficult in cross-sectional study to examine the changes in the level of trust owing to dynamic interface between knowledge donors and seekers. From this viewpoint, a longitudinal study sketching the long-term deeds of individuals within organisations may produce a richer comprehension of bidirectional effects and an understanding of how behavioural patterns change over time. Moreover, this research has considered only knowledge sharing and based on the recommendations of the above scholars; future researchers can conduct research on knowledge hoarding instead of KS.

Another possible limitation of the current study is that it has focused on the impact of culture on sharing of knowledge; but overlooked the impact of cultural disparities on the creation of knowledge. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), Davenport and Prusak (1998) and Choo (1998) have provided some attention-grabbing examples of national variations on KS in their classic works on knowledge management. Keeping in view this limitation, future research can be conducted on cultural influences on the creation of knowledge.

Fourth, since data collection in this study has been limited to organizations belonging to a predominantly collectivist society (Hofstede 1991), therefore the findings of this research may not be interpretable and applicable into firms belonging to distinctly dissimilar national cultures. The findings may also be vulnerable to the threat of single-source bias. Finally, the researcher while collecting data might have overlooked barriers of KS framed by others including: natural barriers (e.g., time and space) (Leonard and Sensiper 1998; Hinds & Pfeffer

2003); cognitive barriers that restrict individuals to share knowledge due to feeling difficulty in communication (Gibbert & Krause 2002; Dixon 2000; Hinds & Pfeffer 2003; von Krogh et al. 2000) and structural barriers (e.g., authority and status hierarchies and functional boundaries) that can hinder open flow of information and the growth of interpersonal relationships (Dixon 2000; Hinds & Pfeffer 2003; Leonard and Sensiper 1998; von Krogh et al. 2000). Based on these limitations, the researcher urges the future researchers to examine findings of the current research across different national cultures by employing more rigorous research designs and procedures.

Fifth, existing research has suggested a noteworthy relationship between individual differences and employee perceptions of knowledge sharing culture. Future research can investigate as to how personal traits of individuals (e.g., level of qualification, working experience) and organizational factors (e.g., firm size and industry type) may moderate the association between organizational factors and individuals' attitudes and intentions toward KS. An important area of future research can be to study the long-term effects of organizational motivational factors (i.e., to see whether the employees' particular reactions were temporary or sustainable) on KS attitudes and intentions of individual employees. Future longitudinal studies can collect data to study the causation and interrelationship between variables that are significant to KS.

## 8.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter includes discussions on the findings, implications for managers, and limitation of the research including directions for future researchers. The findings were examined in the light of the existing literature and implications were suggested for the managers in the light of the answers, statements and recommendations of the participants of this study. Firstly, the importance of trust building and an organizational culture of interpersonal trust was highlighted keeping in view heavy emphasis of participants on the interpersonal trust for KS. Trust helps disregard barriers to KS. Without the presence of trust, the collaboration required for effective KS might not occur. Therefore, when deciding to promote KS, managers should develop appropriate mechanisms that may improve the quality of interpersonal relationships among members characterized by mutual trust and cooperation. Culture was also pointed out as a very strong factor for building interpersonal trust in organizational life. In the current study, serious biases and differences were reported by the respondents with regard to trust building based on cultural and ethnic basis. Moreover, in terms of practical implications, HR managers were suggested to place a higher level of emphasis on affect based trust as compared to cognitive-based trust since most of the respondents in the current study while sharing their views about antecedents to trust development, have emphasised on factors which come under the fold of the antecedent to affect-based trust as it was mentioned in the findings that the factors of Sincerity, Loyalty, Truthfulness and Commitment etc. were important basis of trust development.

Secondly, the respondents of this study shared lots of problems and complications of KS in a cross-cultural working environment and based on those issues, it is indispensable for the HR managers to understand and analyse this matter instead of seeing it from surface. Managers require frameworks to describe the links between knowledge and culture so that they may be

able to design the systems and processes required to create employee behaviours that will promote their objectives regarding KS. Thirdly, stress free conducive working environment and organizational culture based on the principles of professionalism, merit, empowerment and employee motivation has a drastic impact on KS in any organization. HR practices of open communication, merit based appointments, fairness in decision-making can likely promote an organizational culture that supports knowledge sharing. A number of respondents in this study have complained against the factor of stress as a result of lengthy working hours or overloadedness of work and have recommended a stress free and conducive working environment for KS. Finally, HR managers have been suggested to have a deep understanding of the individual characteristics of organizational members that encourage or discourage them towards KS. Based on the findings of this research, these factors include Attitude and Intentions towards KS, Self-efficacy, Organizational Commitment, Reciprocity, a Passion to Help their colleagues and Religiosity are some of the key individual antecedents that play significant role in the KS behaviours within any organization.

The researcher, at the end, has discussed the unique features of this study and discussed the intended theoretical, contextual and methodological contributions resulting from this research. Firstly, the integration and study of constructs like knowledge sharing, culture, trust and antecedents to knowledge sharing can provide some valuable findings for a better analysis and comprehension of the subject matter. Secondly, the integration of such a valuable literature on knowledge sharing, culture and trust (being almost the most important ingredients of knowledge sharing and knowledge management) can be very helpful for the reader to understand the phenomenon in a holistic manner. Thirdly, the findings of this research can be very much significant and helpful for business managers, and especially human resource management, to understand the most critical aspects of knowledge sharing including: culture



and knowledge sharing, trust and knowledge sharing, culture and trust and individual and organizational antecedents to knowledge sharing.

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# Appendice

## Questionnaire

Name of the Respondent:

Organization:

Respondent Category:

Ethnicity:

Designation:

Gender:

Experience:

### Questions about the influence of trust on knowledge Sharing

1. When you receive or share knowledge with any of your colleagues, which factors do you consider the most important?
2. To decide whether to share your knowledge with others which factors will you consider the most important?
3. In your view which factors do your colleagues generally consider while sharing their knowledge with other colleagues?
4. Do you think trust has any role/importance in KS?
5. If yes, then how for example?

## **Questions about the Influence of Culture on Trust Development and Antecedents to Trust Development**

1. Which kinds of people you trust generally?
2. While deciding to trust your colleagues which factors would you consider the most important?
3. What is your impression about your colleagues how do they develop their trust on others?
4. Do you think culture plays any role in the process of trust development?
5. Do you think all your colleagues belonging to different communities/ethnicities develop their trust on others in the same way or differently?
6. Have you seen/observed any differences among your colleagues belonging to different ethnicities with respect to their ways/attitudes towards trust building?
7. If yes, then how for example?

## **Questions about the Influence of Culture on KS**

1. If you have any useful information with whom would you like to share first in your organization?



2. With regard to sharing of knowledge with colleagues, do you generally share with anyone or you prefer someone for this?
3. Do you feel comfortable to share knowledge with anyone or you face any problems?
4. Which factors do you consider being the most important while sharing your knowledge?
5. In your observation, which factors do your colleagues generally consider while sharing their knowledge with others?
6. Have you ever felt that the people of other communities show any kind of prejudice or bias with regard to sharing of knowledge with others?
7. How do you see the working and interpersonal relationship among your colleagues; is it normal or there are certain issues and biases?
8. In your view cultural dissimilarity facilitates/improves or impedes KS?
9. If you think that cultural dissimilarity impedes KS, then what do you suggest to eliminate it?
10. If all of your colleagues might be speaking the same language like yours, then how it might have impacted your knowledge, increased or decreased?
11. In your view which factor is relatively more important for KS; trust or cultural similarity?
12. Based on your observation, do think all your colleagues belonging to different ethnic communities share the knowledge with more or less the same pattern or there are certain notable differences in this process?

13. If yes, then how for example?

### **Questions About the Individual Antecedents to KS**

1. Do you think it is important to share knowledge?
2. What is your personal approach/attitude towards KS?
3. Do you generally feel motivated to share your knowledge with others?
4. What do you think about KS, will it affect you positively or negatively?
5. Do you think it is your official responsibility to share your knowledge with other colleagues?
6. With which intention/motivation do you share your knowledge with other colleagues?
7. Based on your observation, which factors generally tend to be the driving forces encouraging your colleagues to sharing of knowledge?
8. In your view, what tends to be the characteristics of those who tend to be enthusiastic in sharing their knowledge with others?
9. In your view, what tends to be the characteristics of those who generally avoid sharing their knowledge with others?

## Questions About the Organizational Antecedents to KS

1. How do you see the overall situation of learning and KS in your organization?
2. Which organizational factors in your view, facilitate organizational KS?
3. Which organizational factors in your view, impede organizational KS?
4. How do you see the role of your organizational leadership for KS; does it look encouraging or discouraging?
5. Are there any organized efforts done by your organization to promote KS?
6. What do you recommend to encourage the organizational members of your organization to share their knowledge with others?
7. How can you define the organizational culture of your organization?
8. What are the strengths positive things of the organizational culture of your organizations?
9. What are the weaknesses negative things of the organizational culture of your organizations?
10. What do you suggest to encourage/promote KS in your organization?

## Interviewees' Profile

### Case #1 Shifa International

| <b>S.N.</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Profession/Designation</b> | <b>Ethnicity</b> |
|-------------|---------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1.          | Male          | 35         | Head Nurse                    | Chitrali         |
| 2.          | Female        | 36         | PG Doctor                     | Punjabi          |
| 3.          | Female        | 35         | PG Doctor                     | Punjabi          |
| 4.          | Female        | 33         | PG Doctor                     | Punjabi          |
| 5.          | Male          | 36         | PG Doctor                     | Gilgit           |
| 6.          | Male          | 32         | PG Doctor                     | Pakhtoon         |
| 7.          | Male          | 60         | Senior Consultant             | Punjabi          |
| 8.          | Female        | 26         | Nurse                         | Chitrali         |
| 9.          | Male          | 55         | Nursing Superintendent        | Punjabi          |
| 10.         | Female        | 34         | Nurse                         | Chirali          |
| 11.         | Female        | 25         | Nurse                         | Kashmiri         |
| 12.         | Male          | 55         | Senior Consultant             | Punjabi          |
| 13.         | Female        | 34         | PG Doctor                     | Baloch           |
| 14.         | Female        | 30         | PG                            | Baloch           |
| 15.         | Male          | 62         | Senior Consultant             | Urdu Speaking    |
| 16.         | Male          | 50         | Senior Consultant             | Urdu Speaking    |
| 17.         | Male          | 58         | Senior Consultant             | Punjabi          |
| 18.         | Female        | 32         | Nurse                         | Pakhtoon         |
| 19.         | Female        | 36         | Nurse                         | Gilgit           |
| 20.         | Male          | 35         | HRM manager                   | Pakhtoon         |
| 21.         | Male          | 56         | Director HRM                  | Punjabi          |

|            |    |                   |          |
|------------|----|-------------------|----------|
| 22. Male   | 58 | Senior Consultant | Hindko   |
| 23. Female | 40 | Nurse             | Pakhtoon |
| 24. Female | 45 | Nurse             | Pakhtoon |
| 25. Male   | 30 | HR Officer        | Hindko   |

### **Case#2 Poly Clinic**

| <b>S.No.</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Profession/Designation</b> | <b>Ethnicity</b> |
|--------------|---------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1.           | Male          | 35         | Senior Nurse                  | Sindhi           |
| 2.           | Male          | 40         | Nursing Superintendent        | Sindhi           |
| 3.           | Female        | 30         | Assistant Executive Officer   | Hindko           |
| 4.           | Male          | 35         | PG Doctor                     | Pakhtoon         |
| 5.           | Male          | 30         | GP                            | Pakhtoon         |
| 6.           | Male          | 55         | Deputy Director               | Sindhi           |
| 7.           | Male          | 34         | GP                            | Sindhi           |
| 8.           | Male          | 58         | Director Nursing Home         | Urdu Speaking    |
| 9.           | Female        | 58         | Chief Gynecology              | Punjabi          |
| 10.          | Female        | 45         | Senior Doctor                 | Pakhtoon         |
| 11.          | Female        | 34         | FCPS                          | Panjabi          |
| 12.          | Female        | 35         | PG                            | Punjabi          |
| 13.          | Female        | 50         | Nursing Superintendent        | Punjabi          |
| 14.          | Female        | 60         | FCPS                          | Punjabi          |
| 15.          | Male          | 30         | Male Nurse                    | Urdu Speaking    |
| 16.          | Male          | 42         | Male Nurse                    | Sindhi speaking  |
| 17.          | Male          | 45         | Male Nurse                    | Urdu Speaking    |
| 18.          | Male          | 35         | Male Nurse                    | Sindhi           |

|            |    |                 |               |
|------------|----|-----------------|---------------|
| 19. Male   | 33 | Male Nurse      | Sindhi        |
| 20. Female | 35 | Nurse           | Punjabi       |
| 21. Female | 36 | Nurse           | Baloch        |
| 22. Female | 30 | Nurse           | Pakhtoon      |
| 23. Male   | 56 | Deputy Director | Urdu Speaking |
| 24. Male   | 42 | FCPS            | Hindko        |
| 25. Male   | 45 | HRM Manager     | Urdu Speaking |

### **Case # Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences**

| <b>S.No</b> | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Age</b> | <b>Profession/Designation</b> | <b>Ethnicity</b> |
|-------------|---------------|------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| 1.          | Male          | 30         | PG Doctor                     | Sindhi           |
| 2.          | Female        | 60         | Registrar                     | Urdu Speaking    |
| 3.          | Female        | 55         | Principal Nursing college     | Pakhtoon         |
| 4.          | Male          | 30         | PG                            | Urdu Speaking    |
| 5.          | Female        | 30         | PG                            | Punjabi          |
| 6.          | Male          | 32         | PG                            | Sindhi           |
| 7.          | Male          | 35         | PG                            | Pakhtoon         |
| 8.          | Female        | 50         | FCPS                          | Hindko           |
| 9.          | Female        | 52         | FCPS                          | Sindhi           |
| 10.         | Male          | 48         | FCPS                          | Baloch           |
| 11.         | Female        | 34         | PG                            | Baloch           |
| 12.         | Male          | 30         | PG                            | Baloch           |
| 13.         | Male          | 32         | PG                            | Baloch           |
| 14.         | Female        | 30         | Nurse                         | Sindhi           |

|            |    |                   |               |
|------------|----|-------------------|---------------|
| 15. Female | 35 | Nurse             | Pakhtoon      |
| 16. Female | 45 | Nurse             | Kashmri       |
| 17. Female | 25 | Nurse             | Punjabi       |
| 18. Male   | 34 | Male Nurse        | Sindhi        |
| 19. Female | 32 | Nurse             | Pakhtoon      |
| 20. Male   | 45 | Nurse             | Sindhi        |
| 21. Male   | 58 | Senior Consultant | Sindhi        |
| 22. Male   | 35 | PG                | Pakhtoon      |
| 23. Female | 32 | Nurse             | Punjabi       |
| 24. Male   | 34 | PG                | Urdu speaking |
| 25. Female | 32 | Nurse             | Pakhtoon      |

