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The Mediating Role of Knowledge-Sharing Intention in the Relationship between Knowledge Management Systems and Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour

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Abstract

Knowledge sharing plays a vital role in maintaining organisational performance and fostering continuous improvement in educational settings. Although knowledge management systems (KMS) are designed to support knowledge processes, their role in promoting knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB) has not been fully explored, particularly in Malaysian technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions. This study investigates the influence of KMS on knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) and KSB, as well as the mediating role of KSI. A quantitative design was adopted, and data were collected from 141 academicians working in Malaysian Premier Polytechnics. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was applied to test the hypothesised relationships. The findings indicate that KMS has a positive influence on both KSI and KSB. In addition, KSI significantly predicts KSB and mediates the relationship between KMS and KSB. These results demonstrate that well-implemented KMS can create an environment that encourages academic staff to engage more actively in sharing knowledge with their colleagues. The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence of the mechanisms linking KMS to knowledge-sharing behaviour in a TVET context. Practical implications are also offered for institutional leaders and policymakers, who can strengthen knowledge-sharing practices by investing in user-friendly KMS, providing adequate training, and fostering a culture of collaboration, thereby promoting sustainable innovation and organisational growth in TVET contexts.

Keywords: Knowledge Management Systems (KMS), Knowledge-Sharing Intention (KSI), Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour (KSB), HEI, and TVET

Introduction

In contemporary knowledge-driven economies, knowledge sharing has emerged as a cornerstone of organisational innovation, collaboration, and long-term sustainability. Within higher education institutions (HEIs), and particularly in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, knowledge sharing is not only vital for enhancing teaching and research productivity but also for developing the innovative capabilities required to meet dynamic societal and industry demands (Gautam, 2023; Yuen & Lam, 2024). The increasing emphasis on digitalisation and the knowledge economy further situates knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB) as a pressing concern in social science debates on organisational learning, innovation, and workforce development (Di Vaio et al., 2021; Singh et al., 2021).

Despite recognition of its importance, evidence suggests that fostering effective KSB among academicians remains a challenge. Prior research in higher education has demonstrated that while knowledge management systems (KMS) provide technological platforms to facilitate access, dissemination, and exchange of knowledge resources, their implementation does not automatically translate into effective sharing practices (Ng & Yip, 2020; Ali & Ghoneim, 2021). Instead, knowledge-sharing intention (KSI), the willingness and motivation of individuals to share knowledge, has been identified as a decisive factor in determining whether such systems are fully utilised (Bock et al., 2005; Zhang & Lee, 2022). Fortunately, existing studies have largely concentrated on universities and research-oriented institutions, leaving TVET academicians, who play a pivotal role in skill-based education and innovation, comparatively underexplored (Nair & Munusami, 2020; Fauzi et al., 2019).

This study addresses this gap by examining the mediating role of KSI in the relationship between KMS and KSB among academicians in Malaysian Premier Polytechnics. The research problem is twofold: first, the availability of KMS does not guarantee effective knowledge sharing; and second, the intention to share knowledge may be the missing link in translating technological infrastructure into behavioural outcomes. This problem is significant because limited KSB in TVET institutions constrains not only academic collaboration but also broader efforts to strengthen Malaysia's innovation capacity and human capital development. By situating KSB within the dual contexts of organisational technology (KMS) and individual motivation (KSI), this study contributes to contemporary debates in the social sciences on how structural and behavioural factors interact to shape innovation outcomes. Beyond addressing this gap, the rationale for selecting TVET academicians lies in their unique role as practitioners of applied knowledge who bridge academic learning with industry needs. Unlike traditional higher education institutions, TVET institutions emphasise skill-based education, innovation, and strong industry collaboration, making knowledge sharing critical to their success and societal relevance (Nair & Munusami, 2020; Yuen & Lam, 2024). By situating this study in the TVET context, the study extends previous work that has primarily focused on universities, thereby offering a contextual contribution to knowledge management literature. At the same time, it contributes theoretically by clarifying how intention mediates the relationship between system support and actual behaviour.

Accordingly, the research problem addressed in this study is a limited understanding of how technological infrastructure (KMS) and individual intention (KSI) jointly shape knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB) in TVET institutions. This problem is significant because it

affects not only institutional effectiveness but also broader social science debates on digital transformation, organisational learning, and education's role in national innovation systems.

Literature Review

Knowledge Management Systems and Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge management systems (KMSs) are information technology-based tools that support the storage, retrieval, and dissemination of organisational knowledge (Natek & Lesjak, 2021). In higher education institutions (HEIs), KMS, such as learning management systems, repositories, and collaborative platforms, are designed to facilitate both explicit and tacit knowledge sharing, thereby enhancing academic collaboration and innovation (Yuen & Lam, 2024). Effective KMS improves accessibility, centralises resources, and fosters interdepartmental collaboration through forums, document-sharing platforms, and virtual team spaces (Ali & Ghoneim, 2021; Zhang & Lee, 2022).

However, the literature highlights mixed findings. While many studies report that KMS reduces barriers to communication and encourages openness (Wang & Noe, 2010; Gautam, 2023), others caution that poorly designed or unsupported systems may burden faculty members, leading to resistance or knowledge hoarding (Ng & Yip, 2020; Ali & Ghoneim, 2021). Issues such as information overload (Gautam, 2023) and lack of trust (Akosile & Olatokun, 2020) further complicate successful adoption. These findings suggest that organisational culture, leadership support, and training initiatives must complement technological design.

Knowledge Management Systems and Knowledge-Sharing Intention

Knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) reflects an individual's willingness to engage in knowledge exchange and has been shown to mediate the relationship between enabling systems and actual knowledge-sharing behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In the higher education context, access to user-friendly and collaborative KMS strengthens faculty members' intention to share teaching resources, research findings, and best practices (Ali & Ghoneim, 2021; Zhang & Lee, 2022). Studies confirm that system accessibility, usability, and organisational support significantly shape KSI (Ng & Yip, 2020; Gautam, 2023). Conversely, inadequate training, misalignment with institutional goals, or competitive cultures may weaken KSI, limiting system effectiveness (Wang & Noe, 2010; Ali & Ghoneim, 2021).

Knowledge Management Systems and Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour

While intention is critical, the actual translation into knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB) depends on perceived ease of use and institutional support. Well-implemented Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) enhance transparency, reduce knowledge hoarding, and foster academic communities that promote frequent knowledge exchange (Wang & Noe, 2010; Ali & Ghoneim, 2021). Recent research highlights the maximisation of KMS effectiveness through leadership encouragement and an open culture (Ng & Yip, 2020; Zhang & Lee, 2022).

The Mediating Role of Knowledge-Sharing Intention

Although prior studies highlight the direct effect of KMS on KSB, emerging evidence suggests that KSI may play a mediating role. Faculty members who perceive systems as accessible and well-supported are more likely to intend to share knowledge, which reinforces the impact of KMS on their actual behaviour. Conversely, without strong intentions, even

advanced systems may remain underutilised. This highlights the need to conceptualise KSI as a mediator that shapes the extent to which KMS translates into effective KSB. Several studies have investigated the direct effect of knowledge management systems (KMS) on knowledge sharing behaviours (KSB). For instance, Nezafati et al. (2023) and Shofa (2022) reported significant positive effects of KMS on KSB. Similarly, Nair and Munusami (2020) examined this relationship within Malaysian higher education institutions and found that KMS platforms effectively support knowledge-sharing behaviours. More recently, Du et al. (2024) demonstrated that knowledge management systems (KMS) are positively associated with broader organisational outcomes, which further reinforces their role in enhancing knowledge-sharing processes. However, only a few have explored the mediating role of individual intention. This study aims to fill that gap.

In this study, knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB) is conceptualised as the dependent variable. Knowledge management systems (KMS) serve as the independent variable, while knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) is introduced as a mediator that shapes the relationship between KMS and KSB.

Research Framework

This framework addresses gaps in the literature by integrating knowledge management systems (KMS) as an enabler of knowledge sharing within Malaysian higher education institutions (HEIs). In doing so, it examines how intention not only predicts behaviour but also mediates the influence of KMS on KSB. Ultimately, the framework assumes positive relationships among all variables.

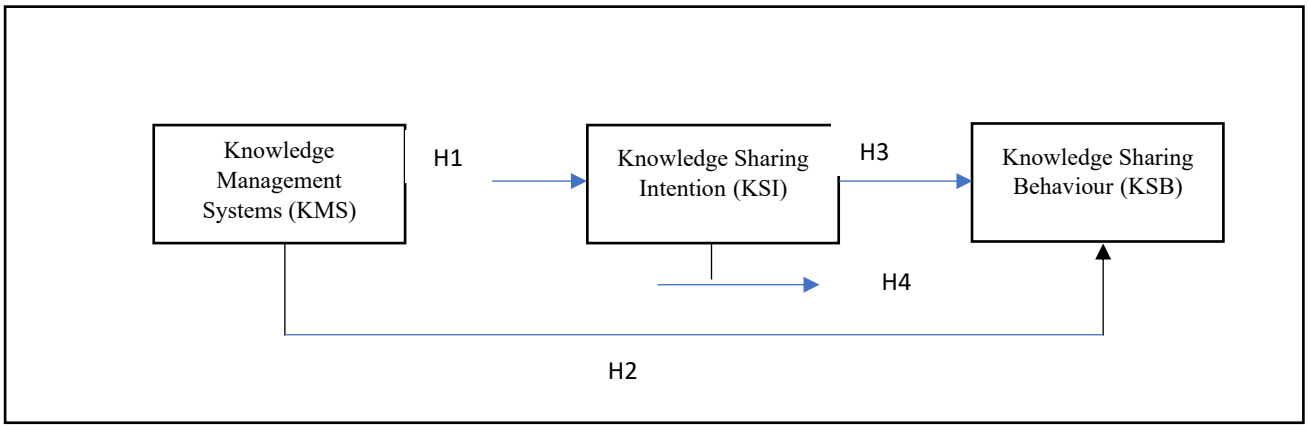

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Knowledge Management Systems (KMS)

Research Objectives

Drawing on the literature and the proposed framework, this study aims to advance our understanding of how knowledge management systems (KMS) shape knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB), as well as the role of knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) in this process. Accordingly, the following research objectives are proposed:

1. To examine the influence of KMS on KSI.
2. To examine the influence of KMS on KSB.
3. To investigate the influence of KSI on KSB.
4. To assess the mediating effect of KSI on the relationship between KMS and KSB.

Hypotheses

Building on this framework and research objectives, the study hypothesises that effective knowledge management systems (KMS) positively influence knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB), and this relationship is strengthened when knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) is high. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1: *Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) positively influence knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) in Malaysian Premier Polytechnics.*
H2: *Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) positively influence knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB) in Malaysian Premier Polytechnics.*
H3: *Knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) positively influences knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB)in Malaysian Premier Polytechnics.*
H4: *Knowledge-Sharing Intention (KSI) mediates the relationship between Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) and knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB).*

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine the influence of Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) on Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour (KSB), with Knowledge-Sharing Intention (KSI) serving as a mediating variable. The quantitative approach was deemed appropriate for testing hypothesised relationships among latent constructs and for drawing generalisable conclusions from empirical data.

Sample and Data Collection

The study targeted academic staff from Malaysian Premier Polytechnic institutions, a group central to knowledge sharing and innovation in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with relevant experience in academic knowledge work. Data were collected through a self-administered online questionnaire, distributed via official institutional channels. A total of 141 valid responses were collected and included in the final analysis.

Instrumentation

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire comprising four sections: demographic details and items measuring KMS, KSI, and KSB. All constructs were measured using items adapted from established instruments in prior studies. Responses were recorded on a seven-point Likert scale.

KMS was measured using items adapted from Al-Busaidi (2017) and Venkatesh & Davis (2000), encompassing dimensions such as the specific use of information systems (IS) or information technology (IT) products, applied to managing organisational knowledge. KSI was measured using items adapted from Bock et al. (2005) and Fauzi et al. (2019), focusing on the willingness of employees to share with others the knowledge they have gained. KSB was assessed using items adapted from Akhavan et al. (2015) and Fauzi et al. (2019), capturing a process where individuals mutually exchange their implicit (tacit) and explicit knowledge. There were five questions per section. The questionnaire was pre-tested for clarity and relevance, and minor modifications were made to ensure contextual suitability for the premier polytechnic environment.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.1. The data analysis was conducted in two main stages using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). First, the measurement model was evaluated to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs. This assessment involved examining factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity, which was tested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. Following the confirmation of the measurement model, the structural model was assessed to test the proposed hypotheses. This stage involved evaluating the direct relationships between knowledge management systems (KMS) and knowledge-sharing intentions (KSI), as well as between KSI and knowledge-sharing behaviours (KSB). In addition, the mediating effect of KSI on the relationship between KMS and KSB was examined. Key indicators such as path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) were used to determine the strength and significance of the hypothesised relationships.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. A total of 141 academicians participated in this study, comprising 113 women and 28 men. The largest age group was 41–50 years (n = 71), followed by 31–40 years (n = 50) and 51–60 years (n = 23). In terms of educational qualifications, the respondents held diplomas (n = 1), bachelor's degrees (n = 36), master's degrees (n = 100), and doctorates (n = 7). Regarding academic positions, 87 were lecturers and 54 were senior lecturers. With respect to work experience, one respondent had five years or less, 12 had 6–10 years, 58 had 11–15 years, 36 had 16–20 years, 31 had 21–25 years, and three had 26 years or more.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics (N = 141)

Measure	Item	Frequency	%
Sex	Male	28	19.8
	Female	113	80.1
Age (years)	31–40	50	35.4
	41–50	68	48.2
	51–60	23	16.3
Education level	Diploma	1	0.7
	Bachelor's degree	36	25.5
	Master's degree	97	68.7
	PhD	7	4.9
Position	Lecturer	87	61.7
	Senior lecturer	54	38.2
Work experience (years)	5	1	0.7
	6–10	12	8.5
	11–15	58	41.1
	16–20	36	25.5
	21–25	31	21.9
	≥ 26	3	2.1

Measurement Model

The first stage of reporting the findings involved measurement model analysis, which consisted of convergent and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2014). Convergent validity assesses the cross-loading of each item, composite reliability (CR), and the average variance extracted (AVE) of the construct. The AVE must be higher than all related inter-construct correlations to meet the discriminant validity. Figure 2 shows the result of factor loadings, AVE, and CR.

The results demonstrated that all item loadings met the minimum 0.7 value. The AVE and CR of all constructs exceeded 0.5. In this context, the construct in the model distinguished itself from other variables, as the other items did not load onto different constructs (Hair et al., 2014). Table 2 depicts the discriminant validity of the study.

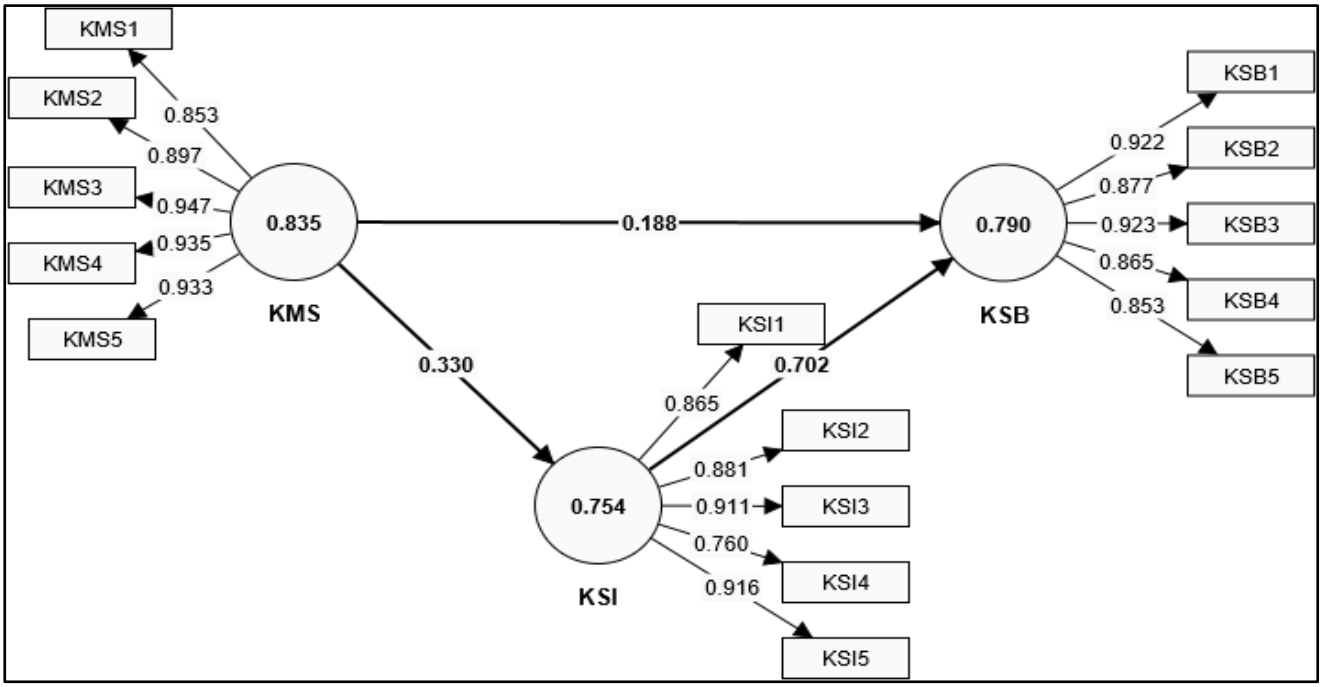

Figure 2: Results of Factor Loadings, AVE, and CR

Table 2
Discriminant validity (N =141)

Construct	Item	Loading	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	CR	rho_a	rho_c
KMS	KMS1	0.853	0.835	0.950	0.955	0.955	0.962
	KMS2	0.897					
	KMS3	0.947					
	KMS4	0.935					
	KMS5	0.933					
KSB	KSB1	0.922	0.790	0.933	0.936	0.936	0.949
	KSB2	0.877					
	KSB3	0.923					
	KSB4	0.865					
	KSB5	0.853					
KSI	KSI1	0.865	0.754	0.918	0.926	0.928	0.939
	KSI2	0.881					
	KSI3	0.911					
	KSI4	0.760					
	KSI5	0.916					

Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations, as proposed by Henseler et al. (2015). An HTMT value below 0.90 indicates adequate discriminant validity. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
The HTMT matrix (N = 141)

	KMS	KSB	KSI
KMS			
KSB	0.443		
KSI	0.348	0.82	

Structural Model

The second stage of results reporting involved structural model analysis, which required the determination of the path coefficient and the coefficient of determination (R^2). In Table 3, all paths between the variables were significant. All hypotheses were supported.

Table 4
Path coefficient (N = 141)

Hypothesis	Path model	Original sample (O)	t-value	p-value	Confidence interval (BC)		R^2	f^2	Q^2	Decision
					LL	UL				
H1	KMS -> KSI	0.330	3.702	0.000	0.186	0.482	0.109	0.122	0.075	Supported
H2	KMS -> KSB	0.188	3.522	0.000	0.101	0.275	0.616	0.082	0.480	Supported
H3	KSI -> KSB	0.702	16.631	0.000	0.632	0.770		1.977		Supported

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was assessed to evaluate the explanatory power of the model. The results indicated that the R^2 value for knowledge-sharing intention (KSI) was 0.109, indicating very weak explanatory power. In contrast, the R^2 value for knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB) was 0.616, indicating substantial explanatory power. These findings suggest that the predictors in the model explain only a small proportion of variance in KSI, but they explain a considerable proportion of variance in KSB.

Mediation Analysis

Table 5

Testing of Hypotheses on the Mediating Effects of KSI

	Hypothesised relationship	Std. Beta	Std. error	t-value	Confidence interval		p-values	Decision
					LL	UL		
H4	KMS -> KSI -> KSB	0.232	0.061	3.797	0.132	0.335	0.000	Supported

The bootstrapping results revealed that KSI mediated the relationship between KMS and KSB (β = 0.232, t = 3.797, p = 0.000). The indirect relationships indicated the presence of a mediating effect. The 95% bootstrap CI bias-corrected indirect effect (LL = 0.132, UL = 0.335) led to the conclusion that H4 was statistically supported. The data analysis produced the following findings:

1. **H1** was **supported**: Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) had a positive influence on Knowledge-Sharing Intention (KSI).
2. **H2** was **supported**: Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) had a positive influence on Knowledge-Sharing Intention (KSB).
3. **H3** was **supported**: KSI had a positive influence on KSB.
4. **H4** was **supported**: KSI positively mediated the relationship between KMS and KSB.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence supporting the proposed theoretical framework. Specifically, knowledge management systems (KMS) were found to have a significant positive influence on both knowledge-sharing intentions (KSI) and knowledge-sharing behaviour (KSB). This highlights the critical role of technological and structural support in motivating academicians to engage in knowledge-sharing practices. The result aligns with previous studies (e.g., Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Dwivedi et al., 2021), which emphasised that well-established KMS enhance the accessibility, storage, and dissemination of knowledge, thereby encouraging individuals to share knowledge more actively.

The results further demonstrate that KSI significantly influenced KSB, underscoring the importance of intention as a precursor to actual sharing behaviours. These findings posit that behavioural intention is the most immediate determinant of behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of this study, academicians who developed stronger intentions to share knowledge were more likely to transform these intentions into actual sharing behaviour. This supports earlier empirical evidence that intention serves as a strong mediator in predicting knowledge-related behaviours (Bock et al., 2005; Lin, 2007).

Additionally, KSI was found to positively mediate the relationship between KMS and KSB. This implies that the effectiveness of KMS in fostering knowledge-sharing behaviour depends partly on the level of intent among academicians. In other words, even when technological tools and systems are available, knowledge-sharing behaviour will be strengthened only if individuals are motivated and intentional about using them. This finding extends the literature by highlighting the synergistic effects of organisational support (via KMS) and individual motivation (via KSI) in promoting effective knowledge sharing.

Overall, the study's results provide practical contributions. Practically, the evidence suggests that policymakers and institutional leaders should not only invest in advanced KMS but also design interventions to strengthen academics' intention to share knowledge, for example, through training, incentives, and supportive culture. Knowledge-sharing behaviours thrive when systems and intentions align, thereby fostering innovation and institutional development.

Conclusion and Implications

This study examined the influence of Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) on Knowledge-Sharing Intention (KSI) and Knowledge-Sharing behaviour (KSB), with KSI also tested as a mediator. The results confirmed that KMS significantly enhanced both KSI and KSB, while KSI itself positively influenced KSB. Moreover, KSI strengthened the relationship between KMS and KSB, underscoring the importance of intention in transforming system support into actual knowledge-sharing behaviours. Overall, the findings highlight that both organisational infrastructure and individual intentions are vital in fostering effective knowledge-sharing among academicians in Malaysian TVET institutions.

The findings carry several important implications for practice. First, institutions should continue investing in robust KMS that support collaboration, accessibility, and ease of knowledge sharing. Second, beyond providing systems, higher education institutions (HEIs) must actively encourage intentions to share knowledge by cultivating supportive cultures, offering professional development, and recognising knowledge-sharing contributions. Finally, by integrating both system-based and motivational strategies, HEIs can enhance knowledge-sharing practices that ultimately drive innovation and academic excellence.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has its limitations. First, the data were collected from academicians at Malaysian TVET institutions, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other educational settings or industries. Future research could expand the scope by including respondents from different higher education institutions or cross-country comparisons to validate the model in diverse contexts. Second, this study adopted a cross-sectional design, which restricts the ability to infer causal relationships. Longitudinal or experimental studies could provide stronger evidence of the causal links between KMS, KSI, and KSB. Third, this study restricted its focus to Knowledge Management Systems (KMS) and Knowledge-Sharing Intention (KSI) as predictors of Knowledge-Sharing Behaviour (KSB). Future studies could integrate additional organisational or individual factors, such as leadership support, trust, or intrinsic motivation, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of knowledge-sharing dynamics. Finally, self-reported data were used, which

may be subject to response bias; subsequent studies might benefit from incorporating mixed methods or objective performance measures to triangulate findings.

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